

Imam Jawad (A.S.) debates with leaders of various religions and scholars

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"O Allah, I beseech You knowing that You are the Sovereign, that You have power over all things, and whatever You Will, comes into being. O Allah, I turn to You through Your Prophet, Mohammad, the Messenger of Mercy, may Allah bless him and his Family. O Mohammad, O Prophet of Allah! I turn to Allah through You, your Lord and my Lord, that He may fulfill my request for your sake. O Allah, for the sake of Your Prophet, Muhammad, and the Imams of his Family, may Allah bless him and his Family, fulfill my request!"

The supplication in the Divine Court that we recited to you is the one which the faithful recite on the eve of the advent of the sacred month of Rajab. As is evident by its wordings, it is indeed unique. Although the English translation might lack the electrifying impact of the original Arabic on the listeners, nonetheless, as could be clear by the English wordings as well that the one who bequeathed this supplication to humanity was not an ordinary human being. As is obvious, after beseeching the Almighty directly without any intercessor, Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) is being addressed as the intercessor, and then again Allah is being implored for the sake of the Messenger of Mercy and the Imams of his Household.

Perhaps the naïve, as well as the knaves, might not grasp the message of this supplication because of the retarded nature of their minds, but anyone well-versed with God's Revealed Word, the holy Qur'an, where the Almighty Himself has spoken of "wasila" (or means) and "shafa'a" or intercession in the Divine Court, know for sure that these wordings are indeed hidden treasures, or else their prayers would never have been answered. Moreover, the Prophet himself set the precedent in this regard by teaching the faithful to supplicate to Allah by invoking those whom the Almighty Creator holds near and dear.

To be more precise, this particular supplication was taught by the person whose birth anniversary we celebrate every year on the 10th of Rajab. He was the 9th Infallible Heir of the Prophet, and was entrusted the imamate of mankind at the tender age of 8 years. Yet despite his fairly young age, he immediately set about to prove his mission by making speechless. So powerful were his words of wisdom that certain silver-bearded scholars of his age, whose sceptical minds had been unable to comprehend the ayah of the holy Qur'an that speaks of John (Yahya) being granted wisdom and the book while still a child, tried to pose questions to him beyond his age. It is a matter of regret that these self-styled scholars also seemed to have forgotten the ayahs of Surah Maryam where the infant Jesus speaks of his mission from the cradle. The 9th Imam, whose epithet "Taqi" means Pious, while another famous epithet "Jawad" means Generous in both material and spiritual matters, including knowledge, jolted from deep slumber the minds of the self-doubting scholars. As the son of the Martyr of Khorasan, Imam Reza (AS), he gave glimpses of his God-given knowledge to all those who came into contact with him, thereby proving beyond an iota of doubt that he was a spotlessly pure heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA).

There was no doubt he was the Imam of the age, a fact his opponents grudgingly acknowledged. During his 17-year mission, he enlightened minds and souls, grooming a large number of scholars in various fields, who would carry on for the benefit of posterity the legacy the Prophet had bequeathed to his divinely-decreed successor, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS) at Ghadeer-Khom, on the express commandment of God, while returning from his Farewell Hajj Pilgrimage to Mecca in 10 AH. Born in Medina in the year 195 AH, the 9th Imam was orphaned at the age of 8 because of the martyrdom through poison of his illustrious father, Imam Reza (AS), in distant Khorasan. Yet despite his tender years, Imam Jawad (AS) ably carried on his young shoulders the heavy responsibility of the guidance of the ummah. His debates with religious leaders of various religions, and scholars of different schools of philosophical thought, including with the grey-bearded Mu'tazallie ideologue, Yaya ibn Aktham, are well known. They deal with wide-ranging subjects, including the Hajj rituals, the rules of hunting birds and animals, marriage and laws of permissibility regarding women, and the important matter of "wilayah" or God-given authority that is vital in this world for unified leadership of the ummah, and so essential in afterlife for the safe and proper journey of the human soul.

For over 15 years, Imam Jawad (AS) was under the watchful eyes of the crafty caliph, Mamoun, the killer of his father. The Abbasid ruler forced his daughter in marriage upon the 9th Imam, who was already married and was the father of several children. After Mamoun's death, the 9th Imam was for around two years under the constant watch of the next caliph, Mu'tasim, who eventually martyred him through poisoning at the young age of only 25 years.

Imam Taqi (AS) was laid to rest in the shrine of Kazemain, north of Baghdad, beside his grandfather, Imam Musa Kazem (AS). Since time does not permit us go into details about the other important aspects of the life of the 9th Imam, who trained a vast number of scholars, let us recite to you another supplication to God invoking the names of the 9th and 10th Imams that the faithful punctually recite daily in Rajab and have their prayers answered by Almighty Allah. It reads: "O Allah, I beseech You, for the sake of the two Imams who were born in the month of Rajab, Mohammad ibn Ali the Second, and his son Ali ibn Mohammad, Your chosen one, and I seek nearness to You through them, which is the best of all proximities. O You from whom all boons are sought and that which is with You is eagerly asked for, You do I beseech, as an offender and sinner whose sins have ruined him, who is a captive in the bondage of his failings, persistent since long in error, languishing in his state of disaster. He beseeches You to accept his repentance with gracious clemency, to liberate him from sin and to rescue his neck from the Fire, and to pardon whatever he is guilty of. For You are my Master, my greatest hope and source of reliance.

"O Allah, I beseech You by the noble requests made of Your, and by Your sublime means (to fulfill them) to enfold me, in this month, in Your all-embracing mercy, and grant me Your apportioned blessings and a soul content with whatever You provide it, until its descent into its grave and its arrival at the site of the Hereafter and there where to it is bound."

Now we read an interesting poem composed by Iran's English language poet, Dr. Hassan Najafi:

Where will you rest, mad poet, at last
 In his love the weary length of life past,
 O Peace of mind! We are your love's guest
 The only softest soother of the breast,
 Your door alone in our bowl can pour
 Dispense your balmy store.
 In your love the earth diminishes to our eyes
 And stoop down the lofty heights of the skies.
 As darker grows the night
 Your love's gleaming light
 Emits a brighter ray
 Adorns and cheers our way.
 When in magnanimity stretches your hand
 No one lurks in a sullen gloom over the land.
 Bows down with chains to you the mankind
 To gain every good in you consigned.
 Hasten to pleasure
 The earth presents its brightest treasure.
 Today is the birth of the Ninth Imam
 Stoops down the heaven with all its balm,
 You, Reza's Son and Successor,
 And of wisdom's Possessor,
 At tender age you displayed prophetic knowledge,
 Like Jesus and John the Baptist you the Sage of your age,
 Silver-bearded scholars in your presence smattered
 Astounded at the bezels of wisdom you scattered
 If not for the Ahl al-Bayt, only rocks and sands are found
 And sickly winds forever howl around.