

Quranic treasures hidden in Salwat: Prayer for blessings on the Holy Prophet (s.a.s.) and his progeny (Holy Quran 33:56)

The following verse of the Holy Qur'an¹ commands Muslims to recite prayers in which they seek blessings for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and salute him with a worthy salutation.

"Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation." (33:56)

'Innallaha wa Malaaa-'ikatahuu yusallunna 'alan-Nabiyy:
Yaaa - 'ayyuhallaziina 'aamanuu salluu 'alayhi wa salimuu taslimma

The Holy Prophet elaborated on how to invoke blessings upon him and his family in the following hadith²:

We asked God's messenger this question, "How is the blessing to be invoked on you who belong to the prophetic family? God has taught us [only] how to salute you." He told us to say, "O God, bless Muhammad and Muhammad's family as Thou didst bless Abraham and Abraham's family. Thou art indeed praiseworthy and glorious. O God, grant favours to Muhammad and Muhammad's family as Thou didst grant favours to Abraham and Abraham's family. Thou art indeed praiseworthy and glorious."

The Holy Prophet has also explained how to invoke blessings upon him and his family in the following hadith³:

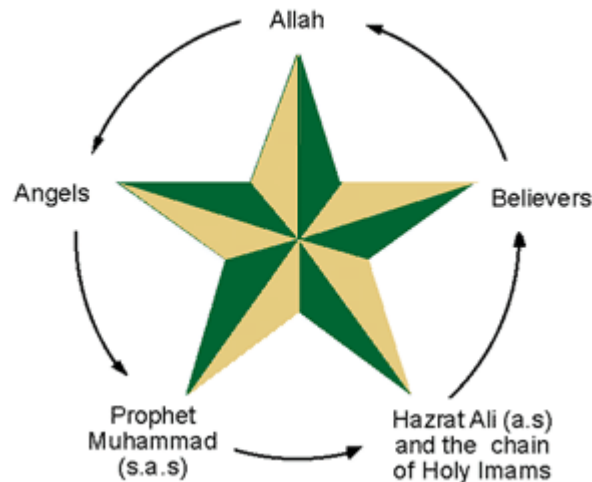
Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as saying: "If anyone would like to have the fullest measure granted him when he invokes blessings on us, the members of the prophetic family, he should say, "O God, bless Muhammad the ummi prophet, his wives who are the mothers of the faithful, his offspring, and the people of his house as Thou didst bless the family of Abraham. Thou art indeed praiseworthy and glorious."

In order to understand more about the Holy Prophet's family and the people of his house, the glossary of terms and the concepts in the preamble of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslim constitution can yield great insights.⁴ The glossary of terms used in the table below is accessible on line.

Preamble of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslim constitution

- (A)** The Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims affirm the Shahada 'La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasulu-Ilah', the Tawhid therein and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Salla-Ilahu 'alayhi wa-sallam) is the last and final Prophet of Allah. Islam, as revealed in the Holy Qur'an, is the final message of Allah to mankind, and is universal and eternal. The Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) through the divine revelation from Allah prescribed rules governing spiritual and temporal matters.
- (B)** In accordance to the Shia doctrine, tradition, and interpretation of history, the Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) designated and appointed his cousin and son-in-law Hazrat Mawlana Ali Amiru-l-Mu'minin ('Alayhi-s-salam), to be the first Imam to continue the Ta'wil and Ta'lim of Allah's final message and to guide the murids, and proclaimed that the Imam should continue by heredity through Hazrat Mawlana Ali (A.S.) and his daughter Hazrat Bibi Fatimat-az-Zahra, Khatun-i-Jannat ('Alayha-s-salam).
- (C)** Succession to Imam is by way of Nass, it being the absolute prerogative of the Imam of the time to appoint his successor from amongst any of his male descendants whether they be sons or remoter issue.
- (D)** The authority of the Imam in Ismaili Tariqah is testified by Bayah by the murid to the Imam which is an act of acceptance by the murid of the permanent spiritual bond between the Imam and the murid. This allegiance unites all Ismaili Muslims worldwide in their loyalty, devotion and obedience to the Imam within the Islamic concept of universal brotherhood. It is distinct from the allegiance of the individual murid to his land of abode.
- (E)** From the time of the Imam of Hazrat Mawlana Ali (A.S.), the Imams of Ismaili Muslims have ruled over territories and peoples over various areas of the world at different periods of history and, in accordance with the needs of the time, have given rules of conduct and constitutions in conformity with the Islamic concepts of unity, brotherhood, justice, tolerance and goodwill.
- (F)** Historically and in accordance with Ismaili tradition, the Imam of the time is concerned with spiritual advancement as well as the improvement of the quality of life of his murids. The Imam's Ta'lim lights the murid's path to spiritual enlightenment and vision. In temporal matters, the Imam guides the murids, and motivates them to develop their potential.
- (G)** Mawlana Hazar Imam Shah Karim al Hussaini, His Highness Prince Aga Khan, is direct lineal descent from the Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) through Hazrat Mawlana Ali (A.S.) and Hazrat Bibi Fatima (A.S.), is the Forty-Ninth Imam of the Ismaili Muslims.

