

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

And we appointed the Qibla which you formerly observed only that we might see him who follows the messenger, from him who turns on his heels (al Baqarah 2:143)



FACIAL FOCUS

English Version of the Urdu treatise
(Qibla)

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M. A., Ph. D., Gold Medalist

International Series

7

Idara-e-Mas'udia, Karachi
(Islamic Republic of Pakistan)

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In the Name of Allāh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

It is truly said that heart of man rules his body and soul and does not permit any intrusion and when its passage is blocked, it strives to remove and destroy the barrier or gets itself destroyed but it brooks no opposition and forced diversion. Heart and love are synonymous and inseparable. Anything else than true and unbiased love can not find an asylum and sanctuary in the heart. Almost all the actions emanate and take shape from the bounds of the heart and get wide spread in the expanse of the open regions surrounding it. But the heart remains constant at itself to whatever direction is moved in thrust. It is like the *Qibla* in this direction of which all the affairs bow their heads figuratively speaking. A Persian poet confirms this when he says.

دارم دلکے قبلہ نما می خوانمش
رو سوئے او می کند ہر چند کہ می گردانمش

“I have a heart which I call my *Qibla Numa* (an instrument which indicates where the object of my love resides. It keeps its face (direction) in that very particular location whenever I may turn it.”

The same irreversible constancy prevails in the hearts of the devotee pilgrims who have the honour and blessing of offering personal homage when they visit the sacred shrines of the Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ and stand before his lasting paradisaical place (*Mazār-i-Aqdas*) bowing their heads with hands raised as for *Dua*

and *Durūd* or folded as in the *Salāwat*. This is in consonance with the Qur'anic assertion proclaiming that:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا (احزاب : ٥٦)

"Allāh and His angels send greetings and *Salām* (*Durūd-o-salām*) on the Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ: therefore men of faith (*Imān*) you also send greetings and salām on him in the most humble manner".¹

And in response the *Momins* recite incessantly the rites of *Durūd-o-salām*.

There is no reason why this ecstatic sublimation should not be taken place because it is the occasion of the fulfillment of their life long desires and ambitions. Those who see their life's dream come true, they can be praised and congratulated in their this greatest achievement; but there are thousands upon thousands who breathe their last and in worldly sense they seem to remain unaccorded with this great Divine Blessings. Whatever our conjectures may be about these people, nevertheless they are the martyrs of love at the Altars of the Holy Prophet ﷺ through we ordinary mortals may not see them rewarded. Truly speaking, this is the death which the living ones ardently desire to embrace. Another beautiful Persian

¹ Qur'ān, al-Ahzāb, 33:56

couplet has aptly described the blessing of eternal life as a reward for the apparent mortal death!

قسمت نگر کہ کشته شمشیر عشق یافت
مرگے کہ زندگان بدعا آرزو کنند

“Look at the life which the martyr of love receives in lieu of the death, a death which the living ones aspire and pray for.”

But the really fortunate *Momins* have arrived at the holiest of the holy place, though their longings have achieved what these were aspiring for and as matter of course their hearts and minds should now be at rest and be rejoicing the fulfillment of their desire, but, in the world of love and ecstasy rest and comfort is a tabooed privilege. Here in the presence of the beloved, the hearts' pounding and throbbing increase multi-fold and submissive sacrifice gets lost at the altar of love and devotion, because the place which bears delicacy and demands humility under the canopy of the sky, in the presence of the Throne of Almighty.

But the vagaries of human mind are unpredictable, specially of those persons who wield imperial authority. It is ironical that in respect of genuine unbiased and humblest emotion, expression of Love, Regard and Affection by the devotees of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not permitted and the restriction imposed on the people from offering *Salawat-o-salām* by raising their hands in front of the *Mazār-i-Aqdas*. There are government guards deputed

there constantly on the look-out do not hesitate to lower the raised hands by physical force and turn the face of the devotees to the direction of the Holy Ka'aba which is at the southern direction from the Holy *Mazār*. But little the office-bearers realize that physically turning face, the heart remains constant at the fixed place visualizing the grandeur of its centre of attraction namely the Holy Prophet ﷺ and *Mazār-i-Aqdas*. Surely this turning of face compulsively cannot mean deviation from the Love and obeisance of the Holy Prophet Hadrat Muḥammad Mustafa ﷺ which accompany devoted pilgrimage hundreds/thousands of miles away from the kith and kins. So in whatever direction their faces may be turned their hearts and minds remain constant towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ and they pay their homage as assiduously and evenly as ever before. This is what true Love, Affection and Devotion mean and what they stand for.

The word *QIBLA* bear the literary meaning the point toward which face is turned. As the Muslims turn their faces in prayers to the direction in which lies the sacred shrine at Makka so *Bayt-Allāh* is called *Qibla*.

Why no particular direction (location) or symbolic edifice has been declared as the only inalienable command for the purpose of *Qibla* or prayer. The Holy Qur'ān says:

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوْا فِئْتُمْ
وَجْهَ اللَّهِ يُبْقِرُهُ: (١١٥)

"Both the East and the West belong to Allāh; to whichever direction you turn your face, Allāh is there."²

Qur'ān further explains:-

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and West: "³

Looking at the historical background of *Bayt-Allāh Sharīf*, *Khana-i-Ka'aba* or *Haram Sharīf* as it is variously called and venerated, the Holy Qur'ān declares that:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبْرَكًا
وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ○ (ال عمران: 96)

"The sacred Ka'ba was the first and earliest place of worship that was set up for the blessing and the guidance of the peoples (nationals) of the worlds."⁴

After a lapse of centuries when the world was plunged into extreme depth of moral, social and fraternal licentiousness, and when the honour, blood etc. had lost all values and worth, the Divine Mercy dawned upon the sinking humanity, it was revealed as a command to trace the foundation place of the Holy Ka'aba before it was uplifted to heaven and build a new Divine House of Wor-

² Baqara 2:115

³ Baqara 2:177

⁴ Qur'ān. Al-i-Imrān 3:96

ship after laying foundation at the appointed place. The Holy Qur'an says:

وَإِذِ رَفَعَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ
 مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ○ (بقرة: ۱۲۷)

“And remember the time when the Apostles Ibrahim and Ismail ؑ were raising the Foundation of the House of Allāh and were praying, O our Lord! accept this endeavors of ours (as worthy of Your Approbation); You are the Best Hearer and the Knower.”

5

The occasion was not only the Foundation Ceremony of House of Allāh by great Apostles Haḍrat Ibrahim ؑ and Haḍrat Ismail ؑ they were also praying Almighty Allāh:

رَبَّنَا وَإِنَّا فِيهِمْ لَفِي سُؤَالٍ فَتَمِّمْهُمْ سُلُوكَهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ
 الْكَتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَزَكِّهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ○
 (بقرة: ۱۲۹)

“To raise an Apostle among the people who would rehearse the Signs of Allāh unto them, and teach them the Book (of Guidance) and Wisdom and purify them; You are full of Might and Wisdom”.⁶

⁵ Qur'an, al-Baqara, 2:127

⁶ Qur'an, al-Baqara, 2:129

Through the whole deliberations not only was the House of Allāh (Ka'ba) being constructed afresh, but a grand and Most Auspicious Tiding was also been conveyed to the people that in course of time an Apostle of Allāh would come and change and revolutionize the entire complexion of the near and distant place all over the world. He was to be the Final and the Greatest of all apostles/prophets sent onto the world down the long long channel of history since the inception of prophethood with Haḍrat Adam ﷺ millions and millions years before.

