

On the Mystery of the Testimony and the Invocation of Peace in Prayer

Let it be known that, just as the prostration on the dust is to return to multiplicity without being veiled from oneness (*waḥdah*) through posture and practice, the testimony and the invocation of peace is to return to this through word and remembrance. Due to this, in the testimony there is, firstly, the testimony to divinity and ever-oneness and the negation of any partnership with it, accompanied with praise and the returning of all praise to the holy essence of the greatest name, *Allāh*. After this, there is the turning to the degree of the servanthood of the absolute nearmost one, Muḥammad, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, and to the degree of his prophethood, which corresponds to the theophanies of the essence and actions in the mirror of multiplicity. The greeting of peace is for the Prophet. Then, it is the return of the wayfarer to himself and the seeking of peacefulness for himself and for the devoted servants of God during the return from this perilous journey; 'Peace be upon me, the day I was born and the day I die and the day I am raised up alive.'¹ This greeting is for the day of resurrection and the return from true death. After that, he turns towards all the angels of God, the prophets, and the angelic powers that have accompanied him on this journey and he seeks from God the High their peace during this return from the wayfaring, just as is alluded to in the *ḥadīth* about the prayer of the Prophet during his heavenly ascension where it is said:

Then I turned around and, behold, I was in the ranks of the angels, the prophets, and the envoys. He said to me, 'O Muḥammad! Greet them with a greeting of peace.' And so I said: 'peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.' He said: 'O Muḥammad! I am the peace and the greeting; the mercy and the blessings are you and your descendants.' Then, my Lord, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, ordered me not to turn to my left.²

Perhaps the command of God the High, may He be glorified and exalted, not to turn to the left alludes to not turning towards 'what follows from creation' or towards untrue, dark things. It is necessary that the wayfarer turn completely

¹ Q.19:33, these are the words of Jesus from the Qur'ānic *sūrat Maryam*.

² Ibn Bābawayh, *ʿIlal al-sharāʿiʿ*, p. 316.

to the right side of things, which contains the aspect of the light of the Lord, 'And the earth shall shine with the light of its Lord.'³

The reality of peacefulness during this journey of ascension means that the wayfarer is to be free of the self (*nafs*) and egotism. If he gains peacefulness at this stage, he will also have peace in the following stage, which is granted through the grace of God. This peacefulness means to turn towards the right and not to the left, which is the origin of being veiled and crookedness.

Summary

It is said on the authority of *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah* that Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

The testimony (*tashahhud*) is a eulogy for God the High. And so, be a servant to Him in your heart, be humble before Him in action, just as you are a servant to Him through words and claims. Join the truth of your tongue to the purity of the truth of your heart. For He created you a servant and He ordered you to worship Him with your heart and your tongue and your limbs, so as to realise your servitude to Him through His lordship over you; and to know that the forelocks of the creatures are in His hand. They have no breath or perception, save through His power and His volition; they are incapable of carrying out the least thing in His kingdom without His permission and will. God, may He be glorified and exalted, said: 'Thy Lord creates whatsoever He wills and He chooses; they have not the choice in their affairs, glory be to God! High be He, exalted above that which they associate with Him.'⁴ And so be a servant, thankful in deed, as you are a servant, one who invokes in word and claim. Join the truth of your tongue with the purity of your heart, for He created you; and so, glory be to Him, that will and volition should be for anyone save through His preceding will and volition. And so, endeavour to use your servanthood for the pleasure of His judgement and in worship for fulfilling His commands. He has ordered you to call for blessings upon His prophet, Muḥammad, may the blessings of God be upon him and His descendants. And so, join your prayer to Him with blessings upon the Prophet, and your obedience to Him be attained through your obedience to him, and your testimony of Him be attained through your testimony of

3 Q.39:69.

4 Q.28:68.

him. Beware that the blessings of the gnosis of his sanctity do not escape you, lest you be deprived of the availment of his blessings, of his prayer for forgiveness for you, and of his intercession for you. This is so that you fulfil your duty with regard to God's commands and prohibitions and with regard to the customs and ceremonies (*al-sunan wa al-ādāb*), and so that you know the greatness of his rank nigh God, may He be glorified and exalted.⁵

This *ḥadīth* also alludes to the reality of the testimony, its ceremony, and its mystery. Therefore, he said: 'The testimony is the eulogy for God the High.' This is the reality of the testimony, or rather it is the reality of all acts of worship, just as was alluded to previously, namely that the acts of worship are the eulogies of the degree of lordship, each one through a divine name or names.

