

صَكَا مِلَّة

مَجْمُوعَةُ كُتُبِ سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا السَّيِّدِ جَدِّ وَزَيْنِ الْعَابِدِينَ

مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْأَوَّلِ الرَّابِعِ مِنَ الْإِثْنَاءِ عَشَرَ الْأَلْفِ

الطَّبْعَةُ الْخَامَةُ لِلنَّبِيِّ الْأَمَامِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيَّهِمَا

السَّلَامُ

مَنْزِلَةُ الْكَلَامِ فِي كِتَابِ الْمَدِينَةِ الْكُبْرَى فِي كِتَابِ السَّيِّدِ الْأَمَامِ

فِي بَلَدِ كَرْمَلِش

الطبع الثاني

١٣٨٩ هـ ١٩٦٩ ع

FOREWORD

More than thirty five years have passed since the first edition of this translation of the *Sahifa-i-Kamila* appeared in print. It then had the singular merit of being the first English translation of that centuries-old work, and even now, as the second edition goes to the press, it holds the unique position of being the only English rendering thereof.

Translation was undertaken by the late Mr. Ahmad Ali Mohani "at the suggestion of Maulana Syed Najmul Hasan and Maulana Syed Nasir Husain, two of the most celebrated Shiah Mujtahids of Lucknow."

The learned translator stated in the modest foreword to the first edition :—

"History tells us that great and good men of every age and nation, of any faith and persuasion have always been in the habit of praying, and it may be said without fear of contradiction, that prayer makes character great, good and noble. 'Nothing in man' says a well known writer, 'is great, but so far as it is connected with God.' Hence it follows, that the greater a man is the stronger is his connection with the Creator, and prayer being the strongest means of establishing this connection, is of the greatest moment to mankind."

Then adding, a short bibliography of the authorities consulted and relied upon by him, he continued :—

"It must be acknowledged that the traditions mentioned in the introduction have not been rendered literally, nor did I, in translating the prayers themselves, try to be literal at the expense of sense."

The present edition has been made necessary by the constant demand from the public and has been made possible by the generous donations from some of our esteemed brethren, who, in the true spirit of Islamic charity forbid us to disclose their names. We cannot, however, prevent our feelings of sincere gratitude from praying for their success and prosperity in this world as well as hereafter.

The present edition embodies a fuller and more comprehensive introduction ; a few amendments in the translation and footnotes ; and a careful correction of the original Arabic text which is printed facing each page of English translation throughout. A table of contents has also been added.

These improvements have been made possible by reference to the Urdu translations by the late Maulana Mohammad Harun Saheb and Maulana Syed Ali Saheb, Mujthahid, both of which are accompanied by learned introductory discourses.

The Arabic text in this edition has been reproduced by photographic blocks from an edition of the original Sahifa-e-Kamila compared with the most correct copies of Allama Mohammad Taqi Majlisi I. In this edition although the Arabic writing is somewhat smaller than that of the first edition, the correctness of the reproduction is more reliable.

The Madrasatul Waizin thanks all the donors who have contributed towards the publication of this second edition, which it is hoped, will meet with the acceptance and approval of all concerned.

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LUCKNOW

CONTENTS

<i>Prayer No.</i>	<i>Pages</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
1. In Praise of God	31
2. Blessings on the Prophet	35
3. Blessings on the Angels	36
4. Blessings on the Followers of the Prophet	39
5. For himself and his adherents	41
6. In the morning and evening	43
7. In distress	47
8. For protection from immorality	48
9. For pardon from God	49
10. Imploring God's protection	50
11. For a good end to life	51
12. Confession of sins and repentance	52
13. In time of need	55
14. For relief from oppression of tyrants	58
15. In illness distress and calamity	59
16. For remission of sins	61
17. Seeking refuge from the malice and cunning of Satan	65
18. Thanks for the warding off of calamity and prayer for the continuance of Grace	68
19. For rain	68
20. For excellence of morals and good conduct	69
21. In grief and lamentation for errors	76
22. In hardships and difficulties	79
23. For safety and thanksgwmg	82
24. For his parents	84
25. For his offspring	86
26. For neighbours and friends	89
27. For the guards of the frontiers	90
28. Invoking God's help	95
29. In straitened circumstances	96
30. For help in repaying debt	96
31. For the grace of repentance	97

<i>Prayer No.</i>		<i>Pages</i>
32.	After the night vigil and confession of sins	102
33.	Soliciting Divine favour in some important affair	108
34.	In sorrow at seeing someone afflicted because of his sins	109
35.	Expressing his resignation to God's will	110
36.	Prayer at the time of thunder and lightning	110
37.	Acknowledgement of his deficiency in giving thanks	112
38.	Remorse at wrong done to any creature, and prayer for deliverance from the Fire	114
39.	For Mercy and Forgiveness	115
40.	At the mention of death	117
41.	For Divine Protection	118
42.	On Finishing Recitation of the Holy Quran	119
43.	On Seeing the New moon	124
44.	At the Beginning of the Month of Ramazan	126
45.	Farewell to the Month of Ramazan	130
46.	On the Id ul Fitr and on Fridays	139
47.	On the Day of Arafah (9th Zil Hijja)	142
48.	On the Day of Id-uz Zuha and on Fridays	158
49.	To avert the treachery of enemies	163
50.	In Piety and Fear of God	167
51.	In meekness and Humility	168
52.	Importunate Entreaty	171
53.	In a spirit of Humility	173
54.	For Removal of Anxiety	174
55.	Glorification of God	176
56.	On Divine majesty	176
57.	In a Spirit of Humility	178
58.	In Remembrance of the Al-e-Mohammad	178
59.	Invoking Blessings upon Adam	179
60.	In Distress	179
61.	In Dread and Fear	181
62.	For Sunday	182
63.	For Monday	183
64.	For Tuesday	185
65.	For Wednesday	186
66.	For Thursday	187
67.	For Friday	188
68.	For Saturday	189

INTRODUCTION

أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ۝ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ
إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝

سورة اعراف آيات ٥٥ و ٥٦

"Implore your Lord plaintively and secretly; behold, He loveth not the transgressors. And do no mischief in the earth, after the reform thereof, but beseech Him with fear (of His wrath) and craving (for His pleasure); lo, the Mercy of God is near those who act handsomely."

Holy Qur'an, Chap. VII, verses 55 & 56.

The importance and universality of prayer is a matter of common observation. It may be said to be a bond of personal love and dependence—of the highest ethical quality—between God and man. Prayer, in the words of H. More, "is the application of want to Him who alone can relieve it, the voice of sin to Him who alone can pardon it. It is the urgency of poverty the prostration of humility, the fervency of penitence, the confidence of trust. It is not eloquence, but earnestness, not figures of speech, but compunction of soul. It is the 'Lord, save us, we perish' of drowning Peter; the cry of faith to the ear of mercy!" "In the morning," says W. Seeker, "it is a golden key to open the heart for God's service and in the evening it is an iron lock to guard the heart against sin."

"It is not truth," says D. H. W. Beecher, "nor philosophy to say that prayer alters nothing, that the laws of nature are fixed and that entreaty cannot change them. The laws of nature are fixed on purpose to be used for the granting of prayer. Any man can use the laws of nature to grant the request of his child. Does he say that God, who made those laws, cannot do with them as he can?"

It is true that the Divine mind knows it all beforehand. It is true that His counsels are wiser than man's and that He will Himself do for us better than we can ask or think. But for all that. He has created and ordained it one of the laws of the universe that when we reach our hands and lift up our voice to Him, consciously, from our hearts, seeking to come into touch

See, "What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm: for with Him is the source of revelation", Qur'an, Chap. 13, verse 39 and the saying of Imam Ja'far Sadiq,

اِنَّ الدَّعَاءَ يَرُدُّ الْقَضَاءَ كَمَا يَنْقُضُ السَّلَاقَ وَقَدْ اَبْرَمَ اِبْرَاهِمًا

"Prayer averts fate and breaks the string of events, even though they may have seemed inevitable."

with Him, then new floods of the holy spirit flow over us from Him, with their wonderfully calming, illuminating and uplifting power." (R. A. Armstrong).

"There are," says J. S. Blackie, the author of 'Self-Culture', "higher things than knowledge in the world; there are living energies; and in the moral world, certainly, it is not knowledge but aspiration that is the moving power, and the wing of aspiration is prayer."