The expected arrival of the Holy Prophet ﷺ indicated the Divine Dispensation that henceforth the world (universe) will not face catastrophic destruction as happened to the numerous communities of the earlier apostles of Allāh. It also promised more and more refinement, progress and prosperity of mankind on earth. The Holy Prophet ﷺ himself acknowledged that "I am the prayer of Haḍrat Ibrahim ﷺ" ⁷ which means that not only he knew the prayer of Haḍrat Ibrahim ﷺ he had also the full knowledge of the mission for the betterment of his own community as well as the happiness and prosperity of the rest of mankind till Eternity. His mission consisted in the fulfillment of Haḍrat Ibrahim and Haḍrat Ismail ﷺ and the way to achieve this was through the four Divine ordained steps namely: (1) Rehearsing the signs (revelation) of Allāh (2) imparting education through Divine Books of guidance (3) teach wisdom and (4) purifi-

cation from the filth and uncleanness of infidelity and moral debasement.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was in the prophetic and dynastic lineage of Haḍrat Isma'il ^{عليه السلام} and the *Bayt-Allāh* ever remained fresh in his heart. Therefore when he proclaimed his prophethood in 610 AD and the *Salāwat* was made obligatory to on *Momins* (Believers) the Holy Ka'ba was made the *Qibla* for the Muslims.

After the Ka'ba was declared as the Divinely ordained *Qibla* for the Muslims, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his followers began to offer their prayers at this *Qibla*. At this a peculiar situation arose because now the Muslims and the infidels were both offering worship at the Ka'ba as the *Qibla*. The non-believers were already prostrating in the Ka'ba as their ancestral practice. When the Muslim prostrated and stood in worship towards Ka'ba, it was not clear whether these Believers were prostrating towards Ka'ba in pursuance and obedience to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or to the Ka'ba itself as were doing the infidels. The revelation of the verse:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ اطَّاعَ اللَّهَ (٨٠)

"Whoever obeys the Holy Prophet ﷺ he obeys Allāh the Almighty."⁸ settled the issue.

So long the Holy Prophet ﷺ stayed at Makka, the Ka'ba or *Bayt-Allāh* remained the *Qibla* for the *Momins*. After the Migration (*Hijra*) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in

⁸ Qur'ān, Al-Nisa', 4:80

622 AD, then in the very first year of *Hijrah*, the *Bayt-al-Maqdis* was made the *Qibla* which remained as *Qibla* the next 17 months, and the Muslim Community obeyed the Holy Prophet ﷺ with unswerving faith and loyalty. This demonstrated the sterling qualities of complete obeisance towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ by his Companions and common followers. The Holy Ka'aba which had remained *Qibla* for full thirteen years was left over as such in obedience to the command and to unstinted love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ. All the faces which remained in constant remembrance and devotion of *Bayt-Allāh* for no less than full thirteen years were turned, with least murmur and delay, towards Bayt al-Maqdis.

The Ansars the local settlers of Madina who were affectionately called the Ansars because they had helped Migrating Muslims from Makka in their distress and shelterlessness, (who had recently accepted Islam after leaving Judaism and Christianity) were also offering prayers towards *Bayt-al-Maqdis* alongwith other Muslim brethren. There seemed a sort of consensus among all Muslims of all sectors namely the old inhabitants of Madina (Ansar) fresh arrivals as the migrants or Muhajrin from Makka and the unreliable hypocrites (who posed themselves as Muslims on leaving their ancestral creed of Jewry (Judaism) and the Christianity in offering prayer towards *Bayt-al-Maqdis*.)

But the heart and mind of the Holy Prophet Haqrat Muhammad Mustafā ﷺ fondly longed and inwardly prayed that Ka'ba-Allāh may be revised and restored as the *Qibla* for his Umma. Of course, there must have been

umpteen of desires with the Holy Prophet ﷺ which prompted him to turn his august glance heaven-ward during prayers. Then came the sacred and holy moment when during the course of *Salawat* he once again raised his glance upto the heavens with the same desire in his innocent heart, the verse was suddenly revealed which commanded him to turn his face towards Ka'ba heralding the change of *Qibla*. The verse narrates the fond desire of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the equally affectionate endeavoring response from the Presence of Almighty Allāh; it says:-

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا مَرْقُورٍ
 وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ
 فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ ۗ (البقرة: ١٤٤)

"Surely we have been witnessing your often turning glances (O' Prophet!) towards the heaven. We shall surely allow you to turn your visage to that (direction) which you please. Now, therefore, you turn your visage towards the *Masjid-i-Harām* (Ka'aba) in whatever direction you, (O' Prophet) be and you too (O' men of faith) turn your face, in that direction (Ka'ba) wherever you may be".⁹

اے زہے شان عبدیت تری!
تو جدھر ہے ادھر خدائی ہے

What a grand spectacle of your servitude (O' Prophet) to the Almighty Allāh wherever are (may be). There is also the Divine Presence.

The Divine command for the change of *Qibla* (termed as "*Tahwīl-i-Qibla*" in religious context) served dual purpose in that while it was the manifestation of an unfailing love and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ by the men of Faith, at the same time it also exposed the secretive hypocrisy of that disgruntled influential local elements of the society who were conspiring to seize power and establish their supremacy especially among the new converts (Ansars) and the simplistic population of Madina who were dangling between Faith and Unfaith. Thus the division between the *Momins* and the *Munāfiqs* (hypocrites) was thoroughly brought in the forefront.

The (change of *Qibla* from the *Bayt-al-Maqdis* to *Bayt-Allāh*) sent a wave of jealousy and despair among the Jews and Christians as also the hypocrites who were prostrating towards *Bayt-al-Maqdis* not out of love and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but as a formality and a mere outward display of faith. The shock was too much for them to bear because in the former state before change of *Qibla* the disgruntled elements could easily make intrusion among the mass of people in which all sectors of populace mingled freely as far as the prostration toward

Bayt al-Maqdis was concerned and in due course of time they could wean away the simpletons to form their own block as a politico-religious block in Madina. They lost no time in raising objections and accusations against this change. How flimsy, unfounded and self-aggrandized these outpourings (accusations etc.) were can be seen from the simplest and most convincing manner the Holy Qur'ān responded; in the straightforward and forthright way it termed the perpetrators of this uncouth mischiefs as fools (i.e. men devoid of common sense). It is said:

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَن قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهِمْ
 قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۗ وَالْآيَةُ بِرَبِّهِ ۗ

"Now the fools" among the people will say what it is that made these men (*Mominis*) change their *Qibla* to which they were adhering so far? Tell them (O, Prophet) that both the East and the West belong to Allāh".¹⁰

The above quoted verses while rebuking and castigating the accusers and objectors of the change of *Qibla* as shortsighted fools, it also demonstrates how affectionately and enduringly Almighty Allāh recalls His regard for the Holy Prophet Hadrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ when it is said: "Surely we were witnessing your turning your face towards heavens."