As for its ceremony, or rather the ceremony of all acts of worship, the best of this is that which is alluded to in these noble words, that attention should be paid to the states of the heart and the permeation of servanthood in secret, so that the claim is not meaningless. The wayfarer must strive to make his verbal invocations and his claim reach the heart, and to make the heart the one that remembers and worships because, if the heart rises to servanthood, then all the virtues of his domain and his exoteric and esoteric forces will rise to servanthood. So, at the beginning of the affair, the heart is reminded through the invocation performed by the tongue, and at the end of the affair, the tongue and all other parts of the body are interpreters of the heart.

After this, in the following *ḥadīth* a model is given for the attainment of the degree of thankfulness (*shukr*), and after that there is the instruction of the degree of contentment (*riḍā*), both of which have a lengthy explanation, which at this point cannot be accommodated.⁶

One of the important ceremonies of the testimony and the invocation of peace, which are the conclusion of prayer, is the knowledge of the sanctity of the Noble Final Envoy, may the blessings of God be upon him and his descendants, which the wayfarer must make his heart understand, for were it not for the complete unveiling of the Prophet, no one would have the knowledge of the way to servanthood of God and arriving at the degree of closeness and ascension to gnosis. Therefore, just as at the beginning of prayer, it was mentioned that the friends and companions of the way of gnosis and true ascension are the Prophet and the infallible pure imāms; it must also be men-

5 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 23–4. *Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 284.

6 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī gives nine types of contentment and ten types of thankfulness, contingent on different contexts and instances. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, pp. 248–51.

tioned at the end of the journey that they are the blessed nearmost ones, the means of arrival for the folk of gnosis, and the intermediaries for the revealing of the blessings and theophanies of the presence of lordship, glorified be His majesty. 'If it were not for them, the Oft-Compassionate would not have been worshipped and the Oft-Compassionate would not have been known.' Anyone who knows a little of the reality of nearmostness and prophethood would know what kind of relationship the nearmost ones, peace be upon them, have with creation; we have mentioned this, praise be to God, in our treatise *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah*.

However, the allusion to the mystery of the testimony, in the way that we have mentioned, where the imām said: 'And to know that the forelocks of the creatures are in His hands,'⁷ is a subtle reference to the degree of the realisation of awareness after self-effacement, where the multitude are no longer the veils of the beauty of the Beloved, and the virtue and volition of God are seen to be implemented and manifested in the mirror of creation. The permission (*idhn*), which is mentioned in the noble *ḥadīth*, is the divine permission to bring something into being (*al-idhn al-takwīnī*) and is the permeation of the exoteric by the esoteric. In this degree, the mystery of 'predestination' and the reality of 'a matter beyond two matters' is unveiled upon the heart of the wayfarer in every degree of the essence, attribute, and action. In this brief work there is no room for the details of this issue.

A Second Summary

On the authority of *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah*, Imām al-Ṣādiq, peace upon with him, said:

The meaning of 'peace' (*al-salām*) at the end of each prayer is protection (*al-amān*), i.e., whosoever carries out the command of God and the custom of His Prophet with a humble heart shall be protected from the tribulations of the world and granted exemption from the chastisement of the hereafter. Peace (*al-salām*) is one of the names of God the High, which He has entrusted to His creatures so that they may use its meaning in their actions, trusts, and dealings with one another, in being truthful in companionship and in the soundness of their relationships. When you want to place peace in its proper place and fulfil its meaning, be mindful of God; and your religion, your heart, and your reason should be at peace

7 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 23. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 284.

with yourself. Therefore, do not pollute it with the darkness of disobedience. Be at peace with your guardians, so that you do not grieve, weary, or distress them by dealing in evil towards them; then behave in the same way to your friend and your foe. For if the one who is closest to man is not at peace with him then the one who is more distant from him is more likely not to be at peace him. Whosoever does not place peace in its proper place in this instance has not invoked the invocation of peace and salutation, and is a liar in his invocation of peace, even though he declares it amongst creation.⁸

In this noble *ḥadīth* there is a hidden reference to the mystery of the greeting of peace, to its outward ceremony, and to the realisation of its reality.

