

Du'a Kumayl, A Translation & Commentary

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Arabic text, English translation, commentary, and audio recitation of this famous supplication that Ameer al-Mu'mineen Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) taught to his companion Kumayl ibn Ziyad (r).

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the loving memory of its author – the Late Haji Husayn A. Rahim M.B.E who passed away at London on March 23, 1979 at the age of 78 years.

It was his religious zeal and sincere efforts, despite sickness and declining age that this work was made possible. His numerous other articles, translations and commentary works published in the LIGHT magazine and elsewhere on important religious topics demonstrated his deep knowledge as well as his unreserved devotion towards religion and propagation of the valuable teachings of our Holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt ('a).

The Late Haji Husayn Rahim can be said to be the architect of Shia Islamic propagation in East Africa. He first propounded the idea of propagation of the religion in one of his articles in SALSABIL magazine during the years 1955/56.

Late, in one of the meetings, he moved an amendment to the constitution of the Federation of the Khoja Shia Ithna Ashari Jamats to include in its aims and objects the publications propagation and missionary work of the Shia Faith.

May Almighty Allah reward him for all his invaluable services to the faith and rest his soul in peace. Amen.

Preface

The author acknowledges with gratitude the assistance received from the following works:

- (a) 'Know Your Islam' published by Peermahomed Ebrahim Trust of Karachi (Pakistan), which contains a verbatim translation of the Du`a in the English language, and which has been reproduced *mutatis mutandis* in this commentary;
- (b) 'Anisul-Layl fi Sharhi Du`ai'l-Kumayl' which is an Arabic commentary on the Du`a; and
- (c) 'Darman Ruho-Rawan' which is a commentary in the Farsi language of the Du`a and contains scholarly interpretations of its words and phrases written by the learned Aqa Muhammad Baqir Malbubi.

Origin Of The Du'a

Kumayl Ibn Ziyad Nakha'i was a confidant amongst the companions of Amir al Muminin, Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (‘a) and this sublime Du'a was first heard from the beautiful, though anguished, voice of Imam Ali. According to Allamah Majlisi (on whom be Allah's Mercy) Kumayl had attended an assembly in the Mosque at Basra which was addressed by Imam Ali in the course of which the night of the 15th of Shaban was mentioned.

Imam Ali said–”Whosoever keeps awake in devoutness on this night and recites the Du'a of Prophet Khizr, undoubtedly that person's supplication will be responded to and granted. When the assembly at the Mosque had dispersed, Kumayl called at the house where Imam Ali was staying, and requested him to acquaint him with Prophet Khizr's “Du'a”. Imam Ali asked Kumayl to sit down, record and memorise the “Du'a” which Imam Ali dictated to Kumayl.

Imam Ali then advised Kumayl to recite this “Du'a” on the eve of (i.e. evening preceding) every Friday, or once a month or at least once in every year so that, added Imam Ali, “Allah may protect thee from the evils of the enemies and the plots contrived by impostors. O' Kumayl! in consideration of thy companionship and understanding, I grant thee this honour of entrusting this “Du'a” to thee.”

Du`a Kumayl, A Translation & Commentary

(دُعَاءُ كُمْيَلِ بْنِ زِيَادٍ (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful

O Allah! Bless Muhammad and his progeny.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْأَلُكَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ الَّتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

O Allah! I beseech Thee by Thy mercy which encompasses all things

“Allah” is the proper name applied to Him only and it has no corresponding word in English. The English word “God” merely means a deity – an object of worship and it may be fire, image, animal, sun or other celestial body. It has “Goddess” for its feminine and “Gods” for its plural. Whilst the word “Allah” has neither feminine nor plural and has never been applied to any person or thing other than the unimaginable Supreme Being. The Arabic word “Ilahun”, which has for its dual “Ilahaini” and for its plural “Alihatun” may perhaps be considered to be equivalent to the English word “God”.

The word “Allah” comprises all the attributes of perfection and, when used in the form of invocation as “Allahuma,” the letter “Mim” is added in the end to compensate the omission of the exclamation of entreaty “Ya” meaning “O Allah!” Examples of such form of entreaty can be found in the Qur'an:

“Jesus, son of Mary, said “Allahumma” O Allah! Lord of us! send down for us table spread with food from heaven”. (5: 114).

and the Holy Prophet was similarly directed to say:

“Allahumma” O Allah! Owner of Sovereignty Thou givest Government unto whom Thou wilt and Thou withdrawest Government from whom wilt.” (3:26).

According to the teaching of the Qur'an, the all comprehensiveness of Allah is referred to in the very first words of the Qur'an. He is the Creator, the Nourisher and the Accomplisher of the entire creation.

The words “I beseech Thee” imply that the beseecher does not deem anyone else–besides Allah–deserving to be sought from and the words “Thy Mercy which encompasses all things represent exactly the description thereof given in Verse 7: 156 of the Holy Qur'an.

وَيَقُوتِكَ الَّتِي قَهَرْتَ بِهَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ، وَخَضَعَ لَهَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ ، وَذَلَّ لَهَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ

And by Thy power by which Thou overcometh all things and submit to it all things and humble before it all things

Verse 39:4 of the Qur'an states – ***“He is Allah, the One, the Subduer (of all).”***

“Al Qahar” (the Subduer) is an epithet of Allah and Verse 2: 165 clarifies that ***“The Power is wholly Allah's.”***

وَجَبَرُوتِكَ الَّتِي غَلَبْتَ بِهَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

And by Thy might by which Thou hast conquered all things

The word “Jabarut” meaning “Might”, is derived from the epithet of Allah “Al Jabbar” meaning “The Mighty One.”

وَبِعَظَمَتِكَ الَّتِي لَا يَقُومُ لَهَا شَيْءٌ

And by Thy majesty against which nothing can stand up

The word “Izzat” is derived from Allah's epithet “Al Aziz” (The Glorious).

وَبِعَظَمَتِكَ الَّتِي مَلَأَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

And by Thy grandeur which prevails upon all things

“He is the Most High, the Tremendous”. Verse 2:255 of the Qur'an.

وَبِسُلْطَانِكَ الَّذِي عَلَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

And by Thy authority which is exercised over all things

“O Thou against whose Authority no other authority prevails” (Du'a Jaushan al-Kabir). The combined authority of all worldly powers are incapable to prevent natural disasters like earthquakes, cyclones or floods even though they may have had previous notice of it.

وَبَوَجْهِكَ الْبَاقِي بَعْدَ فَنَاءِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

And by Thy own self that shall endure forever after all things have vanished

The expression “Wajhika” has been defined by Malbubi as “Dhate Parwardighar” Allah Himself.

The Qur'an says: ***“Everything is perishable but He.” (28:88 & 55:27).***

It is stated “And there shall remain for ever the Person of Thy Lord, the Lord of Glory and Honour.”

وَبِأَسْمَائِكَ الَّتِي مَلَأْتَ أَرْكَانَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

And by Thy Names which manifest Thy power over all things

This refers to “Asmaul Husna” the Excellent Names of Allah. Malbubi states that these Names constitute the props which sustain everything in existence.

وَيَعْلَمُكَ الَّذِي أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

And by Thy knowledge which pervades all things

“The Omniscient” is one of the positive attributes of Allah. The Qur'an states:

“Allah indeed encompasses all things in knowledge.” (65: 12).

“Al Muhitun” meaning “One who Encompasses or Comprehends” is one of the epithets of Allah.

وَيُنُورُ وَجْهَكَ الَّذِي أَضَاءَ لَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ

And by the light of Thy countenance which illuminates everything

The word “Wajh” has a wide meaning including “cause, countenance, support, appearance, aspect and look”. According to Malbubi, it refers here to the “light of His Own Self”. In interpreting the same expression used in Verse 55:27 of the Qur'an, Imam Zainul Abidin (‘a) has stated that the Imams are the countenance of Allah. (Tafsir Safi). Imam al-Ridha (‘a) has stated that the Prophets, the Messengers and the Imams are meant by the phrase “Countenance of Allah” (Tafsir Qummi).

يَا نُورُ يَا قُدُّوسُ يَا أَوَّلَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ، يَا آخِرَ الْآخِرِينَ

**O Thou who art the light! O Thou who art the most holy! O Thou who existed before the foremost!
O Thou who shall exist after the last!**

This passage asserts that Allah's eternity has no beginning and no end.

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تَهْتِكُ الْعِصَمَ

O Allah! Forgive me my such sins as would affront my contingency

The word “Isam” is the plural of “Ismat” meaning immaculacy, defence or contingency. Whilst immaculacy is reserved for Imams and the Prophets, every sane and adult person is endowed by Allah with faculty to defend himself against or resist sins and keep himself chaste. But the commission of certain sins assail his powers of defence and even destroy his contingency whereby he becomes a profligate and a depraved person.

May Allah protect us from such sins! Imam Ja'far al Sadiq (‘a) has enumerated the following sins amongst those which abash one's chastity: (1) The drinking of intoxicants; (2) Gambling, (3) Indulging in plays which cause mockery or derision amongst people, (4) Gossiping about other people's vices or infamies; and (5) Associating with those who are sceptics or agnostics (Anisul Lail).

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُنْزِلُ النَّقَمَ

O Allah! Forgive me my such sins as would bring down calamity

According to a Hadith, the following sins bring down calamity: (1) Breach of a covenant; (2) Manifestation of shameful conduct; (3) Publication of falsehood; (4) Giving judgement contrary to Allah's revelation; (5) Refusing, or preventing the payment of Zakaat, and (6) Giving of short measure. (Malbubi).

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُغَيِّرُ النِّعَمَ

O Allah! Forgive me my such sins as would change divine favours (into disfavours)

Imam Sadiq (‘a) has stated that these include the following sins: (1) Inequity against people; (2) Silencing or opposing an Alim; (3) Being ingratitude to Allah's Grace; and (4) Assigning associate to Allah. Imam Sadiq (‘a) has also included the following other sins under this category:– (1) Displaying one's own poverty; (2) Despising Allah's Favour; and (3) Uttering a complaint against Allah. (Anisul Lail) .

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تَحْبِسُ الدُّعَاءَ

O Allah! Forgive me my such sins as would hinder my supplication

According to Imam Sadiq ('a), such sins are:– bad faith (mala fide), ceasing to believe in the prayer being answered (granted), hypocrisy towards brethren, delays in the saying of prayers in time and violation of duties towards the two parents (Uququl Walidain). (Anisul Lail).

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُنْزِلُ الْبَلَاءَ

O Allah! Forgive me such sins as bring down misfortunes (or afflictions)

According to Imam Zainul Abidin ('a), the following sins bring down misfortunes or afflictions: (1) Abandoning aid to those in affliction; (2) Abandoning assistance to oppressed persons calling for assistance; and (3) To render abortive (or destroy) the enjoining of good acts and forbidding that which is evil (Amr bil Ma'ruf and Nahi Anil Munkar). (Anisul Lail).

O Allah! Forgive my such sins as would suppress hope

Although this paragraph has been omitted from Sheikh Abbas Qummi's edition, it does exist in other authoritative books and commentaries of the "Du'a".

According to Imam Sadiq ('a), the following sins are those which suppress hope:– (1) Despair of the Mercy of Allah; (2) To entertain no hope of Allah's Clemency; (3) Reliance upon someone else besides Allah; and (4) Disbelief in Allah's promises. Imam Zainul Abidin ('a) has referred in Sahifa Sajjadiya to the similar effect. He has said:–"The seeking by one indigent person from another necessitous being is a folly of his brain and loss of his common sense. My Lord! How many men have sought honour from others than Thee and have been dishonoured; they, who sought wealth from others than Thee, were struck with poverty and those who sought greatness from others than Thee, met with destruction.

Muhammad Ibn `Ajlaan relates:–"Once I became so distressed, constrained and helpless that I decided to appeal for financial assistance from Hassan Ibn Zaid, who was then the Governor of Medina. As he was a friend of mine, I had hoped he would be sympathetic towards me. On my way to the Government House, I met Muhammad Ibn Abdulla, who was the grandson of Imam Muhammad Baqir ('a).

On noticing my perplexity, he inquired as where I was going. I informed him of all my circumstances and said that I saw no other way except to seek aid from Hassan Ibn Zaid. He said, "Your need will not be fulfilled for verily I have heard my uncle, Imam Ja'far as Sadiq ('a) saying that Allah had revealed to one of his Prophets as follows –"I swear by My Greatness and Majesty that I shall sever the hope of every person who hopes, by reason of despair, to obtain aid from anyone else besides Me and I shall disgrace him in the eyes of the people and I shall place him further from My Grace and Favour. What!

Does My bondman, in his distress, hope for relief from anyone else save Myself whilst I control destinies? Does he hope to acquire anything from anyone else when I am All Sufficing and Generous?" (Anisul Lail).

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي كُلَّ ذَنْبٍ أَذْنَبْتُهُ ، وَكُلَّ خَطِيئَةٍ أَخْطَأْتُهَا

O Allah! Forgive every sin that I have committed and every error that I have erred

“Sin” must be distinguished from an “error” which may be due to a mistake. “To error is human” as it may be due to a mistake or misunderstanding the position. The former implies intention to do wrong but the latter may be due to a mistake made in good faith but as both may result in considerable damage, they need Allah's grace of forgiveness.

Verse 4: 17 of the Qur'an says:

“Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance, then turn (to Allah) soon, so these it is to whom Allah turns (mercifully), and Allah is ever Knowing, Wise.”

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْكَ بِذِكْرِكَ

O Allah! I endeavour to draw myself nigh to Thee through Thy invocation

Every prayer, every act of piety, every act of charity and benevolence must be intended with the object of drawing one self nigh to Allah. Indeed the entire life of a faithful must be aimed at achieving this aspiration for which every jinn and man was created. Being nigh to Allah is the highest prize a human being to attain. The Qur'an says:

“Then if he is one of those drawn nigh (to Allah); Then happiness and bounty and a garden of bliss (for them)” (56:88-89).

وَاسْتَشْفِعْ بِكَ إِلَى نَفْسِكَ

And I pray to Thee to intercede on my behalf

The power of intercession is solely vested in Allah. Verse 39:44 states:

“Say: Allah's is the intercession altogether.”

But He may permit others also to intercede. See Verse 20: 109 which reads:

“On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with.”

وَأَسْأَلُكَ بِجُودِكَ أَنْ تُدْنِيَنِي مِنْ قُرْبِكَ

And I entreat Thee by Thy benevolence to draw me nearer to Thee

The nearness to God signifies the perfection of a human being

وَأَنْ تُوزِعَنِي شُكْرَكَ، وَأَنْ تُلْهِمَنِي ذِكْرَكَ

And grant me that I should be grateful to Thee and inspire me to remember and to invoke Thee

“Gratitude to Allah” implies being faithful to His commandments and remembering Him at every moment. Remembering Him at every stage deters us from committing sins and our hearts are laid at rest. The Qur'an says:

“Surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest.” (13:29).

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ سُؤَالَ خَاضِعٍ مُتَذَلِّلٍ خَاشِعٍ

O Allah! I entreat Thee begging Thee submissively, humbly and awestricken

These are the essential qualities needed for approaching Allah. A person is required to have awe of his Lord and fear the evil consequences of the Day of Reckoning. See Verse 13:21 of the Qur'an.

أَنْ تُسَامِحَنِي وَتَرْحَمَنِي وَتَجْعَلَنِي بِقِسْمِكَ رَاضِياً قَانِعاً

To treat me with clemency and mercy, and to make me pleased and contented with what Thou hast allotted to me

The beseecher seeks the clemency of Allah in respect of his sins and short comings; contentment and pleasure with the necessities of life bestowed upon him by Allah without seeking to beg the same from others. It is stated in Hadith by Imam Ali (‘a) that: “He who is contented, is honoured and ignominious is he who yearns.”

It is stated in the second Hadith that “One who is contented is self-sufficient even if he is hungry and naked; One who is contented triumphs over the people of his time and one who is contented has sufficiency of means over his generation; He who is contented has selected self-sufficiency over ignominy and ease over hardship”.

Imam Ali Amir Al-Mu'minin (‘a) has stated:—“I sought richness but did not find it except in contentment and so it behoves you to be contented and feel enriched, I sought for Glory and Position but did not find them except in knowledge and it behoves you to acquire knowledge and it will secure you glory and position in both the worlds; I sought to obtain nobility and I could not find it except by fearing Allah,

therefore, fear Allah to become noble; I sought for tranquillity and found it in abandoning mingling with people, therefore, leave the worldly people and you will obtain tranquillity.” (Malbubi).

The Holy Prophet has also said “Contentment is a treasure which does not exhaust.” (Malbubi).

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

“We distribute among them their sustenance (rizq) in the life of the world.” (43:32). (Malbubi).

وَفِي جَمِيعِ الْأَحْوَالِ مُتَوَاضِعاً

And cause me to be modest and unassuming in all circumstances

It is stated in Hadith that Allah has appointed two angels over each of his bondsmen; whoever is humble and unassuming over others, Allah exalts him, but whoever is arrogant suffers humiliation. (Malbubi) .

اللَّهُمَّ وَأَسْأَلُكَ سُؤَالَ مَنْ إِشْتَدَّتْ فَاقَتُهُ وَأَنْزَلَ بِكَ عِنْدَ الشَّدَائِدِ حَاجَتَهُ ، وَعَظُمَ فِيْمَا عِنْدَكَ رَغْبَتُهُ

O Allah! I beg Thee as one who is passing through extreme privation and who supplicates his needs to Thee and his hope has been greatly raised by that which is with Thee

Paradise, forgiveness and all that is good for human being are in the control of Allah. But hope must be combined with fear of Allah. In one of our supplications, we pray “O Thou! From Whom I hope (reward) for every good and fear His Wrath for every evil (intended to be committed).” It is stated by Allah in Hadith Qudsi “When hope and fear (of His Wrath) combine in a believer, I make paradise for him incumbent.” (Malbubi) .

اللَّهُمَّ عَظُمَ سُلْطَانُكَ وَعَلَا مَكَانُكَ

O Allah! Great is Thy kingdom and exalted is Thy greatness

This passage is auxiliary to the last passage in which a human being, having acknowledged his own disability to remedy his own privation, seeks succour from the Lord Whose Kingdom is great and Might is exalted. (Malbubi).

وَحَفِيَّ مَكْرُكَ ، وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُكَ وَغَلَبَ قَهْرُكَ ، وَجَرَتْ قُدْرَتُكَ ، وَلَايْمَكُنُ الْفِرَارُ مِنْ حُكُومَتِكَ

Thy plan is secret, Thy authority is manifest, Thy might is victorious and subduing and Thy power is prevalent throughout and it is not possible to escape from Thy dominion

Imam Husayn (‘a) reports that a man came to see his father Imam Ali Amir Al-Mu’minin (‘a) and said–”I am a sinner and find it difficult to resist the temptation to sin. Wilt thou advise me what to do?”

Imam Ali Amir Al-Mu’minin (‘a) admonished the man as follows– If you possess the ability for these five pre requisites, then you may commit any sin as you like:– Firstly, stop partaking of sustenance (rizq) provided by Allah; Secondly, get out of Allah's domain; Thirdly, find a place where Allah does not see, Fourthly, acquire power to prevent the Angel of Death from taking away your soul; and Fifthly, gather the strength to resist Malik, the Angel in charge of the Hell, flinging you into the Hell. If you are able to do these five things, then sin as you like. (Malbubi).

اللَّهُمَّ لَا أَجِدُ لِذُنُوبِي غَافِرًا وَلَا لِقَبَائِحِي سَاتِرًا

O Allah! Except Thee I do not find any one able to pardon my sins nor to conceal my loathsome acts

The Qur'an clearly states:

“and who forgives the sins but Allah” (3: 134).

It is the exclusive right of Allah, though others may intercede with His permission. Qur'an, 2:255.

“Satir” (the concealer of loathsome acts of His bondsmen) is one of Allah's attributes. By His infinite Grace, He conceals a lot of our loathsome acts from the knowledge of the society, but discloses our virtues. In one of our supplications, we say “O Thou! who makes conspicuous our decorous actions and conceals those that are loathsome.” (Malbubi).

وَلَا لِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عَمَلِي الْقَبِيحِ بِالْحَسَنِ مُبَدِّلًا غَيْرَكَ

Nor have I any one except Thee to change my evil deeds into virtues

It is Almighty alone who has the power to change our evil deeds into virtues. Says the Holy Qur'an:

“Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” (25:70).

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ، وَتَجَرَّأْتُ بِجَهْلِي

There is no god but Thou glory and praise be to Thee I have made my own soul to suffer I had the audacity (to sin) by my ignorance

“Ignorance” here means “foolishness or stupidity” (Malbubi).

وَسَكَنْتُ إِلَى قَدِيمِ ذِكْرِكَ لِي ، وَمَنْكَ عَلَيَّ

Relying upon my past remembrance of Thee and Thy grace towards me

Allah is, of course, Ever Gracious but it is sheer audacity and foolishness to regard His Grace as a licence to commit sins and expose one's own soul to the hazard of sufferings in the hereafter. The passage teaches us that every sin will cause suffering to the soul unless immediate repentance is made and Allah's forgiveness is sought. Repentance implies determination not to repeat the sin.

Mansur el Ammar relates that once he had an occasion to go out of his house at midnight and on his way he heard the pathetic voice of a young man making supplication to Allah and saying: “My Lord! The sin which I have just committed was not done with the intention of disobeying or defying Thee but was actuated by sheer, lust over powering me and Satan leading me astray. I have made my own soul to suffer and be liable to Thine indignation and chastisement.”

Mansur states—“When I heard these words of supplication by the young man, I went to the crevice of the young man's door and recited in a loud voice this verse of the Qur'an:

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones, over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded.” (66:6).

Mansur continues to say “When I had recited this verse, the young man raised a cry of lamentation and I heard him cry out—“My Lord! My weak body has no power to become the fuel of the hell fire'.”

Mansur walked away from the house and says – “When the next morning I passed by that house from which I had heard the young man's supplication, I heard women wailing. I went to inquire the cause for wailing and an old lady came to the door and said—‘Last night when my youthful son was engaged, through fear of Allah, in supplication someone called at the door of our house and recited an admonishing verse of the Qur'an which caused my son to shout and fall on the ground palpitating and died immediately.’

Mansur states that he informed the old lady that as he was the cause of her son's death, would she permit him to wash and shroud his dead body. The old lady permitted him to do so and Mansur states—“When I entered the young man's room, I saw him lying facing towards Ka'ba (Mecca) and I saw a piece of canvas on his chest. When I moved away the canvas, I saw the following words engraved on his chest in clear letters:—‘I have washed this bondman with the water of penitence, now My bondman is pure from sins.’ (Anisul Lail).

اللَّهُمَّ مَوْلَايَ كَمْ مِنْ قَبِيحٍ سَتَرْتَهُ ، وَكَمْ مِنْ فَادِحٍ مِنَ الْبَلَاءِ أَقْلَنْتَهُ

O Allah! My Lord! How many of my loathsome acts hast Thou screened (from public gaze)

وَكَمْ مِنْ عِثَارٍ وَقَيْتَهُ ، وَكَمْ مِنْ مَكْرُوهٍ دَفَعْتَهُ

How many of my grievous afflictions (distresses) hast Thou reduced in severity

The word “Maula” has here been used in the sense of “Master” and the word “Fadihin” means “heavy” or “grievous” (Malbubi).

وَكَمْ مِنْ ثَنَاءٍ جَمِيلٍ لَسْتُ أَهْلًا لَهُ نَشَرْتَهُ

And how many of my stumblings hast Thou protected, how many of my detestable acts has Thou averted, and how many of my undeserving praises hast Thou spread abroad!

The Arabic word “ithar” has been translated by Malbubi as meaning “laghzish” in Farsi language which means “a slip, slipping or stumbling.” “Makruhin” is used in the general sense to mean “any blameworthy act.”

اللَّهُمَّ عَظُمَ بِلَائِي ، وَأَفْرَطَ بِي سُوءُ حَالِي ، وَقَصُرَتْ بِي أَعْمَالِي

O Allah! My trails and sufferings have increased and my evilness has worsened, my good deeds have diminished and my yokes (of misdeeds) have become firm

According to Maibubi, the Arabic word “afrata” means “increased” and that “aghlal” is the plural of “ghalla” meaning restrained like imprisonment and deprived of Allah's tawfiq (the favour of Allah) to accomplish good deeds.” When the yokes of sins become heavy, they over power the sinner and prevent him from accomplishing good deeds. (Malbubi).