¹⁰ Qur'ān, al-Baqara, 2:142

But the other strategy or Divine plan in this context is more inspiring and thought-provoking and it demands concentrated and unbiased attention.

Instinctively man does not easily give up even the slightest emblem which he regards as part of his religious, social or communal entity. He would stand in revolt against any attempt by any detractor or challenger to his ideals as if the latter are the symbols of pristine and enduring nobility!

Those who wholeheartedly submitted to the new order which demonstrated the supreme ideals of love and loyalty to the Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ was above everything. Likewise, those who took ill of this new change as a negation of their ancestral practice as also those hypocrites who had no ideals except their self-aggrandizement, forever were branded as people of blind vision who in-spite of having mind and eyes chose to plunge in the abyss of darkness and abomination. After thus segregating the two divergent elements, the Divine Judgment in this case was pronounced:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ (الآيَةُ رُبْعًا) (١٢٢٠)

"We ordained the fixation of the *Qibla* which you were following (O' Prophet) before with a view to ascertain (and make known all over) as to who are those who follow in the footsteps of the Prophet and those who turn back on their heels (rebel

and retract from the path of Truth and Salvation).¹¹

The spirit behind the change of *Qibla* is admittedly not intended as a physical change from one direction to another, but it is, as the above verse amply reveals that it is the test and trial between the unswerving love and faith in the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the hallmarks of the true Momin, and adherents of divergent groups represented by the opponents of the change of *Qibla* spearheaded by the *Munāfiqs*.

As things stand at present when two aspects of spiritual and ritualistic significance are involved we are made to decide whether in front of the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* and in the presence of Holy Prophet ﷺ we should keep our face towards him or towards the Ka'ba-Allāh, and whether we should raise our arms as in supplication or keep them lowered as someone feeling remorse. This is a delicate issue and we cannot decide as both aspects have their respective sanctions. However, when the above quoted Qur'anic verse is read in conjunction the following Ḥadīth from the *Mishkāt Sharīf* the matter becomes clear and ambiguities and doubts are removed; the Ḥadīth reads thus:

وَعَنْ ابْنِ خُزَيْمَةَ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ عَنْ عَمِّهِ أَبِي خُزَيْمَةَ إِنَّهُ يَرَى
فِيمَا يَرَى النَّاسَ أَنَّهُ سَجَدَ عَلَى جِهَةِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
فَأَخْبَرَهُ فَاصْطَلَحَ بِهِ وَقَالَ صَدِّقٌ رُوِيَ أَنَّكَ فَسَجَدَ عَلَى
جِهَتِهِ (مشکوٰۃ شریف، ص ۲۵، ص ۲۸۷)

"It is reported from Ibn-i-Khuzayma bin Sabit رضي الله تعالى عنه that his uncle Abu Khuzayma رضي الله تعالى عنه saw in his dream that he is prostrating on the forehead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When he reported the dream to the Holy Prophet ﷺ he laid down and said Abu Khuzayma رضي الله تعالى عنه to make prostration on his forehead and justify his dream as reality. So Abu Khuzayma رضي الله تعالى عنه did the same and prostrated on Hadrat Muhammad's ﷺ forehead.¹²

When the footmarks of Hadrat Ibrahim عليه السلام can be made the prostrating spots for the pilgrim(16) then why cannot the forehead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ be made as the prostrating spot for his devotees and self-sacrificing adorers and admirers as an expression of their respect and veneration for him. Abu Khuzayma رضي الله تعالى عنه prostrated on the forehead of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a demonstration of the reality and Not towards the Holy Ka'ba as a formal ritual. In essence the holy parsonage of the Apostle of Allāh was made the *Qibla* for those who are endowed with abiding Love and Devotion to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The test of a *Momins* faith (*Iīmān*) is that he regards the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the supreme most wealth and treasure of love and obedience over each and every article of mundane utility on the including his nearest and dearest ones of the family and outside. In this respect the

¹² Mishkat, Vol II, p.387

following verse of the Holy Qur'an is equally forthright and convincing:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ
وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ أُقْتِرَ
فُتْمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ
كَسَادَهَا وَمَسْكَنٌ تَرْضَوْنَهَا
أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ
وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا
حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ○ (تر: ۱۳)

"Say (O Prophet! (unto your people of faith) if it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates (consorts) or your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you delight, are dearer to you than Allāh or His Apostle, or the striving (crusade) in His Cause (Mission) then you wait until Allāh brings about His Decision: And Allāh guides not the rebellious."¹³

In the Qur'anic context the man (or men) who turns back and failed deliberately or otherwise to give unstinted and unswerving most devoted love and the foremost priority and preference to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in comparison to anything and everything rebellious. Indeed, this is the most wretched and downright condemnation by Almighty Allāh Himself when that accursed person in his selfishness and personal inclination does not give that

¹³ Qur'an, al-Tauha, 9:24

much love and grace to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which his Most august personality demands.

Prostration is symbolic expression of extreme obedience and the sublimest love and reverence for the authority to whom it is offered. It also marks the distinction between the one who is most humble and submissive to the command without the least demure or reluctance, free from all the vestiges of egotistic self assertion, while on the other side of the command is the self-conceited victim of nurtured and pampered eggs, thinking himself to be equal or above the person before whom he is ordered to prostrate. At numerous places in the Holy Qur'an the mention of the command for prostration has been made.¹⁴

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ

سُجُودًا ۝ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ۝ (حجر: ٢٩-٣٠)

In all these verses the command was to the angels of all groups and stations (*mansab*) including the Iblis who was the member of the Angelic clan though created from other medium. All those verse bear testimony that when Almighty Allāh had given the perfect shape to the human form (Adam) made from clay and He had breathed His spirit into that substance who thus received the life and conscience with that Divine Breath.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ

الآية (بقره: ٣٣)

¹⁴ Qur'an, al-Baqara, 2:34, al-A'ra, 7:11, al-Asra', 17:61, al-Kahaf, 18:30, al-Tauba, 20:115 al-Hijr, 15:29-30

And we said unto the angeles: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all Ae I'blis. he semurred through pride, and so became disbeliever.¹⁵

This was shear arrogance and transgression without realizing that Love and obedience did not brock neither opposition or defiance. The result was that he was disgraced and condemned as trailer and rebel forever.

Somewhere we have quoted the famous Hadith in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said:

"The first and prime most substance which Allāh the Almighty created was my Noor."¹⁶

Since the first creation of the mankind was Haqrat Adam who was endowed in him he was regarded as the Trustee of Noor of the Holy Prophet Haqrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ, the lineage of Noor thus remained alive and uninterrupted since his arrival in the world and forever thereafter.

It is for this reason that all devoted followers and venerators of the Holy Prophet ﷺ paying homage to the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* are expected to offer *Durūd-o-Salām* to him believing him to listen and respond, with their heads bowed and eyes lowered in reverence. Ijāfiz Ibne Qayyim has echoed this very sentiment when he advises the homage payers at the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* when he says:

¹⁵ Qur'ān, al-Baqara, 2:34

¹⁶ Abd al-Razzaq al-Musannaaf Ref. Zurqāni, Vol.I, p.46, Mawāhib, Vol.I, p.55.

فَيَقُومُ دُونَ الْقَبْرِ وَقَفَّةً خَاضِعٍ
مُتَذَلِّلٍ فِي السَّيْرِ وَالْإِعْلَانِ

"Then you stand before the Holy *Mazār* in such a way that your stance or posture becomes an embodiment of extreme servility and humbleness and that there remains no difference between your exterior and internal existence."¹⁷

Further he says:

فَكَأَنَّكَ فِي الْقَبْرِ حَيٌّ نَاطِقٌ
وَأَنْوَاقِيُونَ نَوَاسِكِ الْأَذْقَانِ

(شفا الفوار، ص ۱۸۳)

"You are alive in your sacred grave (O' Prophet of Allāh) and that you listen and respond what your humble servants present before you. The humility demands that all those who come to pay homage must bow in your presence with due humility and submissiveness."¹⁸

As a matter of fact the hands can be stretched and extended before anyone for begging assistance and charity, but his head must remain upright because it is not befitting for a Muslim to bow head before anyone else.

¹⁷ Ibn-i-Qayyim, *Shifā al-Fuwād*, p.183

¹⁸ Ibid.

But Hāfiz Ibn-i-Qayyim urges and exhorts every Muslim to bow before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The reason is not far to seek, as according to the Holy Qur'ān one who bows before (or obeys) the Holy Prophet ﷺ in fact he bows before (or obeys) Allāh the Almighty.

When Angels were bowing (prostrating) before Hadrat Adam ﷺ in complete obedience to the commands of Allāh, it was the command of Allāh to which they were bowing in submission, and not prophet Adam who was specifically named. But this was to give the directional unity in the exterior while in the interior lay the command of Allāh, rather, Allāh the Almighty Himself.

This delicacy and quintessence of the whole issue did not enter the haughty head of the Satan who remained flabbergasted and exhausted in the relative qualities and nature of fire and clay and lost forever the prominence which he enjoyed only moments before among the fellow angels. The disgrace and condemnation thrust on him remain an ineluctable stigma on him and with him forever and ever, even after the Day of Judgment. This is the price and consequence of vanity and pride. We should all pray with utmost humility that Almighty in His infinite Mercy protects from calamitous inclination even for a moment. By refusing the Divine Command he in fact declined to properly appreciate the high eminence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and paid the eternally irreversible price of condemnation and disgrace.

The Holy Qur'ān has not narrated this grand event not as an episode of an story but to enlighten and brighten the human intellect that in submission to Divine Command

without hesitation and mental reservation lies not only salvation and deliverance from any degradation and humiliation but it also uplifts and enhances the dignity of the person or persons concerned manifold together with an assured unbounded reward in the Hereafter. The thematic point is that if you love Allāh, then you have to bow before the Beloved and the Choicest Servant of Allāh. There is no escape or shortcut to it. *Bayt-Allāh* has been made the centre and apex of the Muslim Unity and solidarity on earth, but Allāh the Almighty has declared the Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustalā ﷺ as the Beloved of His own, as the apple of eye in human phraseology. And the evidence of this truth is the Qur'anic verse which declares:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
 أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا (احزاب : ٥٦)

"Allāh and His Angeles send *Darūd-o-Salām* on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and enjoins upon the believers (*Momins*) to send Greetings and Salutation unto him in the most grand and perfect manner¹⁹.

At another place it has been made clear that the way to Love (and obedience) of Allāh lies through Love (and obedience) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.²⁰

¹⁹ Qur'ān, al-Ahzāb, 33:56

²⁰ Qur'ān, Al-i-Imrān 3:31

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ (آل عمران: ٣١)

Say (O Muhammad ﷺ to mankind) If ye love Allāh, follow me: Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins

This means as an unimpeachable authority that the First and Foremost Criterion as well as requisite for the Love of Allāh is the Love of the Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ. And Love demands that the whole being of the individual inwardly and outwardly existence (which consists of all the constituent organs of the human frame, head, heart and visage, face) should be turned towards the Apostle of Allāh

Offering prayers (*Salāwat*) demands that the entire person of the *Momin* should be under intense and undivided attention (Love) towards Allāh the Almighty. Even in these self-negating moments, if the call from the Holy Prophet ﷺ comes for any companion, it is enjoined that the latter must attend to the Prophet's call first immediately breaking the *Salāwat* at that very stage and later complete the unfinished *Salāwat*.²¹

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ

الآية (انفال: ٢٤)

The above incident is related to a companion, but there is yet another noteworthy incident in which a congregation of the companions were almost forced to leave the *Salāwat* for the Love and Reverence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ when he suddenly appeared from his Hujrah

Sharif when the companions were offering prayer in con-
gregation

① قَدْ كَشَفَ سِتْرَ حُجْرَةِ عَائِشَةَ فَنَظَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَهُمْ

فِي صُفُوفِ الصَّلَاةِ

② ثُمَّ تَبَتَّمُ بِضَحْكَ

③ فَنَكَصَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ لِيَصِلَ الصَّفَّ

④ وَمَعَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ أَنْ يَفْتَتِنُوا فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ

⑤ فَأَشَارَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِإِذْنِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

⑥ ثُمَّ دَخَلَ الْحُجْرَةَ وَارْتَخَى السِّتْرَ

بخاری شریف : ج ۲ ، ص ۷۲۶ ، الامور

"It is reported by Hadrat Anas رضی اللہ عنہ (Companion) that during the course of illness the Holy Prophet ﷺ when he was confined to bed it so happened that one day the Holy Prophet ﷺ unexpectedly raised the curtain of his Hujrah and glanced, with a smile of satisfaction on his holy lips, at the companion who were engrossed in the prayer under the Imamat (leadership) of Hadrat Abu Bakr Siddiq رضی اللہ عنہ. Equally unexpectedly, the glance of Hadrat Abu Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ fell on the Holy Prophet ﷺ and he stepped back a little to make room for him to lead the prayer, but the Holy Prophet ﷺ gestured him to continue leading the prayer. In the meantime there was a stir among the companions who had also glanced the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and under the impulse of unbearable

Love and veneration for him were almost about to break their congregation but the Holy Prophet ﷺ withdrew into his Hujrah Sharif and lowered the curtain¹²²

The above quoted Hadith is incorporated in the Bukhari Sharif. The Arabic diction of the Hadith clearly indicates that the narrator (*Ravi*) of the Hadith (Hazarat Anas) was himself present on the occasion, and as such there can be no ambiguity in the Hadith. It read thus:

The point which demands reiteration and re-emphasis is that inspite of all stir and slight slant in the attention of the companions which occurred under the impact of Love and regard for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, no breach of the *Salawat* took place (on the contrary it provided added verve and inspiration for the *Salawat*) the question arises why in the presence of the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* which symbolizes the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the face of the *momin* be commanded to turn towards Holy Ka'ba and the raised or folded hands of the believer (*momin*) be lowered and straightened on the plea that it is not prayer (*Salawat*). If no interruption takes place while keeping face towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ and slatingly away from the Ka'ba, how can the Dua, *Durūd* and *Salām* be interrupted by reciting them before the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* which is the eternal place of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The majority of the ulema and Imams of the Four Schools of Fiqh are of the agreed opinion that while of-