However, its mystery, as has already been alluded to, is the petitioning for peace and protection during the return journey. Protection, according to the nearmost ones, means not being veiled from the beauty of the Beloved by the veils of multiplicity, which itself is the highest degree of chastisement for the lovers. As the master of the nearmost ones said: 'My Lord, granted that I have fortitude for Thy chastisement, yet how will I have fortitude in being parted from Thee?'⁹ For the lover of the beauty of God there is no chastisement more painful than the grief of being parted. So, the final greeting of peace in the prayer of the nearmost ones is a protection from the tribulation of the dark veils of the world and the veils of light of the hereafter, each one of which is a painful chastisement in itself.

However, the allusion to the realisation of this reality is made where he says, 'Peace (*al-salām*) is one of the names of God the High, which He has entrusted to His creatures.'¹⁰ This is an explanation of the manifestation of the names in the manifestations of creation and the realisation of the truth of the names means to be removed from the darkness of egotism and to witness the portion of lordship in the mirror of one's own being. As long as man is in the veils of multiplicity and the influence of the devil, and as long as his heart is usurped by the foe of God, he cannot witness the portion of lordship and the degree of naming (*ismiyyah*)¹¹ in himself or in any beings.

8 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, pp. 24–5. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 307.

9 This is a phrase taken from the well-known supplication taught to Kumayl b. Ziyād by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. It is commonly known as the supplication of Kumayl and is recited on Thursday evenings. *See Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid wa silāḥ al-muta'abbid*, p. 778.

10 Al-Ṣādiq, *Miṣbāḥ al-sharī'ah wa miftāḥ al-ḥaqīqah*, p. 24. *Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. LXXXII, p. 307.

11 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī defines the name (*ism*) in the gnostic context not as an expression but as the very essence that is named, through the consideration of its existential

When the veil is lifted he will witness himself as the manifestation of the divine names. In sum, whilst returning from this spiritual journey he will have a secure peaceful heart and a protected mind and his vision in relation to all beings will be the vision of purity and peace, he will see the truth of the name 'Peace' flowing through all beings, he will interact with all of them in the realisation of its truth, and he will witness the universe as the abode of peace (*dār al-salām*) and as the manifestation of peace (*mazhar al-salām*), and he will see the influence of the hand of the deceivers entirely falling short of the ever-beautiful beauty (*jamāl al-jamīl*).

Thus, he will see his own entire being and the universe immersed in the name 'Peace'. At this stage he will obtain the mystery of perfection from the mysteries of 'destiny' (*qadr*). If he is disposed to knowledge and speculation, he will realise the mystery of the statement of the philosophers when they say, 'Being is sheer goodness' (*al-wujūd khayr maḥḍ*).¹² If he is of the disposition of the folk of gnosis and unveiling then, according to its capacity, goodness, peace, and divine protection shall theophanise in his heart. God is the Knower. However, these ceremonies do not need any explanation.

A Third Summary

On One of the Mysteries of the Invocation of Peace

Of that which has been mentioned of the mystery of prayer—the reality of which means the journey to God, in God, and from God—regarding the mystery of peace another understanding becomes clear. This is that, when the wayfarer is helped in the state of prostration by becoming absolutely absent from all beings, when he becomes hidden from all beings, when the state of awareness aids him during the last prostration, and when in the testimony this state takes hold, suddenly he is transferred from the state of being hidden from creation to the presence, he enacts the ceremony of presence in His presence, and at the end of the testimony he finds himself turning towards the degree of prophethood and finds himself in the court of the nearmostness of the Prophet where he enacts the ceremony of presence in his presence, which is a vocalised invocation of peace. After this, turning towards the determinates of the light of nearmostness, which are the exoteric and esoteric virtues of 'the devoted servants of God' and himself, he keeps in mind the ceremonies being

attribute. See al-Kāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-ṣūfiyyah*, p. 54.

12 This is a concept which may be found in Neoplatonic philosophy and in the Arabic paraphrastic renditions thereof. See *Kitāb al-iḍāḥ fī al-khayr al-maḥḍ*, in 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *al-Aflāḥiyyah al-muḥdathah 'ind al-'arab*, Kuwait, 1977, pp. 1–33; also Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, tr. E. R. Dodds, Oxford, 1963, prop. VIII, pp. 9–11.

in their presence. Then, after that, through the absolute multiplicity of the hidden and witnessed, he turns to finding the required ceremonies while being in the presence and presents a vocalised invocation of peace, and the fourth journey, which is 'from the creation to the creation',¹³ is complete.

There are more details pertaining to this general statement than this, which now 'I have no ability to say or the creatures to hear.'¹⁴

13 See Šadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'aliya fi al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, vol. 1, pp. 13–8.

14 * Verse from a poem by Sa'dī.