Its object "We do not pray that we may alter the Divine decrees, but that our human will may learn to move in harmony with the Divine will. How far with regard to any special matter, not irrevocably fixed in the Divine concatenation of possibilities, our petition may prevail, we never can tell; but this we do know, that the most natural and the most effectual means of keeping our own noblest nature in harmony with the source of all vital nobleness, is to hold high emotional communion with that source, and to plant ourselves humbly in that attitude of devout receptiveness which is the one becoming attitude in the created towards the Creator. Practically, there is no surer test of a man's diathesis than the capacity of prayer.

Reconciliation of prayer with resignation. Lord Polingbroke once asked Lady Huntingdon how she reconciled prayer to God for particular blessings, with absolute resignation to the Divine will. "Very easily," answered her ladyship, "just as I were to offer a petition to a monarch of whose kindness and wisdom I had the highest opinion. In such a case, my language would be—I wish you to bestow on me such or such favour, but Your Majesty knows better than I, how far it would be agreeable to you, or right in itself, to grant my desire, I therefore content myself with humbly presenting my petition, and leave the event of it entirely to you."

Islamic teaching about prayer Having quoted some of the opinions of modern western writers on the philosophy of prayer, and shown its universality, let us now examine what Islam teaches us concerning the subject. First of all, the Holy Qur'an inculcates the desire to pray in the most impressive terms. Some of its most important verses on the subject are as follows:—

1. "And your Lord saith, Call upon Me; I will hearken unto you."

(Chap. 40, verse 60)

2. "And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, then will I be nigh unto them; I will answer the cry of him that crieth, when he crieth unto Me; so let them respond unto Me; and believe in Me, that they may attain perfection."

(Chap. 2, 186)

3. Say, not on your account doth my Lord care if ye call not Him."

(Chap. 25, verse 77).

4. *Say, O my servants who have transgressed against yourselves, despair not of God's Mercy; truly, God forgiveth all sins—and really, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.*"
(Chap. 39, verse 54.)

In the Hadith, the Prophet of Islam teaches us—

"Prayer is the salvation of the true believer, the pillar of faith, and the light of heaven and earth."

"The best devotion," says Ali ibne-e-Abi Talib, the Commander of the Faithful, "is to abstain from what is prohibited; and the most agreeable of earthly acts to God is to pray to Him; for prayer turneth away a decree, even though ordained; it is the key of Mercy; the instrument of the satisfaction of needs, and the shield against every calamity."

"Whoever prays," says Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, "shall never want." And he once said to Mir (one of his disciples), "O Mir, pray, and do not say: Whatever is ordained shall come to pass. Truly, there is a rank of nearness to God, which cannot be attained save by entreaty; and really, one who shuts up his mouth and asks nothing of God, shall receive nothing from him." To the question, what was the best devotional act, he replied, "There is nothing more agreeable to God than prayer and supplication, for God loves those who pray to Him; and there is nothing more hateful to Him than one who proudly abstains from devotion and prayer."

Addison has said that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure unless he knows something about the character and personality of its author. The lives of great and good men always abound in useful lessons. Professor Blackie rightly says, "So far as my experience goes, there is no kind of sermon so effective as the example of a great man."

It therefore seems befitting that the reader of these prayers should have before him a summary of the life, character and environment of that honoured personage whose thoughts are reflected herein. He was the Fourth Imam of the Shi'as and the following geneological table¹ will show his ancestors and descendans, all of whom are held in the deepest respect and veneration by Muslims all over the world.

Ali, the son of Husain, the son of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, was born in Medina, in 38 A. H., during the caliphate of his grandfather. His mother was Shahr Banu, a daughter of Yezdjird, the last of the Kayanian Kings of Persia. Thus, owing to his connection with two of the noblest families in Asia, he was called "Ibn-ul-Khairatain", (i. e. son of the two chosen ancestries). He was the fourth of the twelve Imams, and his piety and devotion won for him the appellations of "as-Sajjad", (great adorer of God) and "Zain-ul-Abidin" (ornament of the pious). He was barely two

1. See page 4.

MUHAMMAD, THE PROPHET

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3. HUSAIN (4 A. H.—61 A. H.)

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(Continued p. 5)

years old when his grandfather was assassinated during the morning prayers in the Mosque of Kufa. In his twelfth year, he suffered the loss of the mild and generous (who was also his father-in-law) Imam Hasan, killed by poison, at the instigation of the court of Damascus.

He was an eye-witness to the terrible persecution of his revered father. Husain, at the hands of Yazid, who demanded of him the oath of fealty, on pain of death. To avoid having to swear allegiance to a man who was pagan at heart, and whose depravity had undermined the foundations of religion and morality, Husain removed himself with his family to Mecca. On reaching there, he found himself in greater peril, and fearing the desecration of the holy precincts of the Ka'ba by bloodshed, he set out for Kufa, in compliance with the invitations of the fickle and perfidious inhabitants of that town. But on his way there, he was intercepted by a large army sent by Yazid, and Husain himself, along with his kinsmen and followers, seventy-two in all, died fighting on the field of Karbala, after suffering insults and pangs of hunger and thirst for three days in succession. Even Husain's infant son, Ali Asghar, and some other children of tender age, fell victims to the monstrous cruelty of his enemies.

The atrocities perpetrated against the kindred of the Prophet at Karbala are too well-known to need further detail. Ali, the author of these prayers, on his return from captivity, was heard to say, "Had the Prophet positively commanded them to kill us, even as he had charged them by his last will and testament to be kind to us, they could not have injured us more than they did at Karbala." "In a distant age and climate," says Gibbon, touchingly, "the tragic scene of the death of Husain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader."

Of Husain's heroic band of martyrs, the only individual that survived the massacre was his son, Ali Zain-ul-Abidin. His severe illness at the time, disabled him from

Footnote of Page 4.

Imams, with the Prophet and his daughter, are collectively styled "Ahl-ul-Bait" (i. e. People of the House). Commentaries on the Qur'an, as written or given out by these Imams and Hadith as collected or described by them are alone acknowledged, and no religious information coming from any other source is accepted as authoritative. The spiritual teachings of Shiaism chiefly consist in freeing the student from all impurities of thought and action; promoting holiness by communion with God, through prayers; charity and acts of virtue, and last, though not the least, in promoting spiritual love with the Ahl-ul-Bait, who are the best models to copy and follow. The example of Husain, the martyr, who for the sake of truth suffered the most cruel persecution and death, along with his children (Zain-ul-Abidin alone surviving) and cousins and friends at Karbala, stands prominent in the hearts of Shias. Meetings are held, and recitations are made, describing how Husain and his allies in Karbala suffered in the name of Truth. The result is that the Shia, being all love and purity, is harmonised without any other effort, and realises the Oneness (Unity) of God rather imperceptibly."

"Islam", by Muhammad Sarfaraz Husain, Qari Calcutta.

bearing arms, and his implicit obedience of his father's command restrained him from attempting to do so. Thus was he spared

Having beheaded the Prophet's grandson, and having trampled the sacred bodies of the martyrs under their horses hoofs, the murderous host burnt Husain's tents, robbed the bereaved women and children of their few belongings and made them captives, while the mangled corpses of the martyrs were left unburied on the burning sands. The captives were then mounted on the bare backs of camels, with Imam Zain-ul-Abidin at their head, and accompanied by the severed heads of the martyrs mounted on spears, they were led through the crowded streets of Kufa, to the court of Yazid's governor, Ibn-e-Ziad. The latter, having expressed his satisfaction at the performance of his subordinates, ordered the prisoners to be taken to Damascus. At length, after a toilsome journey, this caravan of widows, orphans and severed heads, pelted at and insulted by the depraved populace of the cities and townships through which they passed, and, goaded onwards with the spears and whips of their ruthless captors, finally arrived in the court of the monstrous and inhuman Yazid. The captives as well as the heads of the martyrs were then presented before Yazid, who touched Husain's lips with a stick and heaped insults upon that honourable head. Then, turning towards the prisoners, he inquired the names of each of them, and ironically expressed satisfaction at what had befallen them. When Imam Zain-ul-Abidin remonstrated with him, he threatened to put the helpless Imam to the sword, whereupon the latter, with characteristic courage, defied him, saying, "I am not afraid of being killed; nay, in those that have been slain before me I have an example worthy of emulation." At this point, the wailings of the captive ladies interposed. and Yazid desisted from his evil design.

But in order to insult them the more, he ordered a speaker to mount the pulpit of the great mosque, and publicly abuse Ali and his descendants, including Imam Husain. When the speaker did so, Imam Zain-ul-Abidin rebuked him saying, "Woe unto thee; to please a creature thou hast displeased the Creator."