¹²² Al-Bukhārī, Vol.II, p.726 (Lahore)

tering Darood-o-Salām at the *Mazār-i-Mubārak* every pilgrim (Za'ir) must keep the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in his vision. This was the practice of the great and righteous leaders and ulema of the four principal seats of Islam, namely, Mālikī, Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī and Ḥumbalī who have recorded their own spiritual impacts of their own experiences as well as those of others as far as keeping the face towards the Holy Grave of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is concerned.²³

To pay honour and veneration to the Holy Prophet ﷺ especially through an inspiration in dream or otherwise is the greatest blessing one can think of and when in the fulfillment of that inspiration if the person is further blessed by being able to stand and bow before the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* words and sentiments of gratitude shall simply fail to delineate the surging emotions surrounding him. One such incident is reported in respect of Haḍrat Bilal رضي الله عنه. It is said that:

فَأْتَى قَبْرَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَجَعَلَ يَبْكِي عِنْدَهُ وَيُعْرِغُ
رَجْمَهُ عَلَيْهِ (الصفحة ٥٥)

"When Haḍrat Bilal رضي الله عنه visited the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* he could not control the emotions, he wept and wept and was rubbing his face against the Holy Grave."²⁴

²³ Taqi al-Din al-Subki *Shulā at Siqām li Ziyāra Khayr al-Anam*, p.163

²⁴ Ibid, Ref. Ibn-i-Askari, p 56

In-spite of all these transcendental assertions which surpass the common prudence because they rise and surge within the depths of sentiment and outpourings which scholastic logics can hardly comprehend and which is purely the affairs of the spiritual realm, there still are the people who forbid people from offering 'dua' and praying for the betterment in this world and the Hereafter. Their argumentative premises are:

(1) Death is inevitable and to believe that the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be alive is beyond common sense.

(2) Visitors beseeching the Holy Prophet ﷺ for their betterment and prosperity of theirs and others make the Holy Prophet ﷺ as their intercessor and medium of accession to Almighty Allāh.

(3) They regard the Holy Prophet ﷺ as their symbolic deity possessing Divine privileges and powers! (*Ma'aa' Allāh*)

(1) We would briefly present the Qur'anic authority to prove that life in essence continues even after the death in the mundane or worldly sense.²⁵

The most glaring example of the continuity after death is the privilege and blessing enjoyed by the Martyrs (*Shahids*) who sacrifice their life in the Way of Allāh and as a reward thereof are divinely blessed with the eternal

²⁵ Qur'ān, al-Asra, 17-44, al-Baqara, 2-86, al-Yunus, 10-64, al-Ankabut, 29-64

life thereafter with all privileges and facilities enjoyed by them in the world. This is borne out by the Qur'ān assertion²⁶

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ○ (بقره: ١٥٢)

And call not those who are Slain in the way of Allāh "dead". Nay, they are living, only ye perceive not.

The Shahīds (Martyrs) being human being in their creation and subsistence cannot be regarded as superior to apostles/prophets of Allāh. On the surface of the earth they are very much subject to human norms and behavior. They have also to be the followers of the Prophet of Allāh in the world. If the subjects/followers can be provided with eternal life as Shahīds, they still remain within the bonds of their prophets in the life beyond this earth. It can never be accepted that while the Shahīd regains his life in the inner world his mentor and law giver would be non-existent in the sub-world. This proves that apostles/prophets of Allāh do not die, they remain alive in their grave or may go and do what they wish in the world beyond the world of ours.

There is yet another factor which be carefully and clean heartedly must be understood and its implications should unreservedly believed as true. It relates to the continuum of the life even after the physical departure in

²⁶

Qur'ān, al-Baqara, 2:154

the plane of the world of the Holy Prophet Haqrat Muhammad Mustafā ﷺ and other prophets of Allāh. The Holy Qur'ān manifestly forbids the marriage of Holy Consorts of Holy Prophet ﷺ after him. Here the words "After him" are of special significance, which are quite distinct from "after his death" and negate the occurrence of death in the common usage in our physical life. The verse reads:

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُمْ
 بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا (احزاب : ٥٣)

"It is not right as a propriety that you (believers) should annoy Allāh's Apostle, or that you should marry his Consorts (wives) after him at any time. Truly such a thing in Allāh's Sight is an enormity."²⁷

An Apostle's worldly demise does not cut-off worldly relations. They remain intact. This shows that as marrying anyone's wife in his life and in his presence is strictly forbidden (*Harām*), in the same way the very idea of ever-marrying the consort of the Prophet, after his demise is *Harām*. In this sense, the life of an apostle of Allāh in the world and after his demise remains an uninterrupted entity. Viewed in this perspective the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is more dignified, more beneficent and more persuasive than the life of a martyr, which re-

1

mains confined to his person with all the Divine grace and honour assigned to him as a martyr.

This aspect of eternal life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ enables us to believe why he is graced with the Divine Epithet (Laqab) of *Rahmat-al Aalamun*(31) (Mercy of all the worlds The cosmos). If his life were to be interrupted, the Grace and Mercy of Allāh would also stand interrupted - that would mean the cessation of the world and the entire Divine Plan of Creation. Qur'ān says life is the sign of *Rahma*²⁸ and the Holy Prophet ﷺ is *Rahma* of Allāh the Almighty.

فَانظُرْ إِلَىٰ أَثَرِ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِي
الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ذَٰلِكَ الْآيَةُ لِلرُّومِ : ٥٠

Look:, therefore, at the prints of Allāh's mercy (in creation): how he quickeneth the earth after her death.

(2) The second point of disbelief of the antagonists of the *Momins* belief that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is the intercessor (medium of Divine Forgiveness). In other words this point of disagreement is that the *Momins* seek the forgiveness of sins by bringing the personality of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as an intermediary through whose intercession Almighty Allāh will redeem and forgive their sins.

We all know as believing Muslims that an unfortunate lapse had taken place at the hands of Haḍrat Adam ^(عليه السلام) which cost the life and the delights of the paradise, as a

result of which he was sent down to earth. He remained in repentance for a long time and at last the Divine Mercy relieved him of this relentless agony. Haḍrat Adam ؑ was taught the invocatory phrases (of forgiveness by Allāh the Almighty). The Holy Qur'ān says:

فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ

مَرَّ السَّوَابُ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٢٤﴾

"Then (Haḍrat) Adam ؑ learnt phrases of invocation from Almighty Allāh; then He turned towards him with clemency (and forgave him). Verily Allāh is Often Forgiving, Merciful."²⁹

What were the words of inspiration and commiseration which Haḍrat Adam ؑ had learnt from Almighty Allāh through whose intercession he has pardoned and restored to his former state of innocence with added dignity of being the Messenger of Allāh on earth. The words are stated as under:

يَا رَبِّ! اسْتَسْلِكُ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ لِمَا غَفَرْتَنِي

(فنادى ابن تيمية، ج ١٤، ص ١٥٠)

"(O) My Lord! I beseech you in the Name and for the sake of (Haḍrat) Muḥammad ﷺ to grant me forgiveness (of my lapse)."³⁰

Obviously the decorum and propriety in the name and the sake (intercession) of Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ؑ was learnt by Haḍrat Adam ؑ through no other

²⁹ Qur'ān, al-Baqara, 2:37

³⁰ Fatawa-i-Ibn Taymiyya, Vol. II, p. 150

Agency than Divine Forgiveness. Qur'ān says that the followers of Musa and Eisa followed the same faith of Adam.³¹ There can be no better and more convincing reply to the unrealistic questioning in this behalf than the one presented hereabove. We would add as a matter of human sympathy that it shall never pay any benefit to anyone irrespective of mundane achievement if he (unfortunately) he harbours any uncourteous and unbecoming misgivings about the most sublime and highest Dignity of the Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ.