The verse (ayat) of the Holy Qur'an [Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation. (33:56)] indicates that the major entities which are involved in the execution of this prayer are: Allah, Angels, the Holy Prophet, the Holy Imams and believers. This mechanism of salwat is presented in the following diagram:



According to the ahadith of the Holy Prophet presented above, whenever the name of the Holy Prophet is recited, his family, his offspring and their successors are automatically invoked. According to the Ismaili Muslim constitution, the successors of the Holy Prophet are the Imams who are his direct descendants through Hazrat Mawlana Ali Amiru-l-Mu'minin ('Alayhi-s-salam) and his daughter Hazrat Bibi Fatimat-az-Zahra, Khatun-i-Jannat ('Alayhi-s-salam).

The question then arises: Are the blessings for the Prophet and the Imams or are they for the believers? The answer is given in the following verse of the Holy Quran:

"He it is who confers upon you His Blessings, and likewise do the Angels, that He may bring you forth from darkness (of infidelity) into the Light (of faith): and He is to believers All Merciful" (33: 43)⁵

Huwallazii yusallii 'alay-kum wa malaaaa-'ikatuhuu liyukhrijakum-minaz - Zulumaaati 'ilan-Nuur: wa kaana bil-Mu'-miniina Rahiimaa.

The Prophets and the Imams are considered to be the mountains of religion, that is, they are the holders of the Light of Allah on this earth. Therefore the blessings are not for them rather the blessings are for the believers. These blessings are given to the believers through the guidance of the Prophet and the Imams because knowledge and guidance are continually needed so that the believers may progress along the path of religion and return to their origin as mentioned in the following verse of the Holy Quran:

"Seek they other than the religion of Allah, when unto Him submitteth whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly, or unwillingly, and unto Him they will be returned" (3: 83)⁶

'Afa-gayra Diinillaahi yabguuna wa lahuuu 'aslama manfis-samaawaati wal-'arzi taw'anw-wa karhanw-wa 'ilayhi yurja-'uun?

The phrase '**wa aale Muhammad**' is an integral part of salwat. This is necessary because the present and living Imam has the knowledge and the authority of everything according to following ayat of the Holy Qur'an:

"Lo! We it is Who bring the dead to life. We record that which they send before (them) and their footprints. And all things We have kept in a clear register"(36:12)⁷

'Innaa Nahnu nuhyil-maw-taa wa naktubu maa qadda-muu wa 'aasaarahum: wa kulla sahy-'in ah-saynaahu fiii 'Imaamim-mubin.