"And what is it that would please the Creator?" asked Yazid. "Let me go on the pulpit, and I will tell you", replied Imam Zain-ul-Abidin. At first Yazid was unwilling to grant this request, but, being persuaded by those who were present, he reluctantly conceded, and the Imam climbed upon the pulpit. After praising God, blessing the Prophet, briefly dwelling upon the transitory nature of the world and exhorting men to be virtuous, he said, "Let all men know and recognise me; I am Ali, the son of HusainI am the son of him who was killed unjustly; I am the son of him whose head was severed from the nape of the neck; I am the son of him who died thirsty: I am the son of him who fell on the field of Karbala; I am the son of him whose mantle and turban were plundered after his death; I am the son of him over whom the angels of heaven mourned. O men, the Almighty has been bountiful to us,

**His speech in
the Mosque at
Damascus**

since He has placed the standard of guidance in our midst and planted the flag of ruin among those who are not with us; He has given us excellence over all His creatures and conferred on us what He never conferred on any one else. He has distinguished us with five things, not to be met with in all creation, taken together: Knowledge; courage; generosity; love of God and love of the Prophet. He has bestowed on us what He did not bestow on any one else in the world !”

At these stirring words, pouring out passionately from the heart of the long-suffering speaker, loud wails of lamentation rose from the assembly, and Yazid, finding it expedient to interrupt him, ordered the *muezzin* to call out for prayers. The *muezzin* cried out, “God is great,” and the captive Imam responded, “Yea. God is greater than every great one.” The *muezzin* then said, “I bear witness that there is no god but God,” and the Imam repeated the words after him. But when the *muezzin* said, “I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God,” the persecuted Imam turned towards Yazeed and exclaimed, “Was Muhammad my grandfather or yours ?” “Yours,” answered the shameless tyrant. “Then what right had you to slay his children and make their womenfolk prisoners ?” asked the Imam. Yazeed was dumbfounded, and the cries and lamentations of the audience grew louder and louder. Yazeed tried to exculpate himself by laying the fault of the massacre at Ibn-e-Zyad’s door, but finding the reaction too strong and the feelings too deeply stirred against the perpetrators of the heinous crime, the tyrant quickly retired into the security of his palace, full of fear.

Shortly after this incident, with a view to make his subjects forget the atrocities committed by his men at Karbala, and in order to avoid the publicity of the real facts—for ignorance of the masses was one of the mainstays of Umayyad rule—he liberated the prisoners and sent them to Medina.

After his return to Medina, Imam Zain-ul-Abideen retired into seclusion, leading a life of prayer and painstaking devotion. But even in this helpless

His death. condition, a strict watch was kept over him by the Syrian ruler, so that even his friends were afraid of meeting him too often, and if any poet dared to sing his praises in public, he was promptly punished. This is illustrated by the case of the outspoken Farazdaq.

Some historians relate the event of his second captivity, during the reign of Abdel-Malik ibne-Marwan. The Tab’i, Ibn-e-Shahab az-Zuhri states. “He was put in irons and a strict watch was kept over him. It was with great difficulty that I obtained permission to visit him, and when I saw him with chains and iron fetters on his hands and feet, I began to weep.”¹

He survived the Tragedy of Karbala by about 35 years, and never ceased mourning throughout that period. “He mourned for his father,” says his grandson, Imam Ja’far-

1. Hulyat-ul-Awalia, Hafiz Abu Naeem, published Egypt, Vol. 3, page 135.

as-Sadiq, "while he fasted by day and prayed all night. At the hour of the breaking of the fast, when meat and drink were brought for him, he would say, "My father was killed hungry; my father was killed thirsty." and the food and water was saturated with his tears, so that it had to be brought again and again, till he could eat and drink a little out of it." He continued in this condition until he was called to the Mercy of God. He died of poison, administered at the instigation of Waleed ibn-e-Abd-el-Malik, in the year 95 A. H., and he was buried in the graveyard of Baqi, at Medina, beside his uncle Imam Hasan.

As an eye-witness to the heart-rending events of Karbala, his grief at their recollection was immeasurable. One day, one of his servants protested out of tenderness, saying, "How long will you mourn, dear master?" "Alas!" answered the inconsolable Imam, "Jacob the prophet had twelve sons and only one of them disappeared. But so great was his grief that his hair turned grey and his back was bent and his sight was impaired by excessive weeping. As for me, lo, I saw my beloved father and seventeen of my dear ones all mowed down by arrows, daggers, swords and spears in a single day. How then can my grief abate?" After uttering these pathetic words, he wept bitterly and incessantly. The memories of Karbala were so indelibly impressed on his mind that he could never bear to look at the head of a slaughtered sheep.

In spite of all these sufferings, he was no pessimist, and his prayers, which inspire hope at every step, support this view of his character. The very fact that he prayed is in itself a proof of his hopefulness. A hopeless man would not have thought of praying.

"Blessed be the Lord," says he in one of his prayers, "I am not despairing. This attitude of mind is accounted for by the fact that he had made the will of God his only standard of happiness.

His sincere piety and wholehearted devotion won for him the appellation, "Ornament of the Pious." It is said that when he performed the ceremonial washing before prayer, he used to turn pale for fear of God. Being questioned as to the cause of this intense feeling, he replied, "Don't you know in whose presence I am going to stand?"

One day, while he was saying his prayers, his house took fire and several voices were heard shouting, "Fire, fire!" but he did not feel at all alarmed and continued to pray as if nothing had happened. In the meantime the fire died out, and when he had finished praying, people said to him, "Son of the Prophet, what made you unmindful of the fire?"¹ "The fire of hell," replied he. So absorbing was his devotion.

He used to offer one thousand rak'ats of prayer every day and night.¹ By constantly

1. Sawaiq-e-Muhriqa, p. 119.

keeping awake for prayer at night, his complexion turned sallow¹ and by weeping for fear of God, his eyes were swollen, and by standing for long hours his legs were also swollen. But he never missed the night vigil prayer even while travelling.

Allama Shablanji records that the reporter Taoos once saw him praying in the precincts of the Holy Kaaba, with his forehead touching the ground. Taoos says, "I was curious to hear what he was saying. So I quietly went near. There I heard him say, 'O Master, Thy slave is at Thy door; O Lord, Thy beggar is at Thy door.....'" Says the reporter, "I learnt these words by heart, so beautiful were they; and whenever I asked for anything in those sublime words, my wish was always granted."²

"Once on a time" says Ibrahim the son of Ali, "I accompanied him on a journey to visit the Kaaba. His camel was very lazy. The Imam had, in his hand, a stick, which he raised at the beast, from time to time, but did not strike him."³ Such was his tenderness of heart.

One day, one of his slaves was climbing up a ladder, while carrying a large copper vessel containing roasted meat, for some guests on the top of the house. He had scarcely reached the uppermost round, when he lost hold of the vessel which dropped down causing mortal injury to a child of his master. The accident filled the slave with consternation. But the gentle master thus addressed him, "I know thou didst not do this intentionally, do not be afraid. I forgive thee and emancipate thee."⁴ Such conduct on such an occasion, is one of the noblest instances of forbearance and generosity, on record.

He was very lenient and forgiving. "One day" says the author of Sawaiq-i-Mubriqa, "somebody abused him. The Imam did not mind what he said. Thereupon the fellow said, 'You are very careless.' 'I turn away from thee,' replied the Imam, quoting the verse of the Quran: 'Use indulgence, and enjoin what is just and withdraw from the ignorant' "Another instance of his forbearance is thus mentioned by Qarshi. A man once told the Imam that such a one spoke ill of him. Thereupon, the Imam asked the informer to accompany him to the evil speaker. The man complied believing that his company was solicited for assistance in case of a quarrel. When they reached the evil speaker, the Imam thus addressed him; "If what you said was true, then may God forgive me, and if false then may He forgive you!" To such a pitch had he carried the cultivation of conscience!⁵

1. Allama Tabarsi

2. E'lam ul Wara, by Ibne Talha, ash Shafe'i, p. 1/5.

3. Matalib us Suool, p. 263.

4. Noor ul Absar p. 126.

5. Speaking of the righteous, Ali, the grandfather of our hero says, "When they are praised, they are

One day Abu Hamza Sumali saw a flock of birds circling round and round the Imam and singing, Hamza relates: I was yet wondering at the sight, when the Imam asked, "Do you know what they are saying?", "You know best," said I, and he told me "Lo they praise their Lord and pray for nourishment."¹

Having suffered a great deal himself, he had a great regard for those in distress. "He used to go out at night" says Abu Hamza-e-Sumali, "carrying on his back, a sack full of loaves of bread which he dealt out to the poor. He used to say, 'Secret almsgiving turneth away divine wrath.' The traces of carrying burden were discovered on his back when his sacred body was being washed after death. "There were in Medina," says Abu Ishaq, "many men who lived an easy life, not knowing whence they got their living. When the Imam was no more they learnt that they used to receive their rations from him."²

During the lifetime of Abdul Malik² his son Hisham made a pilgrimage to the Kaaba. He tried very much to kiss the celebrated black stone but failed to do so, owing to the presence of the crowd. At length, tired of his futile attempts, he sat down chagrined on a chair near the sacred well, Zamzam and watched the coming and going of pilgrims, while a company of Syrian nobles stood around him. He was sitting in this mood, when Ali suddenly made his appearance. On the approach of the Imam the crowd made way and he kissed the black stone without difficulty. This incident led one of the Syrians to enquire of Hisham about the venerable person, to whom people showed so great respect. Hisham, fearing lest his companions should feel favourably inclined towards the Imam, with affected indifference replied that he did not know who the individual was.

