

'Sajdah (Prostration) on a Tablet of Karbala (Why?)'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ، وَسَلَّم تَسْلِيمًا.

In the Name of Allah^{-azwj} the Beneficent, the Merciful. The Praise is for Allah^{-azwj} Lord^{-azwj} of the Worlds, and Blessing be upon our Chief Muhammad^{-saww} and his^{-saww} Purified Progeny^{-asws}, and greetings with abundant greetings.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَجِّلْ فَرَجَهُمْ وَالْعَنِ أَعْدَاءَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

Sajdah (Prostration) on a Tablet of Karbala (Why?)

Sajdah (سجدة -prostration, its plural *Sujūd* - سُجُود), is to bow down on earth in reverence and submission to Allah^{-azwj}. For example, Allah^{-azwj} Says in Holy Quran:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا حِطَّةً نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ، وَسَيَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ {2:58}

And when We said: “Enter this town, so eat from it plentifully wherever you so desire to, ‘وادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا’ and enter the gate in Sajdah, and be saying, ‘Hitta’. