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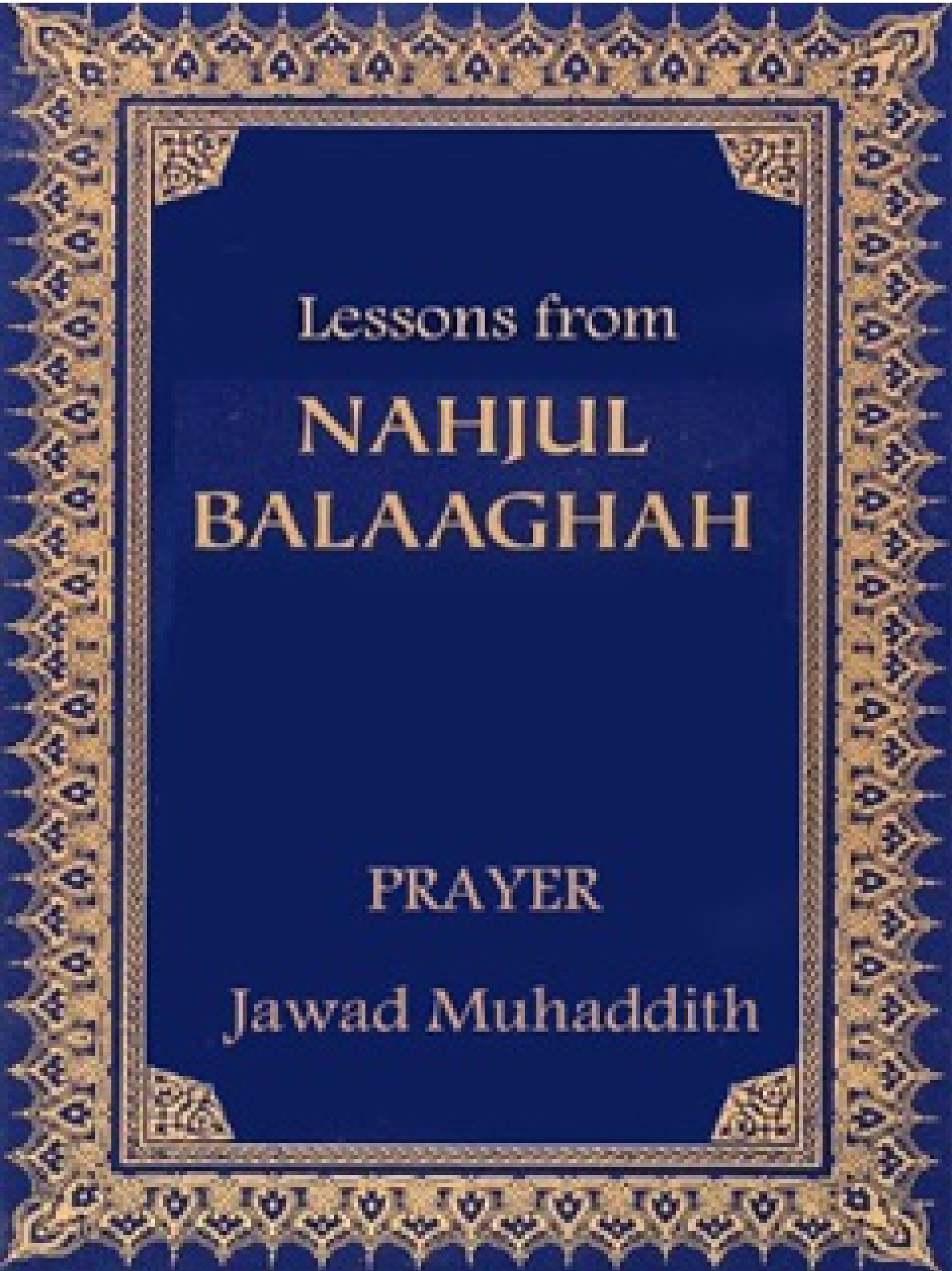


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Lessons from
**NAHJUL
BALAAGHAH**

PRAYER

Jawad Muhaddith

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Lessons from Nahj al Balagha

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Undoubtedly, Nahj al-Balagha, can be compared to an ocean full of gems, that, the more deeply it is dived in, the more valuable lessons and life-creating wisdoms can be gained out of it. For the same reason many thinkers, during ۱۴ centuries have been seeking lessons from the thought school of Amr al-Mu'minn(A.S.). And many books have been written on the exposition of his peerless words

Hadrat Ali(A.S.)'s words both on rational and speculative subjects, are valuable and directive. In the realm of objective affairs, human life, and practical subjects, they are promoting, too. These varied speeches of His Highness have originated from His elevated soul, unique and multi-dimensional personality, about whom the Messenger of Allah(S.A.W.), stated

(۱) «انا مدينة العلم و عليّ بابها»

"I'm the city of knowledge and Ali(A.S.) is a gate to it"

:As Ferdowsi the poet also says

I am city of wisdom, Ali is the gate"

Prophet's word it was, exactly at that date

Honour to Ali, is the Al-Mighty's utterance

(Said the God of goodness, prohibition and fate(۲

p: ۷

۱ - ۱ . ۱۳۷/۳ . al-Mustadrak `ala al-Sahhayn

(Shahname Ferdowsi (Moskow Publication . ۲ - ۲

:As Amir al-Mu'minin Himself also stated

«عَلَّمَنِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ أَلْفَ بَابٍ كُلُّ بَابٍ فَتَحَ أَلْفَ بَابٍ»

God's Messenger(S.A.W.) acquainted me with thousand doors of knowledge and each .door opened thousand new doors to me

Islamic Research Foundation of Astan-e Qods-e Radaw has taken a step, whatever small, to fulfil its great duty "in making Al(A.S.)'s word and character known", has decided to offer some life-creating lessons of to the Nahj al-Balagha youth. Believing that the enlightened words of Hadrat Al(A.S.), the king of speech in an exalted manner is considered as an ideal example in behaving, making a living and social approaches for each and every muslim. So publishing and presenting of such series of lessons, written with a fluent pen and in a brief form can be the torch of way and brightness of .life

The efforts of Hujaj-e Islam, Mr. Muhammad Jawad Nidafat and Mr. Jawad Muhaddith in carrying out the research in order to write the series of these lessons, sincerely are appreciated hope, taking such a step will provide the young generation to get acquainted with gnostic knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt(A.S.) and the eternal book of .Nahj al-Balagha, as well

Among the useful lessons of Nahj al-Balagha, which any of them can be a life programme, prayer (Salat) is one of the most important one

A heart which is negligence of God, will forget both, himself, being as a "servitude" and god, as a "Lord and Master"

Meanwhile, by creating a gap between God and the servant, Satan will get optimum benefit out of it. It will encourage the human being to obey Satan rather than God, and consequently by spreading the dust of negligence over the mirror of his heart. It will separate him from God. Then human being, will dare to commit all kinds of sins

Al(A.S.) is indeed a skilful instructor of mankind. He is the healer of psychological ailments and the one who awakens man from negligence and slumber. He is a veteran guide who directs mankind to the realm of affection, wisdom and obedience

Whoever accepts to be a pupil in Al(A.S.)'s school of thought and hearkens to his advice and follows His guide lines, doubtlessly will find a way out from the straitened circumstances of this world to the spaciousness of hereafter. Then he'll get enough strength to traverse over the uphill of life in order to attain salvation and follow the steps of his Master (the Leader of pious men)

What you read in this book is a portion of Hadrat Al(A.S.)'s directions about prayer (Salat) and servitude, with some more

explanations, just to make the words of Imam more clear and practical in order to
.make better use of them

Some sentences of Nahj al-Balagha along with their translations have been mentioned in the text , some of them have come as a foot-article and among some sentences only to their translations have been reffered. It is just to avoid the book to be a bulky one, at the same time tirsome for those who are not acquainted with Arabic language. The number of letters, hekmahs and sermons mentioned in this book are based on the compy of "Subhi-Salehi" which its numbers don't match with "Fayd al-Islam
.copy

Hope this booklet like the previous ones, will make the wisdom of Nahj al-Balagha popular among the youth and the true followers of Hadrat Al(A.S.). And by promoting it among the Sh`a community specially the youth, Nahj al-Balagha will cease to be in solitude any more and consequently this great book of humanity will encourage and .help every one to establish a vital relationship with the Almighty the Creator

Heart is a place for "God" to abide

Not for the strangers to live and hide

So, we are sitting at the door to wath out

For, He is the "Concealor", our fear is justified

He is the Merciful but we are despair

He is the Beneficient, alas we don't care

For, we repent and feel ourselves petty

In presence of the Concealor, which is not fair

Servitude, the Secret of Flowering

A blossom grows and flourishes when it faces the radiation of glowing sun, so is the bud of human beings' nature. It flourishes and takes distance from dirt and darkness when it becomes satiated from the main source of worship and receives the warmth of Almighty's affection, then it becomes divine and gets decorated with all the virtues.

Flourishing the "flower of existence" in the "garden of life" needs programme and it is (to perform prayers (Salat

One can substitute the "fear of God" with all other fears and also can substitute "servitude of God" with all kinds of bondages and petty praises due to one's need. Accepting to be servant of God grants man "freedom". The one, who is the servant of God, cannot be a slave for others. Whoever surrenders himself to Almighty in his supplication and prayers, relies upon the incomparable Creator, stretches his needy hand towards the court of that Needless and kneels down at present of that Glorious and Celestial Power out of his obediency and politeness, then he attains "Immensity", who only a true believer deserves it. Through immensity he understands the "philosophy of creation" then he attains "eternal life". Since heaven and its endless blessings belong to those who have passed the examination of "being servitude", successfully

Having the morale of surrender and being servitude of God, is the sign of having a healthy nature and right instruction, and lack of these spirits are the evidences for over-domination of Satan on the realm of self. So one will have the feeling of being refused and incoherent. Satan itself is a rebellion and striving to invite human

beings for disobedience and aberration from God's path, just to increase the number
of its partner

Whatever has been assigned in the religions as a duty for the followers, is considered
as the syllables of this lesson which has been conveyed by the Almighty to His
messengers

Whoever is more observant to obligations and discards the prohibited ones, will gain
better marks and consequently he is considered to be more obedient. This is the only
criteria which shouldn't be neglected. Amr al-Mu'minn(A.S.) states

لا عباده كأداء الفرائض (أ) .(No worship is like the discharge of obligation.)

Whoever is indifferent to God's obligation and is unaware of that Islamic principle
"admonishing fellow believers to do right and to avoid sin". How can he claim to be
"the servant of God? From a servant nothing is expected but "obediency

Blessed are those who consider "the servitude of God" as a credit and honour, as
their Master being Imam Al(A.S.) did. BabaTaher in a poem regarding it says

Happy the ones who are praising Thee

Enjoying to worship God silently

Eternal paradise is their meeting place

Proceeding their prayers, continuously

The obvious symbol of these criteria is prayer (Salat). It is a style of worship which
God has made it obligatory for every one. Salat is considered to be a religious duty
and indeed it is the best means to come closer to the Al-mighty

p: ١٢

Since, in Nahj al-Balagha submission of God, performing of prayers and obligations as well as promotion of this culture is seriously emphasized, then the elevated position of .praying in Hadarat Al(A.S.)'s look can be observed clearly

How can a person be in track of growth, at the same time he rejects praying and
?invocation in this desert of existence

?Why are you stubborn and so proud

Oh, never, as a muslim, It is not allowed

?Why are you discouraged and depressed

Invite yourself to the feast of God, as a guest

Come closer to Him, that is all what we need

Enjoy, seek happiness, under the God's heed

You are a tiny creature in the realm of God

You need to grow, flourish, O, like a bud

Let, be opened a new door to the sun

-Pray to the Lord of universe, the one

Who, bestowed you the life and existence

And honoured you with a divine substance

Elevate your "Self", stand like a cypress

Enter to God's court, get joyfully His bless

Pray and supplicate the Lord as a needy one

Embrace His blessings, O, as a greedy one

When the heart becomes the abiding place of God's affection and all the fears and hopes of one are focussed towards God's threshold, then he will enjoy a state of humbleness while worshiping of God. Humbleness is a kind of perception of God's

immensity, showing courtesy to that divine power, confessing His sovereignty and
.consequently to have inner awareness towards that great deity

Humble praying along with an awareness and God fearing sense is the sign of higher wisdom of a worshiper. Hadarat Al(A.S.) considers it as one of the indications of piety and in further explanation of pious men's qualities, besides "strength in belief", he
.counts "humbleness in prayer", as well

To hold vigil at night, supplication to God, reciting Qur'an with special awareness and witnessing hell and heaven with discerning eyes and requesting God for releasing him from fire of hell, in his invocations, are the signs of a humble and pious man. In the sermon of Mottaqeen, Imam Al(A.S.) in tracing the specialities of such humble persons
:states the following words

During a night they are upstanding on their feet reading portions of the Qur'an and" reciting it in well-measured way, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking buy it the cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse creating eagerness (for paradise) they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turns towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. And when they come across averse which contains fear (of Hell) they bend the ears of their hearts towards it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate themselves on their fore-heads, their palms, their knees and their toes, and
[\(beseech Allah, the Sublime for their deliverance."](#)[\(1](#)

p: ۱۴

This kind of performance of praying at present of God and conversing with Him is considered to be the language of human being's nature. It is cleansing the soul in the spring of spirituality and to be well co-ordinated with all parts and parcels of universe. Submission of God releases one from slavery of mankind, makes him needless and grants him honour. The one who stands humble in front of God and stretches his needy hand only towards Him, puts his face on soil and in the niche of humbleness breaks down the figure of vanity, with whip of prostration slashes on self-conceit, .deserves to be a worshiper

The one who doesn't experience the position of slavery, cannot attain the state of "freedom". In divine threshold, whoever is more humble and submissive, finds himself closer to God. Since we all are needy, but He is the absolute power and endless honour, so our relationship with him is the relation of our "servitude" to His .""Lordship

In Hadarat Al(A.S.)'s speeches three kinds of prayers have been mentioned. They are, business minded prayer, slavery-like prayer and prayer of nobles which is based on their higher knowledge of God and also due to His bounties. The third one is the best one, since it is observed by the sages and fascinated ones. In this regard Amr al-Mu'minn(A.S.) states

A group of people worship Allah out of desire for reward, surely, this is the worship of traders. Another group worship Allah out of fear, this is the worship of slaves. Still [\(another group worship Allah out of gratefulness, this is the worship of free men.\)](#)

:In another speech He also states

Even if Allah had not warned of chastisement on those disobedient to Him, it would be
obligatory by way of gratefulness for His favours that He should not be disobeyed. (1)

Gratitudes of God is the sign of human being's wisdom. A supplication which is
observed out of gratefulness and insight, certainly it will enjoy humility, awareness
and longing for submission

Universe is a vast altar of indigence. All creation including angels, cherubims, flowers,
plants and pines are engaged with humble worshipping of the Mighty Creator in this
great temple of existence

Where are we situated in this system and how we are going to be harmonized with
this collection of existence

.Universe is vast like an extended temple

A galaxi of stars shining, numerous and ample

Spacious sky like an altar, blue and white

Moon and the sun like a lantern looking bright

The extensive earth as a rug of praying

The dawn is approaching but the "awareness", delaying

Delay not, rise again and take the ablution

Stand erect, towards Ka`ba, remove the pollution

Look, it is like an amorous breeze of spring

In the early dawn, listen, awareness is whispering

The call of "ecstasy" and "love", the heart's fruit

"A bright mirror in your front, will show the "truth

p: ۱۶

.Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah ۲۹۰ .۱ -۱

Call the Creator, deeply, He is the Lord of universe

Put on "humility" as a garment, it is fair

Enter the God's court with a rapture, no despair

Put aside the "self" the "people", open your eyes

[Pray spiritually, you are indeed in God's paradise](#)

Purity in Prayer

God demands the sincere actions and pure prayers which is free of deception, hypocrisy and showing off. The value of prayer is also based on "sincerity" and .abstaining from dissimulation and pretention

To worship God in order to invite the others' attention or to make people to have a good opinion about him, anyhow to be considered as a man of belief, these all are dissimulation or polytheism in worship. These kinds of worship neither bring the one closer to God nor make him deserve to receive God's reward in hereafter, on the contrary he has committed a sin which should be questioned about it. In Nahj al-Balagha, it is stated that

A man will not be benefitted even though he exerts himself and acts sincerely if he leaves this world to meet Allah with one of these acts without repenting, namely that [he believed in a partner with Allah during his obligatory worship](#)

A hypocritic prayer is a void action and has no value by God, so, one shouldn't expect .any heavenly reward for it

Those, whose mode of prayer differ while being in solitude or in public before the .people, are involved in moral defect and loss

And they won't be benefitted from such kind of hypocritic praying. Regarding this
:matter Amir al-Mu'minin(A.S.) states

He whose hidden position is not different from his open position, and whose action is
not different from his words, has discharged his obligation and his worship is pure.⁽¹⁾

A person can cope with purity in prayer that he observes Omnipresent God everywhere, and expects reward only from Him, as well. So whoever is more believer in God and in more spiritual, his prayer and submission will be purer, too. Having two different attitudes in hidden and open is the sign of detachment from purity. Hadarat Amir(A.S.) even commands to the man in charge of collecting alm also, states that, to give priority to honesty and avoid pretentious praying which is done for the sake of
:people. In a letter His Highness commands

He also orders him that whatever he does in obedience to Allah openly should not be
different from what he does secretly.⁽²⁾

:As Hafez Shirazi the poet also says

.when they find a secrecy, they act controversially ...

The true worship of God enlightens one's inner self and encourages him to be closer to God, while the dissimulated one, not only keeps him away from God but also causes
:dullness in his heart and consequently he will fall in trap of sin. As Sa`dShrazsays

A so-called spiritual man who renounces the world

-But not for having Godly intention, then

p: ١٨

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter ٢٦ .١ -١

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter ٢٦ .٢ -٢

[Poor him! what will he observe in a dark mirror? \(1\)](#)

In Imam's words, purity in prayer and action also is considered to be very important. For, to refine our action is more important than doing it. For the same reason to purify our prayers from undivine intentions is rather a difficult task. Since it is considered to be a "purity of intention" and Satan's main effort is just do mix the purity of one's intention to hypocrisy, and consequently by causing confusion, deprive him from attaining divine reward

Freshness to Pray

Praying is the expression of submission in the presence of Lord. Whatever more bumility is involved in this invocation, it will be more creative at the same time will cause nearness to God. On this account, the most prosperous time should be allocated for it. And in giving priority of time to do the works, the most hilarious time should be granted to the submission of God. Imam Al(A.S.)states

Keep for yourself the better and greater portion of these periods for the worship of Allah, although all these items are for Allah provided the intention is pure and the [subjects prosper thereby. \(2\)](#)

.This, requires an exact and clear programming for prayers

The heart is sometimes alert and sometimes reluctant. Performing prayers are also obligatory and sometimes

recommended. If there is freshness and vigilance for submission, one can perform ,supererogations besides the obligatory ones, and

p: ۱۹

.Gulistan, ۱th chapter, Hekmah ۶۲ .۱ -۱

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter ۵۳ .۲ -۲

if heart doesn't have enough preparedness and is not prosperous, it is better to stop the praying after doing the obligatory ones, otherwise it will cause frustration, Imam Al(A.S.)'s advice regarding this one is

Sometimes the hearts move forward and sometimes they move backward. When they move forward get them to perform the optionals (as well), but when they move backward keep them confined to obligatories only.

One shouldn't impose praying on himself since it will lose its effect. The imposed prayer, either on oneself or on the others causes disappointment and aversion. Imam Al(A.S.)'s suggestions regarding this matter also prove the fact that when He states

.When optional issues stand in the way of obligatories, abandon them

Supererogatory worship cannot bring about nearness to Allah if it hampers the obligatory

The recommended prayers have been suggested when they do not mar the obligations and don't cause reluctance, as well. The quest for submission and concern for prayer not only makes it effective but also guarantees its endurance and perpetuation

It doesn't mean that when there is no inclination for praying just to ignore it completely and interrupt the relationship with God, but one needs to provide a suitable ground for it spiritually to make the "self" alert and enthusiastic. The interpretation of Imam Al(A.S.) from this issue is such that He advises "Cheat yourself", it means, prepare the ground gradually with proper

p: ۲۰

plans and programmes. For instance by addressing to yourself that "you are not obliged to recite more Qur'an or perform that prayer, just read daily one page of Qur'an or perform two rak`at of supererogatory prayer". In this way your "self" neither will be

frightened nor will have the feeling of burden, then you'll succeed to increase its :willingness for observing much more than its duty. Such are the words of His Highness

Deceive your heart into worshipping, persuade it and do not force it. Engage it (in worshipping) when it is free and merry, except as regards the obligations enjoined upon you, for they should not be neglected and must be performed at the five [\(times.\)](#)

As in the sports, one shouldn't overpractice, (more than his ability), otherwise instead of growing their muscles they will be worn out, in praying also one should consider his capacity and preparedness, just to increase the delight for praying by permanent .practice, then there will be a guarantee for its continuation

The important matter is that a muslim should show endeavourance for "praying of God" and should try to set it in daily schedule as an instructional and refining .programme and assign a proper time for it

Then, one can use this fondness of God and daily prayer as a means of his soul's elevation, in order to seek affinity with God and keep aloof from Satan's temptations. And if this spiritual void is not filled with prayer, then, Satan will be in track to influence

p: ٢١

.the realm of one's life and thought

:Regarding daily programmes of praying, Imam Al(A.S.) states

The believer's time has three periods: The period when he is in communion with Allah; the period when he manages for his livelihood; and the period when he is free to [enjoy what is lawful and pleasant.](#)^(۱)

To appropriate especial time for praying is delightful at the same time, it is provider of one's spiritual need. So in daily programming a fresh time and proper position ought to be allotted to it. In prophet's biography also it is narrated that while His presence at home, He used to divide His time to three portions which one portion was assigned to [God.](#)^(۲)

Such a motto is the indication of considering the importance of having "communion with God" from the side of a "servant". In the life motto of God's patrons and Immaculate Imams also such hours like having spiritual retreat, invocation, holding vigil [and lovely solitudes were available in some parts of their occasions \(day and night](#)

Self – conceit, Impediment of Prayer

When something is contaminated, it will be spoiled and consequently it will not only be of no use but also harmful. Self-conceit and vanity are the impediment of prayer which will appear after prayer. They will hinder one from more performance of praying, since one will feel himself in the highest level of servitude. A selfish person looks down upon others, so there will

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Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah ۳۹۰ .۱ -۱

.Makarim al-Akhlaq, page ۱۳ .۲ -۲

be a gap between such a person with others. Such so-called spiritual men will be deprived of God's reward and will not be benefitted from their own prayers, too, due to vanity, self exaggeration and their snobbish attitudes or being indifferent to others. By having these kinds of negative qualities, all their good deeds also will be eradicated. The deplorable story of Iblis which was expelled from God's court, has its roots in self-conceit, as well. Satan due to his excessive praying disobeyed God's command to prostrate on Adam, since he considered himself superior to Him

:Amir al-Mu'minin(A.S.) regarding this matter states

You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, Although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years- whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by [committing a similar disobedience?](#)

Self-conceit means, whatever good deeds we have observed as a duty of being servitude, to think high of them and consider them especial means, for having superiority feeling. The result of having such an extraordinary state of mind will cause decrease in worship as well as performing good deeds

:(According to the utterance of our Master Imam Al(A.S

[Vanity prevents progress.](#)

While spiritual men, seekers and sages neglect their all long-life

p: ۲۳

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon ۱۹۲ .۱ -۱

.Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah ۱۶۷ .۲ -۲

effort of praying and all the time are worried about their shortcomings in carrying out the duty of being a servitude it is to be wondered how ordinary people due to their some little performance of religious duties are caught in self-deceit! And due to participation in some religious sessions, like going to Haj or performing some rak`ah of prayer, for these kinds of reasons they waste away their spiritual harvests! As Jam :the poet says

Not every worshiper is, God worshiper

Self-centered one is, self worshiper

God chooses the one among His servants

Who considers his "self" "naught" as a worshiper

Attribution of Lovers

Though Imam Al(A.S.) himself is leader of spirituals, pride of prostrators, an example of devotees and many books should be written about his unique prayers, still it is delightful to hear the attribution of God's servants and mood of mad worshipers from .his language

His Highness Imam Al(A.S.) has reproach from weak attitudes of some of his companions and their feebleness in falling in love with God, as well. And in order to create among them more eagerness for praying and paying close attention to the Lord, he recollects Holy Prophet's Companians, hoping this recollection will kindle the :light of enthusiasm in their hearts, and states

I have seen the companions of the Prophet but I do not find anyone resembling them. They began the day with dust on the hair and face (in hardship of life) and passed the night in prostration and standing in prayers. Sometimes they put down

their foreheads and sometimes their cheeks. With the recollection of their resurrection it seemed as though they stood on live coal. It seemed that in between their eyes there were signs like knees of goats, resulting from long prostrations. When Allah was mentioned their eyes flowed freely till their shirt collars were drenched. They trembled for fear of punishment and hope of reward as the tree
(resembles on the day of stormy wind.)

In another statement in describing the spiritual status of his loyal companions who had attained martyrdom in previous battles. Regarding them he states

Their eyes have turned white with weeping. Their bellies are emaciated because of fasting. Their lips are dry because of (constant) praying. Their colour is pale because
(of wake-fulness. Their faces bear the dust of God-fearing.)

Man claims to be higher than angels but the way angels worship God, can be an example for human beings and it has especial manifestation in Imam's speech. His Highness in order to inflame the eagerness of invocation in man's heart utters such a
:words towards almighty God

They are on their places (distinct) from thee and in their positions near Thee. Their desires are concentrated in Thee. Their worship for Thee is much. Their neglect from Thy command is little. If they witness what remains hidden about Thee they would regard their deeds as very little they would criticise themselves and would realize that they didnot worship Thee according to Thy right for being worshiped and did not

[O](#) obey Thee as Thou hast the right for being obeyed.[\(1\)](#)

Whatever one's knowledge and fondness towards God's grandeur increases in his heart and mind, his prayers and good deeds will appear to be inadequate. That is how angels consider their prayers insufficient. And if God's patrons always admit their negligence in their prayers and invocations and seek forgiveness, it is due to their
.better perception of God's grandeur

The rebels repent for their sins

But saints bemoan for their prayers

Though God's angels are always busy with prayers, Imam Al(A.S.) defines them in this way that, some of them are continuously in prostration, some group of them in the position of bending down which never they get tired of it and at the same time they
.won't have the sensation of self-importance and consider their prayers negligible

.They do not entertain pride so as to make much of their acts"

Their humility before the glory of Allah does not allow them to esteem their own
[virtues."](#)[\(2\)](#)

The immaculate Imam who himself is the ringleader of spiritual men and an example for hermits, at presence of God considers His prayers to be very mean and from
:longness of way with little provisions, recollects with regret and sigh by uttering

[Alas! the provision is little, the way is long."](#)[\(3\)](#)

One of the best factors of being instructed and trained is the study of great men's
biography who possessed inner purity, good

p: ۲۶

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon ۱۰۹ .۱ -۱

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon ۹۱ .۲ -۲

.Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah ۷۷ .۳ -۳

moral and pleasant status of performing prayers. For, to be inspired by God's lovers, it is useful to be acquainted with their biographies. Our Imams also used to recollect Imam Al(A.S.)'s excessive prayers by stating who the one to perform prayers like him is

Salat, The Superme Prayer

Humility in presence of "immensity" has been concealed in human being's nature. Invocation in presence of Lord is something innate for human beings and his spiritual pleasure or psychological serenity depends on his prayers and invocation. Salat is the secret of this humility

Granting gratitudes and showing humility to the immense source of power, wisdom and discernment, all are observed in the form of Salat. He is the only Lord who is considered as a Haven in the battle fields, a Hope for the fighters of holy wars, Inspiring source of patience and perseverance in the storm of evidences and hardships, a Shelter of afflicteds in difficulties and A Confident in the solitudes of life and nostalgia of the soul

As Qur'an advises, one should seek help from "Salat" and "Patience". [\(1\)](#) The one who is alien to Salat, how can face the hardships and dangers of life with a high spirit? The importance of this especial prayer is obviously shown in the word of Imam Al(A.S.) and his definition of Salat also expresses the same especiality

p: ۲۷

A: Salat as a Pillar of Religion

His Highness in his last days of lifetime, while being in the bed of martyrdom, advised his sons and everybody to some affairs which one of them was Salat and in his testament he states

Fear Allah and keep Him in view in the matter of prayer, because it is the pillar of your religion.

No tent can stay up except it has a pillar. If the pillar of any building is ruined it will collapse. The role of prayer in the group of religions instructions is same as that pillar which religion has been stabilized on it

The source of your religion is the pure heart

The horizons are beneath the faith, be smart

Al(A.S.) stated, (Fear) the Lord, regarding pray

Pillar of your religion, O, people, is the Salat

B: Salat as an Axis of all Actions

In many narrations the importance of Salat has been stated in this way if one's prayer accepted, his all other actions will be accepted, as well. If one's prayer is refused his all other actions will be so. Hadarat Al(A.S.) expresses the idea in this way

Remember that every act of yours is dependent on your prayer.

C: The symbol of religion

Every school of thought has its own symbol and slogan. Salat is the flag, symbol and essence of the religion of Islam

This fact which has appeared in narrations in different ways, in

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter ۴۷ .۱ -۱

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter ۲۷ .۲ -۲

:Nahj al-Balagha also, has been mentioned as follows

(Establishment of prayer is the basis of community.)

D:As a means of approaching to God

In a sermon His Highness counts the pillars of religion. And among the best deeds which are considered to be a means of approach to God, besides having belief, sincerity and indulging oneself in the holy war, He includes as Salat as well. That is the reason this religious obligation has got more importance

:In one of the sermons He states

The best means by which seekers of nearness to Allah, the Glorified, the Exalted, seek nearness, is the belief in Him and His prophet, fighting in His cause, for it is high ...pinnacle of Islam(Y)....and establishment of prayer for it is the basis of community

Salat is a response to the proclamation of the Holy Prophets Abraham (the friend of God) and His Highness Mohammad(S.A.W.). It is to be in harmony with all the universe which all of them with their innate languages are busy in glorifying God, constantly and silently. Qiblah and Ka`ba are the secret of unity and prayer is the pavilion of this harmony

The right of Salat ought to be recognised and fulfilled. It is so enormous, consequently difficult to be fulfilled unless by keeping diligence and perseverance.

:Imam Al(A.S.) regarding this states

Its obligation is recognized by those believers whom neither the adornment of property nor the coolness of the eyes produced by children can turn away from it.

Allah, the Glorified, says: Men

p: ۲۹

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon ۱۱۰ .۱-۱

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon ۱۱۰ .۲-۲

whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverteth from the remembrance of Allah
(and constancy in prayer and paying the poor-rate...)

(Qur'an, ۲۴:۳۷)...

Salat is the appreciation of spiritual, wise and pious men from that peerless Lord for His affluence, whom the all hearts are in the pledge of His affection. And no man left to drink from that "spring of His recollection" unless he has a mean knowledge about Him.

Be attached not, to any one but Lord

Without His affection you will feel bored

"Detach yourself from "self" and "mass

Earn divine credit and try to amass

You are the servant of the benevolent God

Avoid decaying, try to flourish like a bud

Negligence is a trap, set on your way

Remove it by morning grief or a mid-night pray

Fulfill His gratitudes by prosterating at early dawn

Eternal is His bliss try to make it your own

The spirit of Salat

Devotion and Salat have their own forms and spirits. As the growing of body depends on the soul, the vitality and effectiveness of Salat depends on its spirit, as well. The spirit of prayer means thriving of heart, awareness, feeling of being servitude, ,expression of demand, being aware of one's position in the presence of God

humility, being polite inward and outward. Otherwise by lacking of these qualities in our prayer only a lifeless form remains. As some people's gain from fasting is only suffering from hunger and thirst, in the same manner, their achievements from performing Salat will be just physical tiredness. Salat plays the least training role on their life, for, they have not succeeded to ascend even one step from this spiritual ladder in order to seek nearness to God. As Amir al-Mu'minin(A.S.) states

There is many an offerer of prayers whose prayer is no better than wakefulness and hardship. The sleep as well as the eating and drinking of the intelligent (God-knowing) person is far better.

A prayer which is performed out of one's intuitive faith along with discernment, will certainly be a creative one, at the same time will enjoy the guarantee for endurance. Imam Al(A.S.) states

(Sleeping in a state of firm belief is better than praying in a state of doubtfulness.)

The element of confidence provides life to the prayer but doubtful questioning ruins it like a leprocy. If a prayerful doesn't heed the spirit of prayer, its truth and inner manners as he does the external ones such as cleanliness of cloth, the right recitation of the verses, surely he has lost the game. Not only he will not be benefitted from his prayer but also he will remain futile and unfortunate

The spirit of prayer is recollection of God and His bounties as well as recollection of oneself and his wants. As it is stated in the

p: ۳۱

۱- ۱۴۵ . Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah

۲- ۹۷ . Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah

:Holy Qur'an

Offer prayers perfectly for My Remembrance.

Recollection of God in the prayer prevents one from committing sin or to be indulged
in the unlawful matters

So there will be no benefit to praise God superficially without heeding Him inwardly. It
: is stated in Nahj al-Balagha

Certainly Allah the Glorified, the Sublime, has made His remembrance the light for
hearts...

Since praying is recollection of God, so it will enlighten the heart. It is incompatible to
.be gloomy at the same time to be a prayerful

Performing Salat means approaching the God's threshold. If one's face is towards
Qibla but his heart is not in the same direction his prayer will lack the spirit. As
:Mowlawi states

At your presence if I have no response and heed

I will not count my prayer the real one, indeed

The intention is my prayers to be out of sight

To reveal the anguish of disunion and its height

?Will it be accepted just to stand and pray

!To sit towards niche but fall in market's prey

To face Thee no more desire remained in me

For my false prayers I am ashamed to be

:Salat is a means of affinity to God. As His Highness states

For God – fearing prayers is a means of seeking nearness to Allah(ﷻ); In another
speech He considers both prayer and Zakat

p: ۳۲

.Holy Qur'an, Taha, ۱۴.۱ –۱

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon ۲۲۲.۲ –۲

.hamkeh ,ahgalaB-la jhaN ۶۳۱. –۳

Islamic Tax) the means of seeking nearness to God,⁽¹⁾ though one is a divine programme and related to God and another is a socio-economical programme and related to people. But if prayer didn't induce us to be near to God and couldn't create divine qualities, it means we have not attained the spirit of a creative prayer. Prayer links man with God, sublimates the soul and increases divine wisdom. It cracks down the temptations and proud, disappoints Iblis and finally habituates the heart to speak with God. These are great secrets of performing prayer as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and narrations which prevent one from indecency. Otherwise one will lose the right direction though his face is apparently towards Qiblah. Regarding this the poet says

,Negligence has made us to miss Qiblah, alas

.In a place where there are many indicators

The Spring of Purity

Prayer is the ladder of soul's elevation towards the divine kingdom of heaven. It makes us to enter to the threshold of the owner of immensity and bounties five times a day just to cleanse our soul and body from pollutions. It takes the one to the main source of favor to grant him inner humility and enlighten him in presence of the Lord

Regarding prayer and its effect and ability in rubbing off the sin and releasing one from bondage of self, Imam Al(A.S.) states

Certainly, prayer drops out sins like the dropping of leaves (of

p: ۳۳

[\(trees\)](#) and removes them as ropes are removed from the necks of cattles. [\(1\)](#)

In proceeding of his speech he refers to the beautiful example of His Highness the Messenger of God who considers the prayer as a factor for cleaning the heart and :soul, and states

The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessing of Allah be upon Him and His descendants, likened it to a hot bath situated at the door of a person who bathes in it [\(five times a day. Will then any dirt remain on him?\)](#) [\(2\)](#)

In this expression, prayer has been likened to a spring with these effects: It is like a hot water which is accessible permanently to every one daily five times to bathe in it. This permanency is the main factor of cleansing of every kinds of pollution including .spiritual, moral, negligence, rebellion and proud

God likes pure people and seekers of purity as well, prayer is the spring of purity. As much we perform prayers, we'll obtain more purity and also will become closer to God. For that reason His Highness suggests us to consider it essential to meditate on it, perform it as much as possible and seek nearness to God with it. Imam Al(A.S.) :states

Pledge Yourself with prayer and remain steady on it; offer prayers as much as [\(possible and seek nearness \(of Allah\) through it.\)](#) [\(3\)](#)

,If proud and self-admiration are considered a moral pollution

p: ۳۴

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon, ۱۹۹ .۱ -۱

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon, ۱۹۹ .۲ -۲

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon, ۱۹۹ .۳ -۳

so prayer is regarded as the cleanser of rust of proud as well. His Highness in the
:phylosophy of law of prayer indicates to this point and states

Salat (prayer) for purification from vanity" (1..."