The celebrated poet Abufaras Farazdaq being present, was offended at Hisham's pretended ignorance and declaring that he knew the venerable person well, composed an extempore panegyric, of about 30 lines, celebrating the praises of the great Imam.³ Thereupon Hisham got so offended with Farazdaq that he threw the poet into prison. When the incident was brought to the Imam's notice he sent the poet a present of 12,000 gold pieces, which he refused to take, saying that he had praised the Imam for the sake of God, not for the sake of gold. However, when the Imam said: "We the Ahlulbait (the people of the house of the Prophet) do not receive back what we give

filled with fear and pray to the Lord, saying, 'O Lord I know myself well and Thou knowest me still better. Do not call me to account for what they say of me, make me better than they suppose me to be and hide those faults of mine which they do not know.'

Nahj-ul-Balagha.

1. Matlib-us So'ul 264.

2. He used to feed one hundred families every day. Matalib-us-Suool p. 264.

3. This well-known poem is Justly admired for its energetic style, grandeur of expression and truth of sentiment. It generally forms part of Arabic literary course in India and elsewhere.

away," the poet accepted the gift. This anecdote is significant. It informs us of the Imam's bounty and of the respect in which he was held by the Moslems in general, and throws light on the Omyyade policy of keeping the masses ignorant of the rights and privileges of the house of the Prophet.

Traits in which he resembled his grandfather. It has been observed by Imam Jafar-us-Sadiq, that Ali, the commander of the faithful, never tasted what was forbidden, throughout his life; that when he was given a choice between two things, and found that the more difficult of the two was agreeable to God, he adopted the difficult one; that none, except him, had the strength to worship like the Apostle of God; that when worshipping, he looked like a man detained between Paradise and Hell; that to win divine approbation he emancipated one thousand necks (slaves) out of his personal property, that his own diet and that of his family consisted of olive oil, vinegar, and dates; that his apparel was made of the coarsest material, and if he found the sleeves too long, he cut them short with a pair of scissors, and that none of the Ahlulbait resembled him more than his grandson, Ali the son of Husain (peace be on them all.)

His tenderness of conscience and humility The following anecdote is an admirable instance of his tenderness of conscience and humility 'I saw', says Taoos, 'Imam Zain-ul-abdin praying in the Baitul Haram (the mosque of Kaabah) and weeping. I went to him' and said "Son of the Apostle of God, you have three things to secure you from fear, why do you weep?" "What are those three things?" he enquired "Firstly", said I, "you are the son of the Lord's Apostle, secondly, your grandsire's intercession, and thirdly, God's mercy." "These do not assure me", replied he, "firstly, because, on the day of resurrection God will not enquire about consanguinity, for He says, 'The ties of kindred between them (men) shall cease;'¹ Secondly because the Prophet will intercede only for those approved by God, for He hath said, 'And no plea shall they offer save for whom He pleaseth'² thirdly, the Lord hath said, 'Verily the mercy of God is nigh unto the righteous,'"³ Thus we see that in spite of, having a pure conscience and perfect confidence in the grace of God, he never allowed himself to feel too secure,—the true attitude of the pious and lowly in heart. It is owing to this attitude of mind that his prayers abound in expression of fervid earnestness, ardent devotion and sincere humility, to be found perhaps, nowhere else.

His learning As to his learning and wisdom, it has been observed, that he was the most eminent 'Faqih' (jurist) of his age. Besides a small collection of short, didactic, poetical pieces, ascribed to him, his sermons preached on different occasions and his prayers bear testimony to his deep knowledge of human nature, morals and theology. His speech in Damsacus, in utter

1. A verse from the Qoran. II-166
 2. A verse from the Qoran. XXI-28
 3. A verse from the Qoran. VII-56

disregard of Yazid's threats, is a good specimen of his oratorical powers, and affords an unquestionable proof of his indomitable courage and presence of mind. "Such souls when they appear," says Emerson, "are the Imperial Guard of Virtue, the perpetual reserve, the dictators of fortune. One need not praise their courage—they are the heart and soul of nature."

These detached anecdotes do not aim at presenting a perfect biographical sketch, for, it may be said, that after the tragedy of Karbala the Imam's outward life had not in it many events. Their sole object is to enable the reader to get as complete a view as possible, of his excellent character. Of course in the prayers themselves, we may find, a pretty complete "Spiritual" biography of our hero.

Suffering cause of moral excellence If suffering can make a man advance towards moral perfection, as has been the experience of some of the most eminent sages, then certainly, he was one of the most perfect of men; for, history shows that his share of suffering and sorrow, was superlatively abundant. But let it be borne in mind that a man's innocence is not to be condemned by afflictions.

The name of the book. The "Sahifat-ul-Kamilah" (complete scripture) is a collection of the liturgical utterances of the fourth Imam. It has been so named in order to distinguish it from certain incomplete versions, (e. g. the version current among the Zaidis of Yemen) which were circulated in the days before the invention of the printing press. Great souls and learned divines have treasured its sublime words in their staggeringly prodigious memories, and repeated them in their most fervent prayers. They have often referred to this book as the "Zaboer-e-Al-e-Muhammad" (Psalms of Muhammad's grandson) and the "Injeel-e-Ahl-e-Bait (Gospel of the Prophet's House).

The life of the Fourth Imam shows us his exceptional engrossment in prayers and meditations, which won for him the distinctive titles, "Zain-ul-Abidin" and "Syed-us-Sajideen"—the Ornament of Worshippers; the Prince of Adorers. For although each and everyone of the Twelve Imams was outstanding in his devotion to prayer, the mysterious Hand of Destiny had so modelled the circumstances of Imam Zain-ul-Abideen's life as to make them a fertile ground for the exuberance of that divine contemplation and sublime meditation of which the Sahifat-ul-Kamilah is the fruit.

Every night he used to rise from his bed after midnight and spend the remaining hours of darkness in rubbing his face upon the ground and praising and glorifying God. Once when fire broke out in his house, he remained praying and adoring the Almighty completely heedless of the imminent danger. When the fire had been put out, he completed his usual prayers and was told of the incident, he said, "Fear of the Fire of Hell made me oblivious of this earthly fire."

At the age of twenty-two, we see him suffering from a malignant fever which undermined his health so far as to deprive him from seeking the honour of martyrdom with his father at Karbala. What could the invalid do without food, drink or medicine, except sustain himself by patience and prayer? Immediately after the martyrdom of Imam Husain, we find him a captive, treading barefoot along the thorny path from Karbala to Kufa, from Kufa to Damascus overburdened with heavy chains, bemoaning at each step his sad plight, as he held the rope of a train of camels carrying upon their bare backs his widowed mother, his bereaved aunts and sisters and the helpless orphans of his kith and kin—prisoners all! The malady persists; he still suffers from fever, while the stinging lash bites through his flesh, the iron fetters press against his bones and he is goaded on by piercing spears.

If proof be demanded of the efficiency of prayer or for its power to fortify the mortal soul in facing the most barbarous torture with courage and hope, one single chapter from the life of the ailing Imam can furnish ample proof thereof. Nothing but faith in the Justice and Goodness of God could strengthen anyone to endure the tortures, insults and abuses that were heaped upon the patient Imam in his long sojourn as a prisoner of the tyrant Yazid.