This in essence is the Straight Path (*Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*) of righteousness, of which the Surah Fatiha makes a glorious mention and which is the source of eternal success and prosperity. And this is the path which Allāh the Almighty has declared His own path, which He endorses to be followed and not to fall apart in segments.

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ الَّتِي

رَانَام: ٥٣

"Surely this is My Straight Path (of righteousness), so follow it (O' people!) and not follow other paths which scatter you apart from His path. This is what Allāh commands you to follow so that you may achieve righteousness."³²

At another place, Allāh the Almighty asks Holy Prophet ﷺ that when the people who have sinned

³¹ Qur'ān, al-Baqara, 2:89

³² Qur'ān, al-An'am, 6:153

against themselves come to Him to seek forgiveness from Allāh and the Apostle of Allāh also intercedes on their behalf, then surely they will find Allāh Most Forgiving Most Merciful.³³

The Arabic script of this Holy verse is:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ

وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا (نساء: ٦٥)

Turning to the Holy Prophet ﷺ for any help, succour and intercession personally or in absentia means that the face of the help seeker in distress must be towards that most prominent beloved of Allāh with an inward belief that all that we craye for or implore before him reach his august presence and he judges and decides the issue on merit and in the larger and longer interest of the soul in distress. Any deviation in this behalf either in conviction or faith is not likely to yield desired result. The deeper the faith and devotion to the Holy Prophet ﷺ the greater the chances of the invocation (dua) being accepted and rewarded by Allāh the Almighty. Because this implies faith and love in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and this is what Almighty Allāh's approves and rewards His servant. The reason is simple. Obedience and Love towards the Holy Prophet ﷺ is obedience and Love towards Allāh the Almighty. What affection and commiseration the Holy Prophet ﷺ has towards his sincere and selfless followers, can be gauged from the following Hadith:

³³

Qur'ān, al-Nisa, 4:65

يَا خَيْرَ الرُّسُلِ! إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا صَادِقًا قَالَ فِيهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ
 إِظْلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاؤُكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ
 لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا وَرَأَى جِثَّتَكَ مُتَّغْفِرًا رَبِّكَ مِنْ ذُنُوبِي
 مُتَشَفِّعًا فِيهَا بِكَ (وفي رواية) قَدْ جِثَّتَكَ مُتَّغْفِرًا مِنْ ذُنُوبِي
 مُتَشَفِّعًا بِكَ إِلَيَّ رَبِّي تُرَبِّكِي الْآخِرُ

"One villager Muslim came after the demise of Holy Prophet ﷺ on his grave and followed this Commandment of Allāh³⁴ and was forgiven by the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

يَا عَتَبِيُّ الْحَقُّ الْإِعْرَابِيُّ فَبَشِّرْهُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَدْ غَفَرَ لَهُ

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is highly pleased towards his sinful followers. He proclaimed:-

أَنَا أَوْلَى بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَمَنْ تُوِّفِيَ مِنَ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَتَرَكَ دَيْنًا فَعَلَى قَضَاءِهُ وَمَنْ تَرَكَ مَالًا فَهُوَ
 لِي وَرَثَتِهِ

I have more rights on the souls (and the property) of *Momins* (than what they have). If any of them dies (destitute) and leaves behind debts (loans) to be cleared, then it is unto me to pay off the debt. However, if he has left something by way

³⁴ Taqi al-Din al-Subki: *Shifā al-Siqām Re. Ibn-i-'Asākir*, p.66; al *Mughni*, pp.600-601, Beirut, 1984.

of inheritance then that is the right (due) of his inheritors and successors).³⁵

Subhān Allāh! This is the grandeur of his benevolence that if something is due against the deceased *momin* (which cannot be otherwise cleared) then to relieve the *Momin* from the burden of the formers indebtedness, the Holy Prophet ﷺ takes it upon himself as his moral and guardian's responsibility; by the way it must be remembered of all the dues a deceased (in distress) the loan and debt against him must be cleared before he is buried in the grave; otherwise it will be hanging on him as a curse. The Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ, as the guardian, intercessor and protector of all his ummatis, whatever his rank (being underprivileged and destitute in the world) cannot see him being dragged into the hell.

He is equally aware that rights and privileges of the inheritors/survivors may not suffer in any way, he has commanded that the assets and the properties of the deceased must be equitably and faithfully bequeathed strictly in accordance with the laws of the Sharia.

Surely the status and grandeur of the Holy Prophet ﷺ are inaccessible and incomprehensible by any other agency other than by Almighty Allāh Himself. The apostles and prophets are the highest and loftiest in rank among all creatures/creations of the world/universe and the Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ is the highest and loftiest in rank and status among the apos-

bles/prophets of Allāh. That is the reasons why the followers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been declared as the best Ummah among the mankind and they enjoy the excellence and perfection in the spiritual and mundane affairs in the Divine Administrators of the world/universe, compared to other groups of human beings. The Holy Qur'ān provides the clue that the worthy and the qualified personnel among the "Muslim Ummah" are raised to the status of *Vasila* (mediatory prop between man and Allāh for rendering service and beneficence for the needy and distressed. It is said in the Holy Qur'ān:-

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ

أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ (سورة اسرا: ٥٤)

"Those whom people call upon for their succour and relief are themselves in search of the persons (of special privilege in being near and admitted in the Presence of Allāh) who could approach Almighty Allāh and bring Mercy and Peace from Him in their favour (in order to fulfill their cherished ambitions). These (the privileged persons of having nearness to Allāh -- *Muqarribin*) are always expecting Mercy and Favour of Allāh and they fear the chastisement from Him.³⁶

Who could be nearer to Almighty Allāh and admitted (with all glory and grace) in the Presence of Allāh than the holiest of the holy and the greatest of the greats, Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ, as the most reliable and successful "*Vasila*" for his Ummah and the rest of mankind. This also establishes and justifies the assertion that to seek Divine Mercy and Favour of Almighty Allāh with the mediatory support of His chosen service is exactly in consonance of Divine Will and Intent. Any unsavory misconception in this behalf is a grave deviation from the path of righteousness and must therefore be avoided.

(3) The third point of disbelief in the minds of the modernists against those pious devotees of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who raise their hands in supplication before the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* at Medina-i-Munawwarah is that these men of belief and faith regard the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a deity or god (*Na'uz bi Allāh*).

