

Explanation of Du‘ā 1 from Sahīfa – Part 1¹**1. Saheefa Al-Kamilah: The Perfect Epistle by Ahmed H. Sheriff –main points**

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<http://www.imamreza.net/eng/imamreza.php?id=319>

During 1950-60 Khawja Abdul Latif Ansari, the eminent Pakistani scholar and preacher, discussed the glory and high status of the book *Sahifa Al-Kamila*; his experience with an American Christian lady who had come to the East in the course of her research on rituals of prayers by different religions. Whilst in Iran, she had an opportunity of studying the Sahīfa. Being well-versed in the Arabic language, she could easily digest the underlying meaning and interpretation of the invaluable invocations by the Imam. She felt so much impressed and moved that she readily converted to Islam remarking that no other book would surpass this as it contained the supreme possible human approach towards the Creator Allah.

“I have studied this book with utmost care. I have gone through the invocations and supplications with searching eyes. I was stunned by the lofty meanings and deep sense contained therein. 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. To the extent that I have been able to meditate over it, I notice that its words are above those of the created ones and below those of the creator.” Shaykh al-Islam Tantawi Jawhari from Alexandria

As the divinely appointed guide for the Ummah, how could Imam al-Sajjad carry on the dissemination of the knowledge of the faith after Karbala tragedy without endangering his safety and that of his followers? The Imam chose the medium of invocation and supplication to Allah, which proved of lasting effect. What a sagacious and wise step this was to preserve the lofty teachings of Islam!

In order that this holy book is preserved for the benefit of posterity, Imam Zaynul ‘Ābidīn (a) had originally dictated the invocations therein to two of his sons, Mohamed ibn Ali and Zayd ibn Ali. For some years the book was preserved secretly lest it was tampered with. However during the times of Imam Ja‘far Sadiq (a). It was copied and circulated around among the followers of Ahlul Bayt (a).

From in-depth study, the Sahīfa will be found unveiling many secrets of learning and mysteries of knowledge. The heartrending invocations therein inspire a reader to abstain from evil and lean towards virtue and piety. One who recites the invocations with understanding is apt to concentrate his attention towards Allah and attain self-purification and spiritual upliftment.

¹ Explanatory notes prepared by H. Kassamali for ALI 368, September 2016.

Allama Muhammed Taqī Majlisī, the father of the famous Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī was well-known for his piety, excellence of character and his endeavors in the propagation of the traditions of Ahlul Bayt. In his book *Man La Yabdurū al-Faqih*, v. 4, he narrates how in the course of his dreams, he was being guided by the 12th Imam Sahib al-Asr (af) on various knotty questions of jurisprudence and recommendation not to miss the mid-night prayers. 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 Al-Kamila 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.

2. Ten Du'ās for Worldly Needs

Although 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.

3. Alhamdu lillāh in the Holy Quran

Definition of al-Hamd:

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-madb*, but not *al-hamd* because the pearl has not acquired that luster by its own will and power (*Al-Mizān*, 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.

Hadiths on al-Hamdu lillah

Sūratul Fātiha is also known as Sūratul Hamd, “the Chapter of Praise.”

The Prophet is reported to have said, “When you say: *Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds*, you will have thanked God and He will increase your bounty.” 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.

The Prophet has been reported to have said, “There is no way to enumerate the praise due to Thee: Thou art as Thou hast praised Thyself.”

Praise be to God is employed to thank God for an act or event upon its completion. According to traditional Islamic etiquette, whenever one is asked how one is feeling, the correct response should be *Praise be to God*, no matter one’s condition. (*The Study Quran*, p. 6)

Why all praise belongs to Allah?

Allah says: *That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything* (Q 40:62). He 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 (*Al-Mīzān*, ibid)

The Quran also says: *Allah is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names* (20:8); *nd 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 (Ibid, pp. 27 – 28).

Application of the phrase *al-hamdu lillah*

Imam al-Sadiq (a) said: A mule of my father was lost. He said: ‘If Allah brought it back to me, I would thank Him with praises He would be pleased with.’ Shortly afterwards, it was brought before him with his saddle and rein (intact). When he sat on it and arrayed his clothes, he raised his head towards heaven and said: ‘Praise be to Allah.’ He said nothing more. Then he said: ‘I did not omit, nor did I leave out, anything; I have declared that all praises are for Allah, Powerful and Great is He!; because there is no praise but it is included in this (formula).’ (*Al-Mīzān*, v. 1, p. 34).

4. Passages 1 to 5 from Du’ā 1 from the *Sahifa*

Passage 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'.

It is said that the words *amwal* –the first, and *akbir* – the last, in the passage have been taken from Q 57:3 (هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ) – *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: O God, you are the First prior to whom there was nothing; and You the Last after whom nothing exists.

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الْأَوَّلُ فَلَيْسَ قَبْلَكَ شَيْءٌ وَأَنْتَ الْآخِرُ فَلَيْسَ بَعْدَكَ شَيْءٌ

Passage 2:

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.*

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.

Question: How can we worship someone we cannot see and will never see Him?

Passage 3:

ابْتَدَعَ بِقُدْرَتِهِ الْخَلْقَ ابْتِدَاعاً، وَاخْتَرَعَهُمْ عَلَى مَشِيئَتِهِ اخْتِرَاعاً

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.*

The verb *ibtada'a* is the 8th form of the verb *bada'a* (to originate, begin, produce) and it means to originate and invent. 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 this beautifully:

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 (وَاخْتَرَعَهُمْ عَلَى مَشِيئَتِهِ اخْتِرَاعاً).*

Passage 4:

ثُمَّ سَلَكَ بِهِمْ طَرِيقَ إِرَادَتِهِ، وَبَعَثَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ مَحَبَّتِهِ، لَا يَمْلِكُونَ تَأْخِيرًا عَمَّا قَدَّمَ لَهُمْ إِلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
تَقْدُماً 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.*

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 حَلْفَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

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.

Walking on the grass obliterates sadness; why? It is because plants are green. If they were red, they would be hazardous to our nerves. If they were black, they would cause depression. Subhānallāh, even the green color is not the same in all these green plants. It is impossible to enumerate all kinds of fruits and flowers. It is said that in India alone, there are 300 types of mangoes. In the gardens of Paris, there are five thousand types of grapes such these are identified by number; for example Grape No. 1752.

The Quran quotes Nabī Hūd talking to people ‘Ād at 11:56:

إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ ۚ مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

Truly I trust in God, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature that crawls, but He holds it by its forelock. Truly my Lord is upon a straight path.

A commentator says: this is a metaphor to denote that all creatures are under God’s Control and Authority

Most animals can find their ways in dark nights. They can feel the differences of temperature of the road and around it. They are even sensitive towards the very weak ultra-violet lights which are reflected from the road.

All creatures are headed towards Him will love, some with evolutionary guidance, some with instinct guidance, and some with the guidance of wisdom, nature, conscience and Prophethood. All these are just a reflection of His Determination, Love and Affection towards the creatures.

Passage 5:

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 deceiver 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.*

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.

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 وَحِلَّتِ 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)

Moreover, we have been asked to earn lawful earning and avoid unlawful wealth. The Holy Prophet (s) has said:

نِعْمَ الْمَالُ الصَّالِحُ لِلْعَبْدِ الصَّالِحِ

How nice it is for a worthy believer to possess lawful wealth.