The one who is interested in his soul's purity not only will not ignore this spring of
purity, but also will be benefitted more from it, in order to clean the dust of negligence
from his heart. It is to avoid being placed in the vain circle of repetition,
disappointment and also to release himself from self, seek nearness of God and make
.use of intimacy of his Lord as a means to remove psychological ailments

:Regarding this matter the poet says

Pleasant is a heart-burn in the prayers

The lap is open to the float of your tears

Lodge in the Light, let your heart soar aloft

Avoid dull praying, be attentive with eyes and ears (2

Shall say: we were not of those who offered the regular prayers (to Allah)! (2

The important benefit of prayer is to break down the vanity of human beings and
obliging him to humility and humbleness in order to express his servitude to presence
.of the Lord of universe

In one of the longest sermon of Nahj al-Balagha which is famous to al-Qasi`ah
sermon, and its major points are about servitude of God, avoiding vanity and self-
admiration, His Highness Amir al-Mu'minin(A.S.) indicates to some prayers of Allah

p: ۳۵

1- Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah ۲۵۲ .۱ -۱

2- rawizbaS dmaH. -۲

3- Nahj al-Balagha, sermon, ۱۹۹ .۲ -۳

including haj, fasting and Salat) and points out their rules in breaking the horn of vanity and indicates its effect in cleansing the rust of pride, treating the diseases of self-admiration and providing remedy for prejudice and snobbery. He advises the people to be aware about the ill-fate of haughtiness and introduces it as one of the Satan's great traps which through it, the Satan influences to people heart just to keep them away from divine salvation forever. From Imam Al(A.S.)'s viewpoint, vanity is an agony which aims at the wise men through their knowledge and also the poor men .through their shabbiness and make them helpless

:Then His Highness states

This is the thing against which Allah has protected His" Creatures who are believers" by means of prayers and alms-giving and suffering the hardships of fasting in the days in which it has been made obligatory in order to give their limbs peacefulness, to cast fear in their eyes, to make their spirits humble, to give thier hearts humility, and to remove haughtiness from them. All this is achieved through the covering of their delicate cheeks with dust in humility, prostrating their main limbs on the ground in humbleness and retracting of their bellies so as to reach to their backs due to fasting by way of lowliness (before Allah), besides giving all sorts of products of the earth to the needy and the destitute by way of alms. Look what there is in these acts by way of curbing

(the appearance of pride and suppressing the traces of vanity." (1)

Wonderful ! how this heart is, and its nature is also amazing, since Satan is striving to influence this port to creat a base for his aims in it. The heart is a palace if you don't be its king then you will be a captive of it. If you do not invite God into the palace, satan will occupy it, if you do not gaurd it against the soldiers of negligence, then despotic .soul will influence into it and after conquering will deliver it to satan

Prayer is to rub the face on the soil in presence of the greatness of Almighty. Whoever expresses his servitude to God, he will never be contempteD by any petty men. The :poet says

One will go blind in his eyes

Due to vanity alas, he sighs

God made the prayers obligatory

.O, men pray, then haughtiness dies

Endeavours to Prayer

To consider something very important indicates its value. The evidence supporting the importance of prayers in Imam Al(A.S.)'s view is His advice about prayers including its performing time, concerning others in group prayer, making effort to establish it, to uphold and meditate on it, to prevent it being spoild or become a means of reluctance .for others

Quranic conception of prayer is to "establish" it. It is different with more repeatition of it. To perform prayer means to make it alive in muslims personal and social life. Imam Al(A.S.) uses similar

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interpretation when He recollects His martyred friends, as well. He calls them with sorrow and regret stating that they were men of thoughtfulness, recitation of Qur'an [\(1\)](#) and establishing of God's obligation. [\(1\)](#)

In a letter to Muhammad ibn Ab Bakr, the governor of Egypt, He writes and emphasizes on establishment of prayer on its own proper time. neither to perform it :in time due to having liesure nor delay in it due to occupations, He states

Say the prayers at the appointed time. Do not say it" earlier"

[\(2\)](#) for the sake of (available) leisure nor delay it on account of pre-occupation." [\(2\)](#)

Perpetual participation on Friday congregation also is the sign of perseverance to establish the prayer. Amr al-Mu'minn(A.S.) advices one of his companions named :""Harith - Hamadan

Don't undertake a journey of Friday until you have attended"

the prayer, except when you are setting out to holy war, which is necessary to start earlier. [\(3\)](#) So the importance of Friday prayer and its creative role in training and .inducing awareness can be understood from the advice

It is necessary to be considerate to old men and women in group praying till they perform their prayer along with the Imam of the prayer, this matter is famous to "Mura`at adaf Ma'mumn", and the Holy Prophet has advised Imam Al(A.S.) in observing it and he has advised the same to his Governors, as well. In one case he

p: ٣٨

.Nahj al-Balagha, sermon, ١٨٢ .١ -١

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter, ٢٧ .٢ -٢

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter, ٦٩ .٣ -٣

writes letters to the governors while mentioning the right time of performing prayers in the morning, at noon, afternoon, evening and night time, he instructs them to care about the weakest people and avoiding to be a source of trouble to them or spoiling [\(their prayers in the occasion of group prayer. \(1\)](#)

:In another case His Highness instructs Malik -al- Ashtar in that famous protocol as

When you lead the prayers for the people it should be neither boring nor wastful, because among the people there are sick as well as those who have needs of their own. When the messenger of Allah(S.A.W.) sent me to Yemen I enquired how should I offer prayers with them and he replied, "say the prayers as the weakest of them [\(would say, and be considerate to the believers." \(2\)](#)