Providence had spared him to proclaim before the world the irreparable injury inflicted by his persecutors and to put his torturers to shame. How honourably he acquitted himself of this painful duty is borne out by the lofty, impassioned and sober addresses delivered by him in the court of Damascus. Should any Arabic scholar be led to doubt the genuineness of the *Sahifat-ul-Kamilah*, all he need do is to compare the style of these prayers with that of his sermons as recorded in many reliable books of history. Such a comparison will show at once that the two bear the impress of a common authorship.

The last phase of Imam Zain-ul-Abideen's life unfolds another set of heart-rending circumstances. He survived thirty-four years after the tragic Day of Karbala to weep for the innocent blood of all those who were near and dear to him. The houses once occupied by the worthiest sons of Hashim were now desolate. The Imam cried when he saw a lamb being led by a butcher for slaughter, he even wept to see a cup of water, for it reminded him of the three days of hunger and thirst endured by the martyrs in the furnace-like desert. But even his tears were sermons, and throughout his secluded life in Medina, he wasted not a moment but continued the great task of guidance towards the right path. Amid the general depression and demoralisation caused by the ruthless tyranny of the Umayyad rulers, the moral teachings of the Prophet of Islam were being rapidly forgotten and the spirit of the great faith was withering away. The Imam's purpose in life was neither vengeance nor the seizure of political power. His object was only to keep the spark of spiritual life glowing and the torch of guidance burning. He acquitted himself admirably of this task through the unobjectionable medium of a book containing his prayers and meditations. His

sermons, addresses, even his conversations, were constantly being watched by the jealous Umayyad rulers, but prayers were among the only things which aroused no suspicion, and so the Imam employed this mode of imparting to his followers the knowledge of the true faith. Nevertheless, such was the dread of persecution that even these prayers and hymns were not readily disclosed by those who possessed the manuscripts unless they made sure that the person who asked for them was not a wolf in sheep's clothing. That fact is illustrated by the traditional preface which is usually appended to the *Sahifat-ul-Kamilah*, to show the source wherefrom it is derived.

In contemplating the traditional introduction, we are afforded a glimpse of the precarious condition of the Shias throughout the dark eras of persecution. In those Dark Ages, when the Umayyad and Abbasid tyrants held sway over a mighty Empire there was no crime more reprehensible—no sin more unforgivable than adherence to the Imam descended from the Prophet of Islam. This hostility towards the children of the Prophet appears all the more ironical when we come to think that the very source and fountainhead from which these potentates pretended to derive their authority was the Prophet Muhammad, whose descendants and followers were thus mercilessly tortured. Shias were burnt, tortured, slaughtered, buried alive. Their books were consigned to the flames; their houses were pillaged, and plundered, and they were compelled to keep their real beliefs to themselves. The provisions of the law of *taqayya* (dissimulation) being applied as a means of self-defense, ninety-nine out of every hundred Shias observed them so strictly that even their wives and children remained ignorant of their true beliefs. Under these circumstances it is not at all surprising that a large amount of material concerning the religious aspect of their lives has been irretrievably lost. Indeed, the amazing fact is that a single follower of the Ahl-e-Bait, a single principle of the Shia creed, or a single tradition of the Imams should have survived the merciless oppression and wholesale genocide perpetrated by the blood-thirsty rulers and their minions.

If the facts related in the traditional introduction are accepted, the scholars of the East and West will have to revise their views regarding the earliest books of the Muslims, as the tradition therein contained shows that the book (*Sahifat-ul-Kamila*) had been committed to writing in the lifetime of Imam Zain-ul-Abidin (d. 95 A. H. 713 A. D.). It must therefore be accorded a place among the earliest books of Islam. Ibn-e-Shahr Ashob writes on page I, of his *Ma'alim-ul-Ulama*. "According to Ghazzali, the first book in Islam is the work of Ibn-e-Juraih of Mekka, containing traditions of Mujahid and 'Ata relating to the exegesis of the Quran and the accounts of Hadith; the next book is by Mu'ammarr ibn-e-Rashid as-Sighani? then comes the *Muwatta* by Malik ibn-e-Anas; then the *Jame'* by Sufian-ath-Thauri. But the truth of the matter is that the first writer in Islam is Amir-ul-Mominin 'Ali (alaih-is-salam)

who compiled the Book of Allah (i. e. the Quran); the next is Salman al Farsi; then Abu Zar al-Ghifari; then Asbagh-ibn-e-Nabatah; then Abdullah ibn-e-Abi Rafe; and then Imam Zain-ul-Abidin (alaih-is-salam) author of the Sahifat-ul-Kamila."

This remarkable passage from the pen of ibn-e-Shahr Ashob reveals the astonishing fact that Salman al Farsi, Abu Zar al Ghifari and Abdullah ibn-e-Abi Rafi were among the first writers of books in Islam. These notable companions of the Prophet (razi Allaho anhum) flourished much earlier than any of the writers named by Ghazzali, viz, Ibn-e-Juraih (d. 155 A. H./771 A. D.), Malik ibn-e-Anas (179 A. H. 794 A. D.), and Sufian ath-Thauri (D. 161 A. H./777 A. D.). It also proves that the books of the earlier writers must have perished during the persecution of Shias and the destruction of Shia literature, as no trace of any of them is to be found today. Moreover, it is not astonishing that Ghazaali, who is well known for his bigotry and prejudice against the Shias, should have overlooked or ignored the existence of the works mentioned by Ibne-e-Shahr Ashob. At any rate Ghazzali's information on the subject seems to be prima facie inaccurate as he even ignores the Seerat by Ibn-e-Is'haq (d. 150 A. H./766 A. D.) which is one of the source-books of Ibn-e-Hisham (d. 151 A. H./767 A. D.).¹

The learned Ibn-e-Shahr Ashob too, seems to have overlooked the work of Saleem ibn-e-Qais al Hilali, which dates earlier than the Sahifat-ul-Kamila. Saleem's book has been described as the "Abjad-esh-Shia's (The A. B. C. of Shiaism) and the Sirro Al-e-Muhammed (The Secret Doctrine of Muhammad's Children). The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Imams have verified its authenticity. It is mentioned in the "Fihrsit" by Ibn-e-Nadeem and in the "Mahasin-ul-Wasael" by Qazi Badr-uddin (d. 779 A. H/ 1376 A. D.) as the first book of the Shias, and has been published in the Matba'-e-Haidari at Najaf.

As regards the collection of the addresses, writing and sayings of Amir-ul-Mominin Ali (alaih-is-salam) known as the Nahjhaul-ul-Balagha and of his prayers known as Sahifat-ul-Alaviyah, though these were delivered, written and spoken at a much earlier date, they were not collected and compiled in the form of books until much later. Hence, they are not included among the earliest books. But the Sahifat-ul-Kamilah is rightly classed among the earliest books of the Muslims.

It is related to us² by the noblest Syed Syed Najm-uddin Baha-ush-Sharaf Abul Hasan Muhammad Ibn-e-Hasan ibn-e-Ahmad ibn-e-Ali ibn-e-Muhammad ibn-e-Umar ibn-e-Yahya al Alavi al Husaini³ (may Allah have mercy on him) saying that "I was informed be the Shaikh as-Sa'yed Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn-e-Ahmad ibn-e-Shahryar the Treasurer of Amir-ul-Mominin Ali ibn-e-Abi Talib (alaih-issalam)

1. See Journal of Semetic Studies, Monograph No. 1, "New Light on the life of Muhammad" by Alfred Guillaume, published by Manchester University Press, about 1960.

2. The initial expositor of the tradition, while giving the whole chain of reporters does not reveal his
(Continued p. 16)

in the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, 516 A. H. who read it out to him and I heard it, from the most truthful Shaikh Abu Mansur Muhammad ibn-e-Muhammad ibn-e-Ahmad

(continued from previous page)

own name, thus leaving his identity to be discovered by research. The question is: Who is the person who says, "It is related to us"? Most of all authorities hold this person to be Hibat-Ullah ibn-e-Hamid al Hilli (d. 609 A. H./1211 A. D.), though some of them hold that the person is Ibn-us-Sukoon Ali ibn-e-Mohammad Al-Hilli, while other incline to the view that he is Shaikh Arabi ibn-e-Musafir al-'Ibadi (See History of the Sahifat-ul-Kamila in Urdu, by Maulana Mirza Ahmad Hasan Saheb Kazimaini, pub. Nizami Press Lucknow.)

3. Several other sources are mentioned in various books which establish that the Sahifa is vouched by several independent series of reporters and that it has come down to us in its original form from Imam Zain-ul-Abidin Ali ibn-ul-Husain alaihim-us-salam. To mention all these sources would be to overburden this short preface unnecessarily. Those who wish to study the various sources may refer to the History of the Sahifa referred to above.

One of these chains of reporters may however be mentioned here, as recorded in Behar-ul-Anwar, Vol. 25, p. 157:—

Amir Majid b. Jalaluddin Muhammad al Husaini ad Deshtaki writes in his *ijaza* (certificate) to his pupil Mulla Muhammad Shafi in 1087 A. H./1676 A. D. that he derived the contents of the book (Sahifat-ul-Kamila) from his father Muhaqqiq Nizamuddin Ahmad who learnt from his father Mu'izzuddin Ibrahim, who learnt from his father Salam-ullah, who learnt from his father Emad-uddin Masood who learnt from his father Sadruddin who learnt from his father Ghayas-uddin Mansoor, who learnt from his father Sadruddin Muhammad, who learnt from his father Ibrahim, who learnt from his father Muhammad, who learnt from his father Umairi, who learnt from his father Hasan, who learnt from his father Husain, who learnt from his father Ali, who learnt from his father Muhammad, who learnt from his father Ali who learnt from his father Ja'far who learnt from his father Ahmad, who learnt from his father Ja'far, who learnt from his father Muhammad, who learnt from his father Zaid ash-Shaheed who learnt from his father Imam Zain-ul-Abidin Ali ibn-ul-Husain alaihim-us-salam the contents of this book.

As regards Ameer-ur-Roosa Hibat-ullah ibn-e-Hamid al Hilli, he was the pupil of Shaikh Fikhar ibn-e-Ma'ad al-Moosvi (d. 630 A. H./1222 A. D.) and was a great jurist and man of letters. The father of Shaheed-ul-Awwal Tajuddin b. Mo'aiya namely Jalaluddin Abu Ja'far Qasm b. Mo'aiyya received a certificate from Ameer ur Roosa in his own handwriting bearing his signature, dated 603 A. H. This certificate was inscribed on a page of the Sahifa in the handwriting of Ibn-us-Sukoon, to the effect that Jalaluddin Abu Ja'far Qasm b. Mo'aiya has correctly read this Sahifa under my instructions and I have related to him the source thereof as derived by me from Baha ush-Sharaf Muhammad ibn-e-Hasan ibn-e-Ahmad*"

The great divine Meer Baqir-e-Damad writes in his "Ta'leeqat": "The authenticity of the Sahifat-ul-Kamila is established beyond doubt by consistent evidence from all sources" (ref. MS in the Nasiriya Library, Lucknow). The chain of reporters usually given in the book is adopted merely because it has been customary to do so, but really requires no chain of reporters.

Our learned contemporary, Muhammad Mishkat is of the opinion that: The derivation of the Sahifat-ul-Kamila is *mutawatir*, i. e. corroborated unanimously from different sources." (vide his Preface to the Sahifa, page "jim").

Allama Shahabuddin Najafi writes in his *Istidrak* p. "Kaf-jim":—"Apart from the Imamia Isna Asharia sect, the Zaidia and Ismailia are also agreed regarding the full corroboration of the Sahifat-ul-Kamila and they have written several commentaries and marginal notes thereon."

ibn-e-'abdul-Azizal- 'Ukbari al Mu'addil (may Allah have mercy on him) who said that it was related to him by the Sharif Abu 'Abdullah Ja'far ibn-e-Muhammad ibn-e-Ja'far ibn-e-Hasan ibn-e-Imam Hasan ibn-e-Amir-ul-Mominin 'Ali ibn-e-Abi Talib (alaihim-us-salam) who said that it was related to him by 'Abdullah-ibn-e-Umar ibn-e-Khattab az-Zaiyat in the year 265 A. H. who said that it was related to him by his maternal uncle, Ali ibn-e No'man the most learned, who said that it was related to him by 'Umair-ibn-e-Mutawakkil ath-Thaqafi of Balkh having heard it from his father, Mutawakkilibn-e-Haroon, who related as follows:—

"I met Yahya, the son of Zaid, the son of Ali¹ (peace be on them) after his father, Zaid, had been slain, and he was going to Khorasan. I greeted him, and after returning the greeting he asked, "Whence comest thou?"

"From the pilgrimage," said I.

He then questioned me about his family and about the sons of his uncles who resided at Medina, and particularly enquired about Ja'far the son of Muhammad² (peace be on them), and I gave him their tidings and told him of their sorrow for his father, Zaid³

Then he said to me, "It was my uncle, Muhammad the son of Ali⁴ who dissuaded my father from rising against the ruling power, and foretold that if he revolted and left Medina, his undertaking would not prosper. But, tell me, did you see my cousin Ja'far the son of Muhammad (peace be on them)?"

"Yes," answered I.

"Did you hear him mention anything concerning my affairs?"

"Yes," replied I.

"What was the occasion of his remembering me?"

"Let me be your sacrifice," said I, "I am loth to divulge what I heard from him."

At once, Yahya ibn-e-Zaid, guessing the purpose of my secret, rejoined, "Thinkest thou that I am terrified of death?" Tell me plainly what you have heard from him."

So I said, "I heard the Imam say that thou shalt be killed and crucified, even as they father was killed and crucified".

1. i. e. Hazrat Imam Zain-ul-Abedin Ali-ibn-ul-Husain, alaih-is-salam, the author of these prayers.
2. i. e. Hazrat Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq alaih-is-salam, the sixth Imam.
3. i. e. Zaid-ash-Shaheed, son of Imam Zain-ul-Abedin alaih-is-salam. His mother was Umm-e-walad. He was eminent for his piety and learning and for his chivalry and nobility. Although the Zaidis look upon him as their Imam, he himself was a follower of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq. He was killed in a battle against the Umayyad Hisham ibn-Abd-ul-Malik, and, after burial, his body was disinterred, crucified and burnt and the ashes were scattered to the winds by the beastly Umayyads.
4. i. e. the fifth Imam, Muhammad al-Baqir alaih-is-salam.

On hearing this, the brave Yahya turned pale, and quoted the Holy Quran, saying, "What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm, for with Him is the Source of the Book (of Destiny)."¹ O Mutawakkil, verily, the Almighty has aided us in this affair,² and he has bestowed upon us knowledge and the sword. Both of these belong to us, while He has distinguished our cousins with knowledge alone."

I replied, "May I die for you; Verily, I find men more inclined towards your cousin, Ja'far (peace be on him) than towards you or your father."

He answered, "Yes, the reason is that my uncle, Muhammad the son of Ali (peace be on him) and his son Ja'far invite men towards life, while we invite them towards death."

"O descendant of the Prophet," said I, pressing my point, "are they more learned or you?"

At this, he sat with head bowed in meditation for a long time, and then answered. "We are all learned, but, they know all that we know, whilst we do not know all they know."

Then Yahya asked me, "O Mutawakkil, have you written down anything you have heard from my cousin?"

"Yes," replied I, and disclosed to him many items of knowledge. Then I showed him a prayer which Abu Abdullah³ (peace be on him) had dictated to me, saying that it had been dictated to him by his father, Muhammad ibn-e-Ali al-Baqir (alaihim-us-salam) and that it was one of the prayers of his father Ali ibn-ul-Husain (alaihim-us-salam)—a prayer of the Sahifat-ul-Kamila.

Yahya read the prayer from beginning to end and then asked me, "Have I your permission to copy it?"

I replied, "Descendant of the Prophet, need you ask permission for what is your own?"

"Behold," said Yahya, "I will show you the complete book of prayers which my father preserved from his father, and concerning which my father enjoined upon me by will, to guard it carefully and to deny it to the undeserving."

"Thereupon," says Mutawakkil, "I stood up before him and kissed his forehead, and said, 'By the Lord, O son of the Apostle of God, I seek nearness unto God by loving and obeying you, and I fervently hope that He will bless me with your love in my life and in my death.'"

1. Holy Quran, XIII 30.

2. The war of vengeance which Yahya was going to wage against the Umayyads.

3. i. e. Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (alaihim-is-salam.)

Then he handed over the writing which I had given to him to a boy who was with him, and said, "transcribe this prayer in a clear and beautiful hand and show it to me, so that I may learn it by heart, for I had asked Ja'far¹ aforetime to let me have it, but he denied it to me."

'On hearing this,' continues Mutawakkil, 'I regretted what I had done, and did not know how to undo it, for I had given the book to Yahya because Abu Abdullah (i. e. Imam Ja'far Sadiq a. s.) had not forbidden me to give it to anybody, but now I was told that the Imam had refused to give it to Yahya.'