Therefore it was necessary for the Prophet to include this phrase in the Salwat as described in the ahadith presented above. The following extracts from three Khutba of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) clearly describe the position of aale-e-Muhammad (Descendants of Muhammad, may the peace of Allah be upon them):

"The Almighty God has placed His trust in Aale-e-Muhammad (Descendants of Muhammad, may the peace of God be upon them). They are strongholds where His Commandments receive protection and from which they are expounded and interpreted. They are fountain heads of knowledge created by Him, shelters for His teachings, refuges for Heavenly Books, mountain like citadels to defend His religion. Islam in its beginning was weak and helpless, they came to its help and defence. Islam was nervous of the infidels around it, they made it strong and powerful."⁸

"I swear by the Lord that I know fully well all the messages of God that the Holy Prophet (may the peace of God be upon him and his descendants) has received, the ways of fulfilment of promises made by God and of all the knowledge that science or philosophy could disclose.

We, the progeny of the Holy Prophet (may the peace of God be upon him and his descendants), are the doors through which real wisdom and true knowledge will reach mankind: we are lights of religion."⁹

"Remember that descendants of the Holy Prophet (S.A.S.) are stars in the Heaven, if one sets the other will rise to illumine your path; the Merciful Lord has thus completed His Blessings amongst you."¹⁰

The benefits of salwat are many as described in the following ahadith:

Anas reported God's messenger as saying: "If anyone invokes a blessing on me once, God will grant him ten blessings, ten sins will be remitted from him, and he will be raised ten degrees."¹¹

'Abd ar-Rahman b. 'Auf said: God's messenger went out and entering among some palm trees prostrated himself so long that I was afraid God had taken his soul. I went and looked, and he raised his head and said, "What is the matter with you?" I mentioned that to him, and he told me that Gabriel had come and given him the good news that God said, "If anyone invokes one blessing on you I will bless him, and if anyone greets you I will greet him." Ahmad transmitted it."¹²

Now let us recite the salwat with humility, courage and conviction:

A'uzu billahi minashaitanir rajim

I seek refuge in Allah from the outcast Satan.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (1)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (2)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (3)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (4)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (5)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (6)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (7)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (8)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (9)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (10)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa aale Muhammad (11)

(O Allah! Bestow Peace on Muhammad and his Descendants)

Al-hamdu lillahi rabbil 'alamin.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds!

End Notes

1. Pickthall, M. M. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, 306.
2. Robson, J., *Book IV. Prayer. Chapter XVII. In: Mishkat al Masabih Vol. I (English translation with explanatory notes)*, 188.
3. Robson, J., *Book IV. Prayer. Chapter XVII. In: Mishkat al Masabih Vol. I (English translation with explanatory notes)*, 190.
4. *The Constitution of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims*, 4-5.
5. Pickthall, M. M. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, 304.
6. Pickthall, M. M. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, 46.
7. Pickthall, M. M. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, 315.
8. Jafery, Syed Mohammed Askari. *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, letters and saying of Hazrat Ali, Khutba 5, 7-8.*
9. Jafery, Syed Mohammed Askari. *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, letters and saying of Hazrat Ali, Khutba 123, 91.*
10. Jafery, Syed Mohammed Askari. *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, letters and saying of Hazrat Ali, Khutba 103, 72-73.*
11. Robson, J., *Book IV. Prayer. Chapter XVII. In: Mishkat al Masabih Vol. I (English translation with explanatory notes)*, 188.
12. Robson, J., *Book IV. Prayer. Chapter XVII. In: Mishkat al Masabih Vol. I (English translation with explanatory notes)*, 191.

References

1. Aga Khan IV. *The Constitution of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims*. Islamic Publications Limited, London, 1987.
2. Jafery, Syed Mohammed Askari. *Nahjul Balagha: Sermons, letters and saying of Hazrat Ali, Tahrike Tarsile Quran*, New York, 1981.
3. Pickthall, M. M. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. The New American Library, 12th. Edition.
4. Robson, J. *Mishkat al Masabih Vol. I (English translation with explanatory notes)*, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, r1990.

Please read an poem on salwat, and hear the recitation of Ayatul Kursi and Salwat or continuous salwat on the SalmanSpiritual.com.

Peace, light, barakat, taid and a 'golden' didar,
Noorallah juma
January 1, 2007