وَقَعَدَتْ بِي أَغْلَالِي وَحَبَسَنِي عَنْ نَفْعِي بَعْدُ أَمَلِي وَخَدَعَتْنِي الدُّنْيَا بِغُرُورِهَا ، وَنَفْسِي بِجِنَايَتِهَا وَمِطَالِي

And remote hopes restrain me to profit (by good deeds) and the world has deceived me with its allurements and my own self has been affected by treachery and procrastination

I have translated the Arabic word “nafs” as “self”. The word “nafs” has been used in the Qur'an in various ways according to its context e.g. “*Nafsul Ammara*” referred to in Verse 12:52 means “soul prone to evil”, “*Nafsul Mutmainna*” referred to in Verse 81:18 means “soul at peace” and “Nafsul

Lawamma” referred to in Verse 75:2 means “self-reproaching soul”. Indeed Malbubi states that Imam Ali (‘a) has referred to several types of `nafs" in a Hadith recorded in Majma' ul Bahraini but in the passage of this supplication, the supplicant obviously refers to his own self.

يَا سَيِّدِي فَأَسْأَلُكَ بِعِزَّتِكَ أَنْ لَا يَحْجُبَ عَنْكَ دُعَائِي سُوءَ عَمَلِي وَفِعَالِي وَلَا تَفْضَحْنِي بِخَفِيِّ مَا طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سِرِّي

وَلَا تُعَاجِلْنِي بِالْعُقُوبَةِ عَلَى مَا عَمِلْتُهُ فِي خَلَوَاتِي مِنْ سُوءِ فِعْلِي وَإِسَاطِي ، وَدَوَامِ تَفْرِيطِي وَجَهَالَتِي ، وَكَثْرَةِ شَهَوَاتِي وَغَفْلَتِي

Therefore, my Lord! I implore Thee by Thy greatness not to let my sins and my misdeeds shut out access to my prayers from reaching Thy realm and not to disgrace me by exposing those (hidden ones) of which Thou hast knowledge nor to hasten my retribution for those vices and misdeeds committed by me in secret which were due to evil-mindedness, ignorance, excessive lustfulness and my negligence

وَكُنِ اللَّهُمَّ بِعِزَّتِكَ لِي فِي كُلِّ الْأَحْوَالِ رَوْفًا ، وَعَلَيَّ فِي جَمِيعِ الْأُمُورِ عَطُوفًا

O Allah! I beg Thee by Thy greatness to be compassionate to me in all circumstances and well disposed towards me in all matters

إِلَهِي وَرَبِّي مَنْ لِي غَيْرُكَ أَسْأَلُهُ كَشْفَ ضُرِّي وَالنَّظَرَ فِي أَمْرِي

My God! My Nourisher! Have I anyone except Thee from whom I can seek the dislodging of my evils and understanding of my problems?

According to Malbubi, the evils may be physical or spiritual and it is only Allah Who can perceive them and dislodge them. The Holy Qur'an says:

“Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and dislodges the evil” (27:62).

One of the attributes of Allah is “Reliever of distresses” and every Prophet has sought relief from Him during distress.

إِلَهِي وَمَوْلَايَ أَجْرَيْتَ عَلَيَّ حُكْمًا أَتَبَعْتُ فِيهِ هَوَى نَفْسِي

My God! My Master! Thou decreed a law for me but instead I obeyed my own low desires

وَلَمْ أَحْتَرِسْ فِيهِ مِنْ تَزْيِينِ

And I did not guard myself against the allurements of my enemy

The enemy referred to is Satan who had declared before Allah:

“I will certainly make (evil) fair seeming to them on earth and I will cause them all to deviate.”(15:39).

عَدُوِّي فَغَرَّنِي بِمَا أَهْوَى وَأَسْعَدَهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ الْقَضَاءُ

He deceived me with vain hopes whereby I was led astray and fate helped him in that respect

I have translated the word “Qaza” here as “fate” to accord with the context. Malbubi states that according to Maima'ul Bahrain “Qaza” has numerous meanings amongst them it means “decreed”, “created”. “accomplished”, “brought to an end”, “completed”, “fulfilled”, “destiny”, “death”, “fatality”, “prayer after the time appointed for it elapsed”, “adjudged”, “fate”, “predestination”, or “inevitable fate”.

فَتَجَاوَزْتُ بِمَا جَرَى عَلَيَّ مِنْ ذَلِكَ بَعْضَ حُدُودِكَ ، وَخَالَفْتُ بَعْضَ أَوْامِرِكَ فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ عَلَيَّ فِي جَمِيعِ ذَلِكَ وَلَا حُجَّةَ لِي فِيمَا جَرَى عَلَيَّ فِيهِ قَضَاؤُكَ

Thus I transgressed some of its limits set for me by Thee and I disobeyed some of Thy commandments; Thou hast therefore a (just) cause against me in all those matters and I have no plea against Thy judgement passed against me

“Hujjat” means an argument, proof, reason, alteration or disputation. “Hujjat by Allah” in the above passage signifies that the sinner confesses that Allah had justly passed His judgement against him as Allah had done all that was necessary for his guidance by sending an Apostle, revealing the Qur'an and appointing the Imams to interpret His laws and the sinner further admits that he has no “plea” or argument for excusing himself from transgressing Allah's laws. (Malbubi).

وَأَلْزَمَنِي حُكْمُكَ وَبَلَاؤُكَ

I have therefore become (justifiably) liable to Thy judgement and afflictions

وَقَدْ أَتَيْتُكَ يَا إِلَهِي بَعْدَ تَقْصِيرِي وَإِسْرَافِي عَلَى نَفْسِي مُعْتَذِرًا نَادِمًا مُنْكَسِرًا مُسْتَقِيلًا مُسْتَغْفِرًا مُنِيبًا مُقِرًّا مُذْنِبًا مُعْتَرِفًا لَا أَجِدُ مَفْرَأً مِمَّا كَانَ مِنِّي وَلَا مَفْزَعًا أَتَوَجَّهُ إِلَيْهِ فِي أَمْرِي، غَيْرَ قَبُولِكَ عُذْرِي وَإِدْخَالِكَ إِيَّايَ فِي سَعَةِ رَحْمَتِكَ

But now I have turned Thee, my Lord, after being guilty of omissions and transgressions against my soul, apologetically, repentantly, broken heartedly, entreating earnestly for forgiveness, yieldingly confessing (to my guilt) as I can find no escape from that which was done by me and having no refuge to which I could turn except seeking Thy acceptance of my excuse and admitting me into the realm of Thy capacious mercy

اللَّهُمَّ فَاقْبَلْ عُذْرِي ، وَارْحَمْ شِدَّةَ ضُرِّي وَفُكْنِي مِنْ شَدِّ وَثَاقِي

O Allah! Accept my apology and have pity on my intense sufferings and set me free from my heavy fetters (of evil deeds)

يَا رَبِّ ارْحَمْ ضَعْفَ بَدَنِي ، وَرِقَّةَ جُلْدِي ، وَدِقَّةَ عَظْمِي

My Nourisher! Have mercy on the infirmity of my body, the delicacy of my skin and the brittleness of my bones

يَا مَنْ بَدَأَ خَلْقِي وَذَكَرِي وَتَرْبِيَّتِي وَبِرِّي وَتَغْذِيَّتِي هَبْنِي لِابْتِدَاءِ كَرَمِكَ وَسَالِفِ بَرَكَاتِي

O' Thou! Who originated my creation and (accorded me) my individuality, and (ensured) my upbringing and welfare (and provided) my sustenance (I beg Thee) to restore Thy favours and blessings upon me as Thou didst in the beginning of my life

يَا إِلَهِي وَسَيِّدِي وَرَبِّي ، أَتُرَاكَ مُعَذِّبِي بِنَارِكَ بَعْدَ تَوْحِيدِكَ وَيَعْدَمَا انْطَوَى عَلَيْهِ قَلْبِي مِنْ مَعْرِفَتِكَ ، وَلَهَجَ بِهِ لِسَانِي مِنْ ذِكْرِكَ وَاعْتَقَدَهُ ضَمِيرِي مِنْ حُبِّكَ وَبَعْدَ صِدْقِ اعْتِرَافِي وَدُعَائِي خَاضِعاً لِرُبُوبِيَّتِكَ

O' my God! My master! My Lord! And my Nourisher! What! Wilt Thou see me punished with the fire kindled by Thee despite my belief in Thy unity? And despite the fact that my heart has been filled with (pure) knowledge of Thee and when my tongue has repeatedly praised Thee and my conscience has acknowledged Thy love and despite my sincere confessions (of my sins) and my humble entreaties submissively made to Thy divinity?

