

On the Mysteries of Standing During Prayer

According to the elite, the act of standing in prayer (*iqāmah*) is firmness (*ṣulb*) in the holy court of God, the tucking up of the hem for the obeying of the command, and it is the leaving behind of the coverings and rising through the warning, 'O thou shrouded in thy mantle, arise and warn! Thy Lord magnify and thy robes purify.'¹ It is firmness in morals (*akhlāq*), justice in character, and the lack of an inclination for excess and carelessness. Just as has been previously pointed out in the *ḥadīth* of Rizām, the client of Khālīd b. 'Abd Allāh, that Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said regarding the reality of prayer, 'And he stands between renunciation and covetousness, between fortitude and anguish, as though the promise has been wrought forth for him and the threat has befallen him.'² Standing before God in a manner so that fear does not overwhelm hope and hope does not overwhelm fear, and so that fortitude does not become endurance (*tajallud*), which, according to the doctrine of the lovers, is a most reprehensible trait.

It is noble to appear stout-hearted (*tajallud*) against the enemy,
Whereas weakness is reprehensible save nigh friends.

Anguish should not be excessive and opposed to acceptance, and his repose should be such that he constantly sees the day of recompense and the promise and the threat, and this is one of the highest levels of faith.

According to the folk of traversing, it is to stand firm in the degree of humanity and to go beyond the renunciation of Judaism and the exaggeration of Christianity; 'Abraham was not a Jew neither a Christian, but one who was pure of faith and submitted to the one God.'³ It has been reported in a *ḥadīth* that the Envoy of God, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, drew a straight line and then drew other lines around it and said: 'This straight line is my way.'⁴ They say that he said: 'This verse in the *sūrat* Hūd turned my hair white';⁵ alluding to the word of the high, 'So stand thou firmly straight (*fa-istaqim*), as thou hast been commanded, and whoso

1 Q.74:1-4.

2 *Ṭāwūs, *Falāḥ al-sā'il*, p. 23.

3 Q.3:67.

4 *A report similar to this is reported in Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Ilm al-yaqīn*, vol. II, p. 967.

5 *Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, *Ilm al-yaqīn*, vol. II, p. 971.

repents with thee.’⁶ The perfect gnostic, Shaykh Shāhābādī, may my soul be a ransom for him, said: ‘This command is because standing firmly straight by the *ummah* has been demanded on the part of the Prophet and, due to this, this noble verse is also in *sūrat* al-Shūrā, and this command has not been given directly to them because they are not included in it.’

In short, at every stage standing firmly straight and not leaving the middle way is a very difficult matter for the wayfarer, who must, while standing before God, be timid and lower his head because of his failure to rise to the command; fix his eyes on the place of prostration, which is the dust of humility; remember his own degree of humility, faults, and shortcomings; see himself in the holy court of the King of Kings, who has all the atoms of the universe under the circle of His sovereignty, force, and power; remember the degree of omnipotence (*qayyūmiyyah*) of the holy essence; realise that the standing of the abode of realisation (*dar al-taḥaqquq*)⁷ is subsistent through Him; and in the heart firmly establish the comprehension of omnipotence, this state of suspended-hung (*al-tadallā*), and the annihilation of the universe. In this way, gradually he may reach the mystery of standing firmly straight and obtain actual unity (*tawḥīd*), the mystery of which is known to the folk of gnosis. Thus, the degree of manifestation through the theophany of divine action will be unveiled upon his heart and the mystery of ‘There is no compulsion (*jabr*) or empowerment (*tafwīd*), rather it is a matter beyond these two matters’⁸ will become clear for him. Hence, he will become worthy of entering the court and some of the mysteries of the opening magnifications offered up to God (*takbīrāt*), the Qur’ānic recitations, and the raising of the hands during the magnifications will be unveiled to him.

6 Q.11:112.

7 The abode of realisation is to be understood as all existence.

8 Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 160. * Ibn Bābawayh, *Uyūn akhbār al-riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 124.