By this way the reverence of prayers will be uplifted and people will show more willingness to perform it, at the same time by granting more importance to prayer and being punctual to its proper time the general culture of people to establish it will be elevated, as well

As stated by the narrations, it is obvious Salat is the flag of Islam, and much higher it is hoisted the glory of religion among the followers of Qur'an will increase

Life – Story of Righteous Men

Spiritual monotheist used to love prayer, enjoyed with piety and wisdom, got delighted by performing it and in doing obligations never got satisfied. At the most of there spiritual men

p: ۳۹

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter, ۵۲ .۱ -۱

.Nahj al-Balagha, letter, ۵۳ .۲ -۲

the Holy Prophet was situated, whose endeavourance in establishing prayers Hadarat
:Al(A.S.) has recollected in Nahj al-Balagha By stating

Even after receiving assurance of paradise, the messenger of"

Allah – peace and blessing of Allah be upon Him and His descendants – used to exert
.himself for prayers because of Allah, the Glorified's command

...And enjoin prayer on thy followers and adhere thou steadily unto it

[\(Then the Holy Prophet used to enjoin his followers to prayer and exert himself for it.\)](#)

This is the evidence of enormous toiling for intolerable prayers of the Holy Prophet.
.He used to perform prayers untiring and lovingly without being ever tired or dejected

What an invocations and prayers Imam Al(A.S.) performed himself in the dark night
:and held spiritual solitudes with God! Shahryar the poet says

Ali the king of Arab, at night

Had a divine secret, full of delight

Darkness was only aware of the mystery

The intimacy of God's lion, O, Might

One of the loyal companions of His Highness Imam Al(A.S.) named Dirar ibn Damrah
:describes Imam's intimate ivocations towards God like this

"I stand witness that I have seen him on several occasions"

p: ۴۰

When night had spread and he was standing on the niche of mosque, holding His beard, groaning like a man bitten by a snake and weeping as a grieved man, saying O'world, O'world! Get away from me. Deceive some other person. I have no concern with you. I have divorced you thrice whereafter there is no restitution. Your life is short, your importance is little, the way is long, the journey is far and the goal is hard (to reach)." (1)

This was just one example of his spiritual occasions while having a heart – burn sensation in his prayers. Love of invocation and his past record of being a prayerful is shining in his file, as well. In one of the speeches Imam himself refers to his precedence in accepting Holy Prophet's invitation of Islam and accompanying him in the prayers, states

I am the first leaned, (towards Thee), who heard and responded (to the call of Islam)." (2)
(No one preceded me in prayer (Salat) except the prophet." (2)

In another speech Hadarat Al(A.S.), by mentioning a verse from Qur'an, admires some people, whose even business did not cause negligence in them for remembrance of God or performing prayer. (3)

In past chapter also we learned about Imam's appreciation from the vigilance of piousw men's and their prayers

In the life of such a liberated men prayer has an outstanding and elevated position and it is econsidered as a means of joining

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۱- Nahj al-Balagha, Hekmah ۷۷ .۱

۲- Nahj al-Balagha, sermon, ۱۳۱ .۲

۳- Nahj al-Balagha, sermon, ۱۹۹ .۳

:to the source of Power, Amr al-Mu'minn in one of His speeches states

I am not worried by a fault after which I get time to offer"

(prayer in two units (rak`ah) and beg safety from Allah".[\(1\)](#)

According to this statement, Imam(A.S.) had such a firm confidence to prayer and its role in union with God that even by committing a sin which later on He gets a chance of performing two rak`ah prayer to beg forgiveness, did not worried him

Any how being a servitude of God, the prayerful attains "tranquility", "serenity of self" and "assurance" by the grace of recollecting His name. Among the hardships and storms created by the anxieties, he would safely sit in the boat of invocation, and be .setteled in comfort and stability

When one attained inner peace, he would become steady outwardly, as well. It is not only wine, that causes self-abnegation, drinking a drop of divine wine also will do the same. The one who drinks the wine of "His sweat recollection" will be intoxicated by .God's affection then he will experience the immensity of sea, though he is a drop

In a dark night, if I catch the sight of Friend

I'll avoid gazing at the sun, let the night end

I'll take the ablution from moist of my tears

To His eye-brow the Qiblah I observe my prayers

I'll fly to heaven full of secrets from the nest

p: ۴۲

﴿The fastened wings of devotion to open, is the best﴾

The Last Word

What we learned about prayer upto here were a few draughts from Alaw's school of thought in Nahj al-Balagha . Being in harmony with the master's word our soul got vitality and we listened to His instructions about secrets, manners of prayer and its effect and importance in being servitude of God. But... this is just starting point. The next step is being a practical companion with Nahj al-Balagha and to put its lessons into practice

God is the known and unknown beloved of lovers. His recollection presents a mild spiritual breeze to our hearts' petals, just to refresh them. Those who are eager to enter to this realm should remove the distances and they would experience this spirituality by shedding some tears in their invocations. It is also need to free the grudges sticking in the throat by making Al(A.S.)their companion in the moments of disappointment

God is in favour of "union" why should we cause "disunion"? Why should one be forsaken when he can seek affinity of God by invocation, recitation of Qur'an, praying at dawn or keeping a vigil at night

Whoever is suffering and needs tranquility, he is indeed in search of affection, caressing or dignity. It is better for him to kneel down, put his face on the soil and be in harmony with each part and parcel of universe in the temple of existence in order to call the Almighty, accept to be His servant and enjoy the sweet

p: ۴۳

. "feeling of being "servitude

Come on, whisper the Friend's Name in night's heart

Enlighten the inner-self like a day, let darkness part

Burning tears are the torch, explore the safehold

Rely on the God, feel at home, and be dejected not

Altar is in solitude and darkness, endures

?Will God respond me! will He open the doors

Vigil is in my eye and repentance on my lip

There is no way out, but invocation, of course

Do you smell the fragrance of prayer's orchards with all your being? God is not so
:distant from us. As Sa`d says

The Friend is nearer to me than myself

!What a wonder that I am far away from Him

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلِيسَتْوِيَالَّذِيَتَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِيَتَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

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