هَيْهَاتَ ! أَنْتَ أَكْرَمُ مَنْ أَنْ تُضَيِّعَ مَنْ رَبَّيْتَهُ ، أَوْ تُبْعِدَ مَنْ أَدْنَيْتَهُ أَوْ تُشْرِدَ مَنْ آوَيْتَهُ ، أَوْ تُسَلِّمَ إِلَى الْبَلَاءِ مَنْ كَفَيْتَهُ وَرَحِمْتَهُ

Nay, Thou art far too kind and generous to destroy one whom thyself nourished and supported, or to drive away from Thyself one whom Thou has kept under Thy protection, or to scare away

one whom Thy self hast given shelter, or to abandon in affliction one Thou hast maintained and to whom Thou hast been merciful

وَلَيْتَ شِعْرِي يَا سَيِّدِي وَالْهَيَّ وَمَوْلَايَ ! أُنْزِلْتُ النَّارَ عَلَى وُجُوهِ خَرَّتْ لِعِظَمَتِكَ سَاجِدَةً وَعَلَى أَلْسِنٍ نَطَقَتْ بِتَوْحِيدِكَ صَادِقَةً وَيُشْكِرُكَ مَادِحَةً وَعَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَعْتَرَفَتْ بِالْهَيْبَةِ مُحَقِّقَةً وَعَلَى ضَمَائِرٍ حَوَتْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ بِكَ حَتَّى صَارَتْ خَاشِعَةً ! وَعَلَى جَوَارِحَ سَعَتْ إِلَى أَوْطَانٍ تَعْبُدُكَ طَائِعَةً ، وَأَشَارَتْ بِاسْتِغْفَارِكَ مُذْنَعَةً ؟

I wish I had known o' my Master, my God and my Lord! Wilt Thou inflict fire upon faces which have submissively bowed in prostration to Thy greatness, or upon the tongues which have sincerely confirmed Thy unity and have always expressed gratitude to Thee, or upon hearts which have acknowledged Thy divinity with conviction, or upon the minds which accumulated so much knowledge of Thee until they became submissive to Thee, or upon the limbs which strove, at the places appointed for Thy worship, to adore Thee willingly and seek Thy forgiveness submissively?

In translating the above passage, I have adopted the Persian translation thereof given by Malbubi. For instance, he translates the expression “laitha shi’ri” as “kash mi danistam” which means “I wish I had known”, he translates “kharrat” as “falling down on earth and prostrating”; he translates “jawarih” as “limbs of the body”; he translates “hawat” as “to gather” which I have rendered into English as “to accumulate”, he translates “autaan” as plural of “Watan” meaning centres or homes and “ta’abudi” as “worship” and I have rendered the expression in English as “places appointed for worship” which include mosques, places of prayers like namaz gah. In fact every inch of the earth, which is not privately owned and is pure from pollution (najasat) is a place of worship”.

مَا هَكَذَا الظَّنُّ بِكَ وَلَا أَخْبِرْنَا بِفَضْلِكَ عَنْكَ

Such sort (of harshness) is not expected from Thee as it is remote from Thy grace, o' generous one!

Although the Qur'an proclaims Allah as “*severe in requiting (evil)*” in C. 2 v. 165, He is also described as “*Oft relenting and Merciful.*” (9: 118). According to Malbubi, a Hadith directs us always to have “Husni dhan a good and favourable opinion for Allah.

يَا كَرِيمُ يَا رَبِّ وَأَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ ضَعْفِي عَنْ قَلِيلٍ مِنْ بَلَاءِ الدُّنْيَا وَعُقُوبَاتِهَا وَمَا يَجْرِي فِيهَا مِنَ الْمَكَارِهِ عَلَى أَهْلِهَا عَلَى أَنَّ ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ وَمَكْرُوهٌ قَلِيلٌ مَكْنُوءٌ ، يَسِيرٌ بِقَاوِهِ قَصِيرٌ مُدَّتُهُ

O' Lord! Thou art aware of my weakness to bear even a minor affliction of this world and its consequence and adversity affecting the denizen of this earth, although such afflictions are

momentary, short-lived and transient

فَكَيْفَ إِحْتِمَالِي لِبَلَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ وَجَلِيلِ وَقُوعِ الْمَكَارِهِ فِيهَا وَهُوَ بَلَاءٌ تَطُولُ مُدَّتُهُ وَيَدُومُ مَقَامُهُ وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْ أَهْلِهِ لَأَنَّهُ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا عَنْ غَضَبِكَ وَانْتِقَامِكَ وَسَخَطِكَ وَهَذَا مَا لَا تَقُومُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ

How then can I bear the retributions and the punishments of the hereafter which are enormous and of intensive sufferings, of prolonged period and perpetual duration, and which shall never be alleviated for those who deserve the same as those retributions will be the result of Thy wrath; and Thy punishment which neither the heavens nor the earth can withstand and bear!

يَا سَيِّدِي فَكَيْفَ لِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ الضَّعِيفُ الذَّلِيلُ الْحَقِيرُ الْمِسْكِينُ الْمُسْتَكَينُ؟

My Lord! How can I, a weak, insignificant, humble, poor and destitute creature of Thine be able to bear them?

يَا إِلَهِي وَرَبِّي وَسَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَايَ ، لَايَ الْأُمُورِ إِلَيْكَ أَشْكُو ، وَلِمَا مِنْهَا أَضِجُ وَأَبْكِي

O' my God! My Lord! My King! And Master! Which of the matters shall I complain to Thee and for which of them shall I bewail and weep?

لَا لِيَمِ الْعَذَابِ وَشِدَّتِهِ ، أَمْ لَطُولِ الْبَلَاءِ وَمُدَّتِهِ ؟

Shall I bewail for the pains and pangs of the punishment and their intensity or for the length of sufferings and their duration?

فَلَيْتَنُ صَيَّرْتَنِي لِلْعُقُوبَاتِ مَعَ أَعْدَائِكَ ، وَجَمَعْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ أَهْلِ بِلَاتِكَ وَفَرَّقْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ أَحِبَّائِكَ وَأَوْلِيَائِكَ فَهَبْنِي يَا إِلَهِي وَسَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَايَ وَرَبِّي ، صَبَرْتُ عَلَى عَذَابِكَ فَكَيْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَى فِرَاقِكَ؟

Therefore (my Lord!) If Thou wilt subject me to the penalties (of hell) in company of Thy enemies and cast me with those who merited Thy punishments and tear me apart from Thy friends and those who will be near to Thee, then my God, my Lord and my Master, though I may patiently bear Thy punishments, how can I calmly accept being kept away from Thee?

وَهَبْنِي صَبَرْتُ عَلَى حَرِّ نَارِكَ فَكَيْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَنِ النَّظَرِ إِلَى كَرَامَتِكَ ، أَمْ كَيْفَ أَسْكُنُ فِي النَّارِ وَرَجَائِي عَفْوُكَ ؟

I reckon that though I may patiently endure the scorching fire of Thy hell, yet how can I resign myself to the denial of Thy pity and clemency? How can I remain in the fire while I have hopes of Thy forgiveness?

Wailing, lamentation and weeping over one's own sins are the only weapons available to a repentant sinner who seeks Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness. ***“Call on your Lord” (7:55)***, says the Qur'an, ***“humbly and secretly” (7:55)***. In fact it is stated in an authenticated hadith—“The most beloved tears in Allah's sight are those that are shed by a repentant sinner” and numerous instances are recorded of some reputed transgressors of Allah's laws being forgiven and granted Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness by means of this weeping armoury.

Sheikh Bahai, (1) one of the leading Muslim theologians, records in Vo. 5 of his book called “Kashkul” that a reputed sinner happened to die in the suburb of Basra, Iraq, and his widow did her best to obtain the assistance of the villagers to wash, shroud and bury his body according to Muslim rites but none of them, because of the deceased's notoriety, could be persuaded to co-operate. As a last recourse, she had the deceased's body removed by porters to a place where the Muslims usually assembled for their prayers in the hope that some of the congregation might recite the funeral prayer on the dead body but no one took any notice of the body.

She then got the porters to remove the corpse to a desert and accompanied the body with the intention of getting a grave dug and bury it without ablution, shrouds or funeral prayers. On reaching the desert, she was surprised to see an aged devout worshipper, who lived in a cave near by to spend the rest of his life in devotion and worship of Allah, waiting to receive the corpse. The devout worshipper took over the corpse, washed and shrouded it and despatched a courier to the villagers in the vicinity that he was going to recite the funeral prayer on the body.

When the villagers and the people in the city of Basra got this news, a crowd of them assembled in the desert and inquired from the venerable worshipper, who was held in high esteem for his piety and asceticism, as to what prompted him, to leave the place of his worship and attend to the funeral rites of a reputed wretch. He replied that he had seen a vision commanding him to attend to the funeral rites of the deceased who, he said, was described in the vision as “a; repentant person whom Allah had forgiven and had assigned to him a place in the vicinity of His Mercy.”

The crowd being astonished to hear of this vision, asked the deceased's widow if he had any virtues to deserve a place in the Divine Mercy. She said that so far as she knew, her husband was addicted to drinking and gay life but he did possess three peculiar qualities. Firstly, when he woke up at day break, he used to perform an absolute ablution of his body, dress in pure garments and say his morning prayers. Secondly, never a day passed without him doing some kindness to orphans. It was his habit to refuse taking his meals unless two or three orphans joined him and he used to treat orphans more kindly than his own children. Thirdly, if he happened to wake up in the middle of the night, he used to weep and pray “My Lord! Is it possible for my body to be so enlarged as to fill up the entire pit of hell so that

there would be no room in it for anyone else; my Master! I shall endure Thy hell fire but I shall not be able to endure to see the sufferings of Thine other creatures.”

When the crowd heard this talk of the widow, they all –including the devout worshipper wept and said– “Indeed, we are fortunate to be able to join the funeral prayer of such a patron of orphans and tender hearted person.” They then all joined in the funeral prayer and buried the body with respect and dignity. (Anisul Lail).

(1) Sheikh Bahai (whose full name is Bahau Deen Amili and ranks high amongst Shia Ithna asheri theologians) should not be confused with the new Bahai religious system which is a comparatively new system founded in the 19th century by a person who was called “Baab” and was shortly thereafter followed by a man called Bahauallah” who claimed to have received divine revelation. (The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary).

فَبِعِزَّتِكَ يَا سَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَايَ أَقْسِمُ صَادِقًا ، لئنُ تَرَكَتَنِي نَاطِقًا لَأَضِجَنَّ إِلَيْكَ بَيْنَ أَهْلِهَا ضَجِيجَ الْإِمْلِينِ وَلَا صُرُخَنَّ إِلَيْكَ
صُرَاخَ الْمُسْتَصْرِخِينَ

O' my Lord! By Thy honour truly do I swear that, if Thou wilt allow my power of speech to be retained by me in the hell, I shall amongst its inmates cry out bewailingly unto Thee like the cry of those who have faith in Thy kindness and compassion

وَلَا بُكْيَنَ عَلَيْكَ بُكَاءُ الْفَاقِدِينَ وَلَأُنَادِيَنَّكَ أَئِنَّ كُنْتَ يَا وَلِيَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ، يَا غَايَةَ أَمَالِ الْعَارِفِينَ يَا غِيَاثَ الْمُسْتَغِيثِينَ ، يَا حَبِيبَ
قُلُوبِ الصَّادِقِينَ يَا إِلَهَ الْعَالَمِينَ

And I shall bemoan for Thee (for being deprived of nearness to Thee) the lamentation of those who are bereaved, and I shall keep on calling unto Thee: “Where art Thou o' Friend of the believers! O' (Thou who art) the last hope and resort of those who acknowledge Thee and have faith in Thy clemency and kindness; o' Thou who art the helper of those seeking help! O' Thou who art dear to the hearts of those who truly believe in Thee! And o' Thou who art the Lord of the universe.”

Heart felt words are these to manifest the anguish and sorrow of a believer who, while not resenting the justice meted out to him by Allah in casting him into the hell, nevertheless deplores the fact that he has been separated from Allah's Grace and Mercy. Appropriate phrases such as these for the purpose of supplication can only be learnt from a true Imam who knows the proper method of approach to Allah.

We have instances of similar words employed by Imam Zainul Abidin (‘a) in the Du'a which he taught Abu Hamza Thamali to recite in the early dawn of the holy month of Ramadhan. One of the passages reads–”My Lord! If Thou wilt cast me into fire, it will only delight Thy enemies but if Thou wilt cause me

to enter paradise it will delight Thy Prophet and by Allah I am aware that the joy of Thy Prophet is more beloved to Thee than the joy of Thy enemies.”

Another passage of the Du'a reads: My God! My Lord! I swear by Thy Honour and Majesty, if Thou seeks (to punish me) for my sins, I shall seek Thy Forgiveness; if Thou seeks to reprove me for my blames, I shall seek from Thee Thy Generosity; If Thou wilt cast me into the fire, I shall inform its denizens of my love for Thee.”

أَفْتُرَاكَ سُبْحَانَكَ يَا إِلَهِي وَبِحَمْدِكَ تَسْمَعُ فِيهَا صَوْتَ عَبْدٍ مُسْلِمٍ سُجِنَ فِيهَا بِمُخَالَفَتِهِ وَذَاقَ طَعْمَ عَذَابِهَا بِمَعْصِيَتِهِ ،
وَحُبْسَ بَيْنَ أَطْبَاقِهَا بِجُرْمِهِ وَجَرِيرَتِهِ وَهُوَ يَضْجُ إِلَيْكَ ضَجِيجَ مُؤَمِّلٍ لِرَحْمَتِكَ وَيُنَادِيكَ بِلِسَانِ أَهْلِ تَوْحِيدِكَ ، وَيَتَوَسَّلُ
إِلَيْكَ بِرُبُوبِيَّتِكَ

My Lord! Glory and praise be to Thee, wouldst Thou (wish) to be seen (disregarding) the voice of a Muslim bondman, incarcerated therein (the hell) for his disobedience and imprisoned within its pits for his evildoings and misdeeds, crying out to Thee the utterance of one who has faith in Thy mercy and calling out to Thee in the language of those who believe in Thy unity and seeking to approach Thee by means of Thy epithet “the Creator, the Nourisher, the Accomplisher and the Protector of the entire existence”?

“Afaturaka” is composed of interrogative article “Aa” the conjunction “Fe” and the word “Turaka” meaning “thou be seen” and every effort has been made to render the complex Arabic passage comprehensible by the addition of a couple of words in brackets, without omitting any of the original words. This passage represents a humble reasoning, submitted with all humility, by a fallible creature to invoke the mercy of the Creator.

The word “Rububiyyataka” is difficult to render accurately in English, “Rabb” has been frequently used in the Qur'an and translated by most translators into English as “Lord” but the word is very comprehensive and means also “Nourisher”, “Fosterer”, “Accomplisher” and “Protector”, when used in respect of Allah, it covers all these meanings and means “The Author and the Originator of all the existence.”

يَا مُؤَلَّيْ فَكَيْفَ يَبْقَى فِي الْعَذَابِ وَهُوَ يَرْجُو مَاسَلَفَ مَنْ حُلِمَ ؟

My Lord! Then how could he remain in torments when he hopefully relies upon Thy past forbearance, compassion and mercy?

Indeed. Allah has himself drawn attention to these attributes in the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

“Announce (O' Muhammad) unto my slaves that verily I am Forgiving, Merciful.” (15:49).

Allah is not the Lord of Vengeance but of Mercy. In Verse. 6:54 of the Holy Qur'an, He says:

“Your Lord hath prescribed for Himself Mercy.” (Malbubi).

أَمْ كَيْفَ تُؤْلِمُهُ النَّارُ وَهُوَ يَأْمُلُ فَضْلَكَ وَرَحْمَتَكَ ؟ أَمْ كَيْفَ يُحْرِقُهُ لَهَبُهَا وَأَنْتَ تَسْمَعُ صَوْتَهُ وَتَرَى مَكَانَهُ ؟

أَمْ كَيْفَ يَشْتَمِلُ عَلَيْهِ زَفِيرُهَا وَأَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ ضَعْفَهُ ؟ أَمْ كَيْفَ يَتَقَلَّقُ بَيْنَ أَطْبَاقِهَا وَأَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ صِدْقَهُ ؟ أَمْ كَيْفَ تَزْجُرُهُ زَبَانِيَّتُهَا وَهُوَ يُنَادِيكَ يَا رَبَّاهُ ؟

And how can the fire cause him suffering when he hopes for Thy grace and mercy and how can its roaring flames char him when Thou hearest his voice and sees his plight? And how can he withstand its roaring flames when Thou knowest his frailness? And how can he be tossed about between its layers when Thou knowest his sincerity? And how can the guards of hell threaten him when he calls out to Thee?

أَمْ كَيْفَ يَرْجُو فَضْلَكَ فِي عِتْقِهِ مِنْهَا فَتَتْرُكُهُ فِيهَا ؟

“My Lord”, and how would Thou abandon him therein (the hell) when he has faith in Thy grace to set him free?

! هَيْهَاتَ ! مَا ذَلِكَ الظَّنُّ بِكَ ، وَلَا الْمَعْرُوفُ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ ، وَلَا مُشَبَّهٌ لِمَا عَامَلْتَ بِهِ الْمُؤَحِّدِينَ مِنْ بَرِّكَ وَإِحْسَانِكَ

Alas! That is not the concept (held by us) of Thee nor has Thy grace such a reputation nor does it resemble that which Thou hast awarded by Thy kindness and generosity to those who believe in Thy unity

فَبِالْيَقِينِ أَقْطَعُ ، لَوْلَا مَا حَكَمْتَ بِهِ مِنْ تَعْذِيبِ جَاوِدِيكَ وَقَضَيْتَ بِهِ مِنْ إِخْلَادِ مُعَانِدِيكَ ، لَجَعَلْتَ النَّارَ كُلَّهَا بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا ، وَمَا كَانَ لِأَحَدٍ فِيهَا مَقَرًّا وَلَا مَقَامًا لَكِنَّكَ تَقَدَّسَتْ أَسْمَاؤُكَ أَقْسَمْتَ أَنْ تَمْلَأَهَا مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ، مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ، وَأَنْ تُخَلِّدَ فِيهَا الْمُعَانِدِينَ

I definitely conclude that hadst Thou not ordained punishment for those who disbelieved in Thee, and hadst Thou not decreed Thy enemies to remain in hell, Thou wouldst have made the hell cold and peaceful and there would never have been an abode or place for any one in it; but sanctified be Thy Names, Thou hast sworn to fill the hell with the disbelievers from amongst the jinns and mankind together and to place forever Thy enemies therein

وَأَنْتَ جَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ قُلْتَ مُبْتَدِئًا ، وَتَطَوَّلْتَ بِالْإِنْعَامِ مُتَكَرِّمًا ، أَفَمَنْ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَنْ كَانَ فَاسِقًا ، لَا يَسْتَوُونَ

And Thou, exalted be Thy praises, hadst made manifest, out of Thy generosity and kindness that a believer is not like unto him who is an evil-liver

See Verse 32: 18 of the Holy Qur'an, Pickthall's translation.

إِلَهِي وَسَيِّدِي ، فَأَسْأَلُكَ بِالْقُدْرَةِ الَّتِي قَدَّرْتَهَا وَبِالْقَضِيَّةِ الَّتِي حَتَمْتَهَا وَحَكَمْتَهَا ، وَغَلَبْتَ مَنْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرِيَّتُهَا أَنْ تَهَبَ لِي فِي هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ وَفِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ ، كُلَّ جُرْمٍ أَجْرَمْتُهُ وَكُلَّ ذَنْبٍ أَذْنَبْتُهُ ، وَكُلَّ قَبِيحٍ أَسْرَرْتُهُ ، وَكُلَّ جَهْلٍ عَمِلْتُهُ ، كَتَمْتُهُ أَوْ أَعْلَنْتُهُ ، أَخْفَيْتُهُ أَوْ أَظْهَرْتُهُ وَكُلَّ سَيِّئَةٍ أَمَرْتُ بِإِثْبَاتِهَا الْكَرَامَ الْكَاتِبِينَ ، الَّذِينَ وَكَّلْتَهُمْ بِحِفْظِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنِّي وَجَعَلْتَهُمْ شُهُوداً عَلَيَّ مَعَ جَوَارِحِي ، وَكُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ ، وَالشَّاهِدَ لِمَا خَفِيَ عَنْهُمْ ، وَبِرَحْمَتِكَ أَخْفَيْتُهُ ، وَبِفَضْلِكَ سَتَرْتُهُ

My Lord! My Master! I, therefore implore Thee by that power which Thou determineth and by the decree which Thou hast finalised and ordained whereby Thou hath prevailed upon whom Thou hast imposed it, to bestow upon me this night and this very hour the forgiveness for all the transgressions that I have been guilty of, for all the sins that I have committed, for all the loathsome acts that I have kept secret and for all the evils done by me, secretly or openly, in concealment or outwardly and for every evil action that Thou hast ordered the two noble scribes to confirm whom Thou hast appointed to record all my actions and to be witnesses over me along with the limbs of my body, whilst Thou observeth over me besides them and wast witness to those acts concealed from them? Which Thou in Thy mercy hast kept secret and through Thy kindness unexposed

وَأَنْ تُؤَفِّرَ حَظِّي مِنْ كُلِّ خَيْرٍ أَنْزَلْتَهُ ، أَوْ إِحْسَانٍ فَضَّلْتَهُ أَوْ بَرٍّ نَشَرْتَهُ ، أَوْ رِزْقٍ بَسَطْتَهُ ، أَوْ ذَنْبٍ تَغْفِرُهُ أَوْ خَطَا تَسْتُرُهُ

And I pray to Thee to make my share plentiful in all the good that Thou dost bestow; in all the favours that Thou dost grant; and in all the virtues that Thou dost allow to be known everywhere; and in all the sustenance and livelihood that Thou dost expand and in respect of all the sins that Thou dost forgive and the wrongs that Thou dost cover up

يَارَبَّ يَارَبَّ يَارَبِّ ، يَا إِلَهِي وَسَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَايَ وَمَالِكِ رَقِّي ، يَا مَنْ بِيَدِهِ نَاصِيَّتِي يَا عَلِيمًا بِضُرِّي وَمَسْكِنَتِي ، يَا خَبِيرًا بِفَقْرِي وَفَاقَتِي يَارَبَّ يَارَبَّ يَارَبَّ

O' Lord! O' Lord! O' Lord! O' my God! My Lord! My King! O' Master of my freedom! O' Thou who holdeth my destiny and who art aware of my suffering and poverty, o' Thou who knoweth my destitution and starvation, o' my Lord! O' Lord, o' Lord!

أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّكَ وَقُدْسِكَ وَأَعْظَمِ صِفَاتِكَ وَأَسْمَائِكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ أَوْقَاتِي مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ بِذِكْرِكَ مَعْمُورَةً ، وَبِخِدْمَتِكَ

مَوْصُولَةٌ وَأَعْمَالِي عِنْدَكَ مَقْبُولَةٌ ، حَتَّى تَكُونَ أَعْمَالِي وَأُورَادِي كُلُّهَا وَرْدًا وَاحِدًا ، وَحَالِي فِي خِدْمَتِكَ سَرْمَدًا

I beseech Thee by Thy glory and Thy honour, by Thy supremely high attributes and by Thy names to cause me to utilise my time, day and night, in Thy remembrance, by engaging myself in serving Thee (Thy cause) and to let my deeds be such as to be acceptable to Thee, so much so that all my actions and offerings (prayers) may be transformed into one continuous and sustained effort and my life may take the form of constant and perpetual service to Thee

The Holy Qur'an says:

“Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” (13:28).

It gives solace to those suffering misery, bereavement, destitution or sinfulness. Service to Allah includes service to family and humanity. “Offering prayers”, of course, has been particularly mentioned because without observing the daily prayers, there can be no “remembrance of Allah.” Allah says in the Qur'an:

“Therefore, remember Me, I will remember you.” (2: 152).

It is stated in the Hadith of the Imam that when the time arrives for saying the prayers, an angel calls out to the people—“Stand up to extinguish the fire that you have kindled behind your backs and put it out by means of your mouths (prayers)” (Malbubi).

يَا سَيِّدِي يَا مَنْ عَلَيْهِ مُعَوَّلِي ، يَا مَنْ إِلَيْهِ شَكَوْتُ أَحْوَالِي يَا رَبِّ يَا رَبِّ يَا رَبِّ ، قَوِّ عَلَى خِدْمَتِكَ جَوَارِحِي

وَأَشْدُدْ عَلَى الْعَزِيمَةِ جَوَانِحِي وَهَبْ لِي الْجِدَّ فِي خَشْيَتِكَ ، وَالدَّوَامَ فِي الْإِتِّصَالِ بِخِدْمَتِكَ

O' my Master! O' Thou upon Whom I rely! O' Thou unto Whom I express my distress! O' my Lord! My Lord! My Lord! Strengthen my limbs for Thy service and sustain the strength of my hands to persevere in Thy service and bestow upon me the eagerness to fear Thee and constantly to serve Thee

“Fear of Allah” is the sheet anchor for preventing disorders, crimes and vandalism. The sanctions of human made laws cannot do so. To instil the fear of Allah needs to introduce into human minds the knowledge of Allah, His Powers and Retributions.