'Then Yahya called for a bag, and took out from it a book which was covered and sealed; he examined the seal and kissed it with tears in his eyes; then he broke the seal and opened the book, and spreading its pages before him, he caressed it with his face and eyes, saying, "If thou hadst not mentioned the prophecy of my cousin that I shall be killed and crucified, verily, I would never have parted with this book, and I would never have given it to thee. But I know that my cousin's words are always true and he has derived the knowledge of the future from his ancestors, and that his predictions are bound to be fulfilled. So I am afraid lest such a treasure of divine knowledge might fall into the hands of Bani Umayyah, who might conceal it, and exploit it for their own selfish ends. Therefore, take it from me and guard it with thy life, as a sacred trust, to be delivered after the fulfilment of God's decree concerning that tribe (i. e. the Bani Umayyah) and myself, to Muhammad and Ibrahim the sons of Abdullah-il-Husain the son of Imam Hasan, the son of Ali, peace be on them; for they shall take up this matter (i. e. the Jihad against the murderers of the Prophet's children) after me."

Mutawakkil says, "I took the book and kept it and when I came to know that Yahya had been killed, I went to Madina, and visited Abu Abdullah (Imam Jafar Sadiq) and narrated to him Yahya's conversation; on hearing which, he was overpowered by emotions and wept saying, "God bless my cousin and join him with his holy fore-fathers. By the Lord, O Mutawakkil, nothing prevented me from giving him the prayer but what he feared concerning the book of his father. Where is the book?" "Here it is," said I.

He then opened it and remarked, "By God, this is the writing of my uncle, Zaid, and the prayer of my grand-father Ali, ibnul Husain (peace be on them)."

Then he said to his sons "Arise, O Ismail, and fetch me the prayers which I entrusted to your care and protection". So Ismail stood up and brought a book like the book given to me by Yahya. Abu Abdullah (Imam Jafar Sadiq) then kissed it and touched it with his eyes saying "This is the handwriting of my father, to the dictation of my grand-father (peace be on them) having been written in my presence."

"Son of the Apostle of God," said I, "will you permit me to compare it with Yahya's copy?" He permitted me to do so, saying, "I find thee worthy of it."

1. Yahya ibn Zaid, being closely related to Imam Ja'far Sadiq refers to him in this familiar strain.

I then compared the books, and found them to be identical, word for word and letter for letter. Then I begged (Hazrat) Abu Abdullah's permission to make over the book to the legatees, and he said, "Verily, God commands you to restore trust unto the owners thereof. So hand over the book to them."

The book was then delivered by Mutawakkil to the legatees in the Imam's presence, and when they had gone away, he related to Mutwakkil a tradition of the Holy Prophet concerning the domination of the tribe Bani Umayyah, the persecution of the Ahl-ul-Bait (house of the Prophet and the cruelties which their followers were to suffer under their rule."

'After this,' says Mutawakkil, 'Abu Abdullah (on whom be peace dictated the prayers to me, and there were seventy-five chapters, of which eleven were lost, and more than sixty remained with me'.

Several other series of reporters and sources of derivation are mentioned in various books, which go to show how widely accepted it is that the Sahifat-ul-Kamila has come down to us in its original form from Imam Zain-ul-Abidin, Ali Ibn-ul-Husain alaih-is-salam). One of these corroborative sources is mentioned in the footnote on pp. 16 Other sources are omitted as their inclusion would unnecessarily over-burden this short perface.

Corroboration from other liturgical collections. Among the learned Shia divines who have acknowledged the authenticity of the *Sahifa*, mention may be made of—

- (1) Shaikh Mufid; author of the 'Irshad' (d. 413 A. H./1025 A. D.)
- (2) His contemporary; Shaikh Ali b. Muhammad at Khazzat-al-Qummi author of *Kifayat ul Athar*, a pupil of Shaikh Saduq;
- (3) Shaikh ut Ta'efa Abu Jafar Tusi (d. 460 AH/1060 A. D.;
- (4) Abul 'Abbas Najjashi, author of the 'Rijal' (d. 450 A. H. 1057 A. D.)
- (5) Mulla Muhammad Taqi Majlisi I; and
- (6) Mulla Mohammad Baqir Majlisi II

Besides, many of the liturgical collections of the Shias contain *duas* from the Sahifat-ul-Kamilah, e. g. :—

- (a) *Misbahul Mutahajjid* by the Shaikh-ut-Taefa contains prayers Nos. 6,32,42,43,44,45,46 and 48;
- (b) Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Rawindi (d. 573-1176 A. D.) has copied in his *Prayer Book* the prayers Nos 11,15 and 40;
- (c) Syed Ibn-e-Baqi (d. 653 A. H.1254 A. D.) writes duas Nos. 6,32,43,44,45,46 and 48;

- (d) The *Iqbal* of Syed Razi-uddin ibne Taoos (d. 664 A. H./1264 A. D.)
- (e) Syed Ali, son of the above-named Syed Ibn-e-Taoos incorporates in his *Zawaid ul Fawaid* prayers Nos. 7, 42 and 47;
- (f) Shaikh Muhammad b. Makki, the Shaheed-ul-Awwal (d. 782 A. H./1379 A. D.) records dua No 16; and
- (g) The '*Baladul Ameen*' sets apart a special chapter consisting of duas Nos. 6, 32, and 37, 48.

**Other Collections of
the prayers and
Meditations of the
Fourth Imam**

In addition to the *Sahifatul-Kamila* there are at least eight other collections of the duas of Imam Zain-ul-Abidin (peace be on him), compiled by various learned and reliable authors. These are:—

- (i) *Sahifat us Sania* (the 2nd Sahifa). compiled by Shaikh Muhammad b. ul Hasan at Hurr ul Amili author of '*Wasael ush Shia*'
- (ii) *Sahifat us Salisa* (the 3rd. Sahifa), by Meerza Abdullah Afendi (author of *Ryaz ul Ulama*;
- (iii) *Sahifat ur Rabe'a* (The 4th. Sahifa) by Meerza Husain Noori, Tabarsi author of *Mustadrak ul Wasail*
- (iv) *Sahifat ul Khamisa* (the 5th. Sahifa) by Syed Hasan al Husaini al Ameen, author of *A'yan-ush-Shia'h*,
- (v) *Sahifat us Sadisa* (the 6th, Sahifa) by Shaikh Muhammad Baqir al Birjundi al Qaeni;
- (vi) *Sahifat us Sabe'a* (the 7th. Sahifa) by Shaikh Hadi b. 'Abbas, al-e- Kashiful Ghata, Najafi. author of *Mustadrak e Nahjhul Balagha*;
- (vii) *Sahifat us Samina* (the 8th Sahifa) by Allama Mirza Ali al Husaini al Mar'ashi ush Shahrestani ul Haeri;
- (viii) Another *Sahifa* compiled by Shaikh Muhammad b Muzaffar uz Ziabadi ul Qazwini, a pupil of Shaikh Baha-uddin Amuli', as mentioned by 'Allama Shahabuddin Najafi

As compared to the universally accepted *Sahifatul Kamila*, these later collections are seldom used, through they certainly contain some original duas of the Fourth Imam which are not to be found in the *Sahifat-ul-Kamila*, which is referred to as the *Sahifat ul Oola* (First Sahifa) to distinguish it from later collections.

There are at least 35 different commentaries of the *Sahifat ul Kamilah* by various eminent writers, including Shaikh-e-Kaf'ami (Shaikh Ibrahim b. Ali, d. 868 A. H.), Majlisi ul Awwal (Syed Muhammad Taqi), Majlisi II (Syed Muhammad Baqir), Syed Muhammad Baqir b. Muhammad Damad among the Isna Asharis, and Syed Mohsin b.

**Commentaries and
old Manuscripts**

Qasim ul Yemani of the Zaidi sect. There are bound to be other commentaries and explanations among the Bohras, but unfortunately nothing is known about them.

Among the oldest manuscripts of the Sahifa, the following may be mentioned:—

(1) MS. transcribed by Shaikh Muhammad b Makki. known as the Saheed-e-Awwal in 662 A. H. - 1262 A. D. copied by him from the transcript of Ali b Ahmad us Sadeed. This is preserved in the library of Mumtazul Ulama at Lucknow.

(2) MS. transcribed in 573 A. H/1176 A. D. and compared by Shaikh Muhammed b Idris. This copy bears the certificate of correctness from the pen of Shaikh Muhammad b Idris and contains valuable information about its source and derivation. It is preserved in the Kutub Khaneh Nasiriyyeh at Lucknow;

(3) MS. transcribed by Muhammad b. Ali b. Ibrahim b. Jamhoor known as the Fazil-e-Ahsai. There is a note on the margin of 47th. dua to the effect that the M.S. has been compared with the M.S. of Zain-ud-din Amuli's (2nd. Martyrs') copy six times by several learned men;

(4) M.S. transcribed by Shaikh Ibrahim b. Ali-al-Kaf'ami (author of the *Balad ul Ameen*) having his signature and dated 29th, Shawal, 867 A. H. 1361 A. C,

(5) Besides the above-mentioned MSS, there are about 34 old MSS in the library of Hazrat Imam Raza alaih-is-Salam at Meshhed Iran, particulars whereof may be seen in the handlist of the said library.

The Sahifa is one of the best collections of devotional literature in the world. It has been called, 'The Psalms of the Children of Mohammad' and certainly **Beauty of the Sahifa** ly it is by no means inferior to the immortal utterance of the great **and advantages of** King and Prophet, David of Israel, on whom be peace. The Sahifa **reading it.** reveals to us the loftiness of the mind that produced it, and the deep and exact knowledge of human nature, the fervent devotion, the earnest love, the humility of heart, and the constant sense of moral obligation which were essential parts of the character of Imam Zainul Abidin alaih-is-salam. It also affords us glimpses of his sufferings, trials and tests which are unparalleled in the world's history, and of the patience, hope and fortitude with which he faced them. These are the prayers of one whose father sacrificed himself and his kith and kin for the moral and spiritual welfare of humanity, and did not abandon the remembrance of God even in the last and acutest moments of his agony when he was actually beneath the sword of one of the myrmidons of the tyrant of Damascus. They are the sincere utterances of a devout soul—not the abstruse and incomprehensible sophistries of a metaphysician. They teach men to listen to the silent whispering of their inner-self, and appeal to the head and heart alike. They indicate a very high standard of practical morality by making the reader fully conscious of his responsibilities as a rational being. They contain the gist of religion and morals and, with a few exceptions can be read advantageously by every one having faith in the unity and grace of God.

These prayers are the best guide to moral self-review, the importance of which is too well-known to require any proof. They hold the mirror upto nature, whereby the reader finds his most secret faults and most trivial errors faithfully reflected. If regularly read, they cannot fail to effect continuous and sustained moral improvement, by enabling the reader to form a correct idea of his defects and moderate view of his merits, thereby eradicating vanity and self-conceit.¹ In short, their study is one of the surest ways of cultivating the conscience.

From my own experience, I can bear testimony to the fact that these prayers have been a source of great benefit to me. In sickness, failures, losses and insults—in short, in all temptations, trades and afflictions, they proved a balm to my lacerated heart—a healing ointment to my wounded feelings. They have often solaced my griefs, comforted and calmed my perturbed, distracted mind, and weeded it of grudge, envy and other degrading passions. Some years of continued illness, anxieties and cares, had made me hopeless of accomplishing any good thing in this life, and had the effect of making me averse to every kind of voluntary and useful exertion. I found that my mind had become quite morbid and melancholy. But the regular reading of this prayer-book improved the tone of my mind, and restored me to activity by giving a new direction to my energies. Whenever I read them I am moved to tears, being reminded of my failings and inequities; and I become more charitably disposed towards others, and determined to become a better man and feel considerably relieved.

The most important of all is the fact that these prayers always uplifted my spirits, revived my courage, and guarded me against that most pitiable of all states—despair; and assured me of Divine Grace and Mercy. Hence I can confidently say: 'Reader, if you will do the same, your profit will be as great as mine. Therefore pray without ceasing and keep yourself in an attitude of reverential dependance on the Supreme Source of all Good'.

But the Sahifa is not merely a book of prayers. It is a testament of life in all its varied aspects. For instance, it expounds the doctrine of Divine Justice and contradicts the erroneous beliefs of the Jabriya sect which held that the Almighty could not be bound by the concept of goodness or justice. This belief became very popular under the Umayyads, and so the Imam was bound to contradict it and show the right path. The correct concept of God is indicated in the first dua and in the duas of morning and evening and of repentance.

1. The heart of pride and passion weed, And there the man is pure indeed.

"I have been more and more convinced," says Ruskin, "the more I think of it that, in general, pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes". "It is," says J. K. Evans, "the great master sin of the human heart." "Pride," observes Napoleon Buonaparte, "never listens to the voices of reason, nature or religion". Such being the case, it is our duty to subdue this passion as much as possible, and though we may not quite succeed, we are sure to feel better for the attempt.

The concept of the unblemished and immaculate conduct of the Prophet and Imams is enunciated in the 9th dua, by the following aspiration:—

“O Lord, make our thoughts, feelings, actions, perceptions and words the cause of obedience unto thee, so that no good deed may remain unperformed by us whereby thy rewards can be merited, and no evil deed may be committed by us whereby thy punishment can be merited.”

In the 16th. dua, he says:—

“We have no power except through Thy power, and we have no strength except by Thy help. Therefore help us by Thy support, and strengthen us by Thy strength; blind our eyes to the things that diminish Thy love, and paralyse our limbs, so that we may be incapable of disobeying Thee, and let our thoughts, words and actions be in accordance with Thy commands.”

In the 11th dua he says:—

“.....so that the recording angels should leave us with the record of our misdeeds blank, and the record of our good deeds full.”

In admission of mortal humility as compared to the tremendous obligation owed by us to the ever-present Divine Grace, he says:—

“My Lord, if I were to weep before Thee until my eye-lashes are shed away; and cry until my voice should fail; if I were to stand up in prayer until my feet get swollen; and bow to Thee till my backbone gets disjoined; if I were to offer prostration until my eye-balls came out of their sockets; and if I were to eat the dust all through my life and drink water mixed with ashes till the last breath of my life; and sing Thy praises till my tongue gets tired out, even then I would be unable for shame to lift up mine eyes towards heaven and tell Thee that I had done anything to express my servitude to Thee.”

In the 12th. dua, he again expresses his humility, saying:—

“O Lord, the most lovable of Thy servants is one who has surrendered his pride before Thee; and given up all insistence; and regarded repentance as his duty, so, I am far from being proud, and I seek Thy protection from importunacy; and I seek Thy forgiveness for all my shortcomings; and beg Thy help in all duties which I am too weak to observe.”

On the ideal of self-sacrifice, he says:—

“Lo, we have cast our lives before Thee.”

The duties of a soldier for the cause of Islam are laid down by him in the following words:—

“Show them what they do not see and teach them what they do not know”.....
 “when they face their enemies, let them forget this deceitful world and all its vanity; make them oblivious of all thoughts of wealth; and set before their eyes the vision of Paradise.....”

“Teach him the discipline of shariat; make his judgment sound; keep him away from ostentation and hypocrisy; and make his marching and his halting subservient to Thy will.”

In the 20th. dua, the ideals of good character are thus enumerated:—

“Lord, do not axalt me among men without belittling me in my own estimation, and do not give me any apparent honour without creating within me an equal degree of secret self-contempt.”

In the same dua, he continues:—

“Let me return love for the malice of the malicious; friendship for the jealousy of foes; confidence for the suspicions of the distrustful; kindness in return for the desertion of my relatives; and the sweetness of fearlessness in place of the bitterness of the awe of tyrants. Vouchsafe that I should be sincere to those who oppose me; merciful to those who are merciless towards me, and appreciative of those who malign me. Let me be thankful to those who are kind to me and forgiving to those who are unkind. Let me not be enchanted by looks; grant me self-respect and let me not suffer from the disease of arrogance. Make me obedient to Thee, but do not spoil my services by self-conceit. Make the people enjoy kindness at my hands but do not let me destroy its merit by relating my favours to them. Give me good character and protect me from vanity.”

“O Lord perfect my morals by perpetual obedience, by the companionship of the virtuous and by aloofness and dissociation from the innovators and corrupters of Thy teachings. Do not involve me in sloth or misguidance, or in the things that destroy Thy love, or in association with those who have turned away from Thee, or in separation from those who cling to Thee.”

In the 26th. dua, he says,

“Let me fear my parents and let me be kind to them. Make me enjoy obeying them. Make me prefer their wishes above my wishes and their pleasure, above my pleasure. Let me regard their small kindnesses as great; and my own kindness to them as insignificant in comparison to theirs. O Lord, make me speak softly to them, and make my thoughts pure and my feelings affectionate towards them.”