There is a dire warning in the Holy Qur'ān against conjectures and suspicious in respect of believers. The Divine warning incidentally addressed to the men of belief. The Holy Qur'ān says:-

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ
الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم
بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ (حجرات : ١٢)

"O you who believe! avoid suspicions as much as possible, for suspicion in some cases is a sin. And spy not on each others,

nor speak ill of each other, behind their back. Would anyone of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother. Nay, you would abhor it. And fear Allāh, for Allāh is off-Returning, Most Merciful."³⁷

Most kinds of suspicions are baseless and to be avoided; while some suspicions are crimes in themselves because they do cruel injustice to innocent men and women. The accusers of the believing men and women as regarding the Holy Prophet ﷺ as Ma'bud and Masjud (a deity to be worshipped and prostrated in submission) are only ruining their prospects, both in the word and the Hereafter. On face of it, such an attitude and behavior apart from religious implications, is also a social and moral offence of the gravest order which cannot be tolerated in any human society.

Even Shaykh Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb says:

فَأَيْنَ هَذَا مِمَّنْ يَدْعُو اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ لَا يَدْعُو مَعَ اللَّهِ
 أَحَدًا وَلَكِنْ يَقُولُ فِي دُعَائِهِ اسْتَلِكْ بِفَيْتِكَ أَوْ بِالْمُرْسَلِينَ أَوْ
 بِعِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ أَوْ بِقَصْدِ قَبْرِ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ غَيْرِهِ
 يَدْعُو عِنْدَهُ لَكِنَّ لَا يَدْعُو إِلَّا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ فَأَيْنَ هَذَا
 مِمَّا نَهَى فِيهِ الْخَمْرُ (فتاوى شيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب، ج ٣، ص ٦٨)

"How can that man be an infidel (mushrik) who calls from Allāh in a state of sincerity and does not associate anyone with Him. He only says, O'Allāh! I beseech your

mercy with the *Vasila* (mediation) and in the name of your Apostle or your apostles or your righteous servants. But the core or essence of imploring Allāh the Almighty. Or stands at the grave of some acquainted or stranger person and prays for (invokes) the Mercy of Allāh, but his mind is set on Almighty Allāh alone with utmost sincerity and humility. Such a person is outside the scope of our antagonists. We have no concern with him; he should be allowed to do what he is doing."³⁸

Indeed! such men should be left to themselves. It is between him and the Holy Prophet ﷺ on whose holy grave he stands and prays for Divine Mercy through his intercession.

The believer (*Momin*) has faith that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is fully aware of the affairs taking place at the holy place. He also knows what the Holy Prophet ﷺ has himself said in this behalf.

هَلْ تَرَوْنَ قِبْلَتِي مَهْنًا فَوَاللَّهِ مَا يَخْفَى عَلَيَّ خُشُوعُكُمْ وَلَا رُكُوعُكُمْ

لِي لَأَرَاكُمْ مِنْ وِرَائِي وَرَأَى ظَهْرِي (بخاری شریف، ج ۱، ص ۵۹)

"Do you see that my *Qibla* is here. By Allāh! your humility and sincerity and your bowing are not hidden from me.

Surely! I can also see all that is taking place at my back.³⁹

The words of the Ḥadīth are manifestly significant. The work *Khushū'* translated as 'humility and sincerity' has relevance to the inner world (*Batin*) while the word *Rūkū'* stands for bowing in submission which is related to exterior or manifest world. Therefore, the Ḥadīth leaves no room for ambiguity in the fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ is the knower of the Manifest 'Zahir' as well as the Hidden (Batin). Propriety and appropriate decorum demand that neither we should turn eyes (mind) from his august presence nor should we turn our back at him, whatever the circumstance or compulsion.

Imam Abu Ḥanifa says:

قَدِيمُ أَيُّوبَ السَّخْتِيَانِي
وَأَنَا بِالْمَدِينَةِ فَقُلْتُ لَأَنْظُرَنَّ مَا يَصْنَعُ. فَجَعَلَ ظَهْرَهُ مِمَّا
يَلِي الْقِبْلَةَ وَرَجَّهَ مِمَّا يَلِي وَجْهَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
وَبَكَى غَيْرَ مُسْتَبَالٍ. - من كمال اللطائف: رسول الله في القرآن الكريم، قاهره

"Ayyūb Sakhtiyani came and I was at Madina Munawwarah. I said to him we would see (find out) what he does (when he visit the Holy *Mazār*). So he, at the time of presence on the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* turned his back towards *Qibla* (*Ka'ba*) and setting his face in the direction in which the Holy visage of the apostle of Allāh lay and wept

to his hearts content (Hasan Kamil Al-Maltavi, *Rusūl Allāh Fi al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Cairo 1973, p.500)⁴⁰

The same unerated decorum and praiseworthy etiquette while paying homage to the Holy Prophet ﷺ at the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* has been taught by Hadrat Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal رضي الله تعالى عنه He says:

يَقِفُ وَظَهْرُهُ لِلْقِبْلَةِ وَوَجْهُهُ إِلَى الْحَضْرَةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْكَرِيمِ،
ص ٥٠٠

"While paying homage to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and standing at the Face-side (*Mawajeh Sharif*), the pilgrim (visitor) should keep his back towards *Qibla* and his face should be in the direction in which the Holy visage of the apostle of Allāh lies."⁴¹

It is also written in the *Al-Mughni*:

ثُمَّ تَأْتِي الْقَبْرَ فَتَوَلَّى ظَهْرَكَ الْقِبْلَةَ وَتَسْتَقِيلُ وَسَطَهُ
وَتَقُولُ الْآخِصْرَةَ - (المنى، بيروت ١٩٨٦ ص ٦٠)

"Then you should come at the Sacred *Mazār* and keeping the back towards *Qibla*, turn your (face in the direction in which the Holy visage of the apostle of Allāh lies)".⁴²

⁴⁰ Hasan Kamil al-Maltāwi; *Rasūl Allah fi al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*,
Cairo, 1972, p.500

⁴¹ *Shifā al-Siqām*, p.169

⁴² *Al-Mughni*, p.60

Caliph Abu Ja'far Mansūr (d.158 A.H/775 AD) asked Imam Mālik

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ اسْتَقْبِلِ الْقِبْلَةَ وَأَدْعُوا أُمَّرَ اسْتَقْبِلِ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؛ رَأَيْتَ تَعْرِفُ حَقَّقَ الْمَصْطَفَى،

"(O) Aba Abdullah!! when I intend invoking Mercy of Allāh at the Holy *Mazār* of the Apostle of Allāh, should I keep my face towards the *Qibla* or towards the Holy visage of the Apostle of Allāh".⁴³

On this question, the answer given by Hadrat Imam Mālik رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ is worth inscribing on the heart (as a perpetual reminder). He said:

لَوْ تَصَرَّفْتُ وَجْهَكَ عَنْهُ وَهُوَ وَسِيلَتُكَ وَوَسِيلَةُ أَبِيكَ آدَمَ
عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بَدَأْتُ اسْتَقْبَلَهُ
وَأَسْتَفْتِي بِهِ فَيَشْفَعُ اللَّهُ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ الْآيَةَ الشَّفَاءَ، ص ٢٢ —

"Do not turn your face from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He is the Source of (*Vasila*) of Deliverance for you and your father Adam (Alaihis Salām). Keep your face towards him and bescech his mediation and intercession in your favour on the Day of Judgment. Almighty Allāh has promised to accept his mediation (on that grievous Day)." Then he recited the verse

from the Holy Qur'ān relating to the forgiveness of sin on the mediation of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.⁴⁴

Imam Nuwi has also reproduced this statement from Imam Mālik:

إِذَا أَرَادَ الرَّجُلُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ قَبْرَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
فِي سَنَدٍ بِرَأْسِ الْقِبْلَةِ وَيَسْتَقْبِلُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَيُصَلِّيُ عَلَيْهِ
وَيَدْعُو رُشْفًا لِتَعَامٍ، ص ١٦٩، بحواله نووي، رؤس المسائل

"When a pilgrim/visitor comes to the Holy Shrine of the apostle of Allāh fro paying homage, he should keep his back towards *Qibla* and his face in the direction of Holy Prophet's visage ﷺ and after presenting *Durūd-o-Salām* present his humble submission for acceptance of his prayers (Shilāus Siqam p.169), ref: *Nuwi Ru'usul Masaail*."⁴⁵

Ibn Abi Taymiyyah also prescribes and reiterates the same etiquette while paying homage at the shrines of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, with the additional propriety that he should not touch the Holy Grave (as it is against the decorum and high honour of the blessed grave).⁴⁶

Shaykh Ahmad Rizā Khān Barailvi has reiterated and reemphasized these very norms of etiquette on the auspi-

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ *Shilā al-Siqām*, p.169

⁴⁶ Ibn-i-Taymiyya, *Iqtiza al-Sirāt al-Mustaqim*, p.396

cious occasion of paying homage personally on the *Mazār-i-Aqdas* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, with additional decorums on the spot.

He has affectionately advised and guided every person paying homage to the Apostle of Allāh at his Holy Shrine:

(1) Beware: Do not attempt to kiss Lattice work or touch the Lattice work, this is against the norms of veneration; keep yourself at the distance of not less than 4-arms' length.

(2) Never never turn your back at the *Mazār-i-Aqdas*

(3) Do not make the circuitous round (*Tawaf*) of the Holy Grave, do not prostrate nor bend your back to the extent that it becomes the *rūkū* of the *Salawat* (*Namāz*).⁴⁷

Yes! The shrines consisting of the eternal place of rest of the Holy Prophet Haḍrat Muḥammad Mustafā ﷺ, is higher and more splendid than any royal court of the world in our imagination and fantasy. The very nucleus and basis of the *Eimān* rests and sustains on the grace and reverence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that we proffer in his august presence His companion, never turned backs on him nor did they ever do after his demise when they vis-

⁴⁷ Abimad Riza: *Adwār al-Bashārah fi Masā'il al-Hajjwa al-Ziyārah* (1329 HE) Lahore, pp.70-74

ited the Holy *Mazār* to offer *Durūd-o-Salām*. The grandeur of his personality can be assessed from the fact that when the companions were engaged even in *Farz Salāwat* and the apostle of Allāh happened to call them in any emergency, the companions did not hesitate to break the *Salāwat (namāz)* and turning back on *Qibla* they at once proceeded to answer his call. Even the Holy Qur'ān is witness to this phenomenon. It is unthinkable that any Musalman in his senses would even think of doing and saying anything not befitting his august personality. Anything said or done which hurts or might hurt the Holy Prophet ﷺ is a grave sin and must be avoided at all costs. Any sort of disrespect and indecorum will not be tolerated in the royal court of any worldly king. Can, it therefore be ever contemplated and tolerated in the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who is admittedly the highest and choicest quintessence of all the creations in the universe this world and beyond.

For centuries it has been the blissful practice of our learned ancestors as also the four Great Imams that whenever they visited the Holy Shrines at Madina-e-Munawwarah and raised their hands for presenting *Durūd-o-Salām* they kept their face to the side of Holy Prophet's visage ﷺ, and they have enjoined upon their followers to follow this stance whenever they are fortunate enough to pay homage to the Apostle of Allāh. This is the surest way to keep company with the truly greats and protect themselves from going astray. The Holy Qur'ān says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ. ﴿١١٩﴾

O' Believers! Fear Allāh and keep company with the righteous people."⁴⁸

Admittedly those residents of Madina-i-Munawwarah are the luckiest and the most blessed of all, who dwell near about the Holy Shrines of apostle of Allāh. Their luck and fortune are worth pious envy because of the facility and privilege of presenting *Durūd-o-Salām* to the Holy Prophet ﷺ as and when they wish. At the same time it redounds on them to provide whatever comforts and facilitate they can to those eager and emotionally surcharged humble devotees who come to this most sacred place from hundreds of miles away to present *Durūd-o-Salām* to the Shrines of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Surely, whatever services and convenience they provide to these pilgrims/visitors will evoke affectionate welcome and blessing from the Apostle of Almighty Allāh.

It is obligatory on these privileged dwellers in the vicinity of the Holy Shrines to repay the Divine grace and by way of thanks giving offer all possible comforts to the pilgrims/visitors who hardly get more than one chance in their lifetime to visit and pay homage to the Holy Shrines of Prophet of Allāh ﷺ. They should be permitted and encouraged to follow in the footsteps of Hadrat Bilal رضي الله تعالى عنه who sacrificed his all at the altar of Love and obedience of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

هَلْ الْحُبُّ الْأَزْفَرَةُ بَعْدَ زَفْرَةٍ
وَحَرَ عَلَى الْأَحْنَاءِ لَيْسَ لَهُ بَرْدٌ

⁴⁸ Qur'ān, al-Tauba, 9:119

No doubt:-

بَشَكَ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضُوهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ (توبہ: ٧٢)

But Allāh, with His messenger hath more right that they should please Him if they are believers.⁴⁹

2/17-C, P.E.C.H.S.

Muḥammad Mas'ud Ahmad

Karachi-75400

April, 1996

وَلَسَوْفَ يَجْطَلِبُونَكَ

صَلِّ عَلَىٰ عَالِيَةِ وَاللَّهِ

يَا سَيِّدَ السَّلَاطِ تَجِيَّتِكَ قَاضِيًا

أَجْرًا رِضَاكَ وَخَيْرِي بِجَمَالِكَ

أَنْتَ الَّذِي بَوَّلَكَ مَا خَلَقَ مِنْهُ

كَلَامًا وَخَلَقَ الْوَلَدَ لَوْلَاكَ

أَنَا طَائِعٌ بِالْجُودِ مِنْكَ وَكَائِنٌ

لَا تُخَيِّفُنِي فِي الْأَنَامِ سِوَاكَ

صَلِّ عَلَىٰ عَالِيَةِ وَاللَّهِ وَاللَّهِ وَاللَّهِ وَاللَّهِ وَاللَّهِ وَاللَّهِ

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