“Only the erudite among His bondsmen fear Allah” (25:28).

In order to warn mankind of the catastrophic results of their misdeeds, Allah does some time create symbolic punishments in this world in the form of hurricanes, earthquakes and floods which no power on earth, despite being fore warned by barometers and other scientific means, can forestall or prevent.

These are mere symbols of Allah's Power to deter us from our sinful courses.

But, instead of drawing any lessons from them, we have, by human made laws, legalised the abominable acts of homosexuals and have condoned immorality by changing its nomenclature to “permissiveness” and have thereby, in the name of liberty, allowed our daughters, mothers and sisters, to purvey their most sacred jewel, Chastity as a saleable commodity and to portray one of the most beloved servants of Allah, Prophet Jesus Christ, as a homosexual!

Does this type of conduct justify us to plead to our Creator to save us from the Doom hereafter which has been described as one which “the earth and heavens cannot withstand.” What is called for, is pure character and not “songs of Praise.”

حَتَّى أَسْرَحَ إِلَيْكَ فِي مَيَادِينِ السَّابِقِينَ وَأُسْرِعَ إِلَيْكَ فِي الْبَارِزِينَ ، وَأَشْتَاقَ إِلَى قُرْبِكَ فِي الْمُشْتَاقِينَ وَأَدْنُو مِنْكَ دُنُو الْمُخْلِصِينَ ، وَأَخَافُكَ مَخَافَةَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ، وَأَجْتَمِعُ فِي جِوَارِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

So that I may lead myself towards Thee in the field with the vanguards who are in the fore rank and be swift towards Thee among those who hasten towards Thee and urge eagerly to be near Thee and draw myself towards Thee like them who sincerely draw themselves towards Thee and to fear Thee like the fear of those who believe firmly in Thee and thus I may join the congregation of the faithful congregated near Thee (for protection)

According to Malbubi, the words “saraha” means `to lead out” the word “mayadin” is the plural of “maidan” meaning “the battle field” which obviously means “spiritual” battle field whose van guards (leaders) are the prophets and friends of Allah and the word “javar” is the plural of `Jar” meaning a neighbour and in the passage above it means “Allah's protection.”

اللَّهُمَّ وَمَنْ أَرَادَنِي بِسُوءٍ فَأَرِدْهُ ، وَمَنْ كَادَنِي فَكِدْهُ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ أَحْسَنِ عِبِيدِكَ نَصِيباً عِنْدَكَ ، وَأَقْرَبِهِمْ مَنْزِلَةً مِنْكَ ، وَأَخْصِهِمْ زُلْفَةً لَدَيْكَ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُنَالُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِفَضْلِكَ وَجُدْ لِي بِجُودِكَ ، وَاعْظِفْ عَلَيَّ بِمَجْدِكَ ، وَأَحْفَظْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ وَأَجْعَلْ لِسَانِي بِذِكْرِكَ لَهْجاً ، وَقَلْبِي بِحُبِّكَ مُتِّمّاً وَمَنْ عَلَيَّ بِحُسْنِ إِجَابَتِكَ ، وَأَقْلَبْنِي عَثْرَتِي ، وَاعْفِرْ زَلَّتِي فَإِنَّكَ قَضَيْتَ عَلَى عِبَادِكَ بِعِبَادَتِكَ ، وَأَمَرْتَهُمْ بِدُعَائِكَ ، وَضَمَنْتَ لَهُمُ الْإِجَابَةَ

O' Allah! Whosoever intendeth evil against me, let ill befall on him and frustrate him who plots against me and assign for me a place in Thy presence with the best of Thy bondsmen and nearer abode to Thee, for verily that position cannot be attained except through Thy grace and treat me benevolently, and through Thy greatness extend Thy munificence towards me and through Thy mercy protect me and cause my tongue to accentuate Thy remembrance and my heart filled with Thy love and be liberal to me by Thy gracious response and cause my evils to appear fewer and forgive me my errors for verily, Thou hast ordained for Thy bondsmen Thy worship and bidden them to supplicate unto Thee and hast assured them (of Thy) response

The assurance referred to in the above passage is given in Verse 40:60 of the Qur'an which reads:

“And your Lord hath said: “Call on Me, I will answer your call”.

But there are requisites laid down by the Holy Qur'an for the supplication to be answered. Allah says in Verse 2: 186:

“I answer the supplication of every suppliant who calleth on Me, let them also, with a will, answer My call, and have faith in Me, that they may proceed aright.”

“Faith in Me” means a vivid realisation of His Living Presence and the truth of His having care of us.

“Answer My call” means obedience to His commandments. He says:

“Fulfil your promise to Me and I will fulfil Mine to you.” (2:40).

فَإِلَيْكَ يَا رَبِّ نَصَبْتُ وَجْهِي ، وَإِلَيْكَ يَا رَبِّ مَدَدْتُ يَدَيَّ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ أَسْتَجِبْ لِي دُعَائِي ، وَبَلِّغْنِي مُنَايَ وَلَا تَقْطَعْ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ
رَجَائِي ، وَاكْفِنِي شَرَّ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ مِنْ أَعْدَائِي يَا سَرِيعَ الرِّضَا إِغْفِرْ لِمَنْ لَا يَمْلِكُ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءُ ، فَإِنَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِمَا تَشَاءُ يَا مَنْ
إِسْمُهُ دَوَاءٌ ، وَذِكْرُهُ شِفَاءٌ ، وَطَاعَتُهُ غِنَى إِرْحَمْ مَنْ رَأْسُ مَالِهِ الرَّجَاءُ وَسِلَاحُهُ الْبُكَاءُ

So, my Lord! I look earnestly towards Thee and towards Thee, my Lord! I have stretched forth my hands therefore, by Thy honour, respond to my supplication and let me attain my wishes and, by Thy bounty, frustrate not my hopes and protect me from the evils of my enemies, from among the jinns and mankind o' Thou! Who readily pleased, forgive one who owns nothing but supplication for Thou doest what Thou wilt o' Thou! Whose Name is the remedy (for all ills) and Whose remembrance is a sure cure for all ailments and obedience to Whom makes one self-sufficient; have mercy on one whose only asset is hope and whose only armour is lamentation

يَا سَابِغَ النِّعَمِ ، يَا دَافِعَ النَّقَمِ ، يَا نُورَ الْمُسْتَوحِشِينَ فِي الظُّلُمِ يَا عَالِمًا لَا يُعْلَمُ ، صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ، وَأَفْعَلْ بِي
مَا أَنْتَ أَهْلُهُ

O' Thou! Who perfecteth all bounties and Who wardeth off all misfortunes! O' Light! Who illuminateth those who are in bewilderment! O' Omniscient! Who knoweth without (acquisition of) learning! Bless Muhammad and the Descendants of Muhammad and do unto me in accordance with that which befitteth Thee, and deal with me not in accordance to my worth

The suppliant, in utter humility, entreats Allah, to deal with him not in accordance with what he deserves as a sinner, but in compatibility with Allah's own high attributes as Forgiver, Merciful and Cherisher of His bondman and lead him to the path of piety and righteousness as He, Allah, is the Lord of Piety and Righteousness.

وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَى رَسُوْلِهِ وَالْاٰثِمَةِ الْمَيّٰمِيْنَ مِنْ اٰلِهِ وَسَلَّم تَسْلِيْمًا كَثِيْرًا

May the blessings of Allah be bestowed upon His Apostle and the Rightful Imams from his Descendants and His peace be upon them plentifully

Notes

The Author acknowledges with gratitude the assistance received from the following works –

(a) **“Know Your Islam”** published by Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust of Karachi (Pakistan), which contains a verbatim translation of the “Du'a” in the English language, and which has been reproduced mutatis mutandis in this Commentary.

(b) **“Anisul Lail FI Sharhi Du'ail Kumayl”** which is an Arabic commentary on the “Du'a”;

(c) **“Darman Ruho Rawan”** which is a commentary in the Farsi language of the Du'a and contains scholarly interpretations of its words and phrases written by the learned Aqa Muhammad Baqir Malbubi.

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[5] <https://www.al-islam.org/tags/dua-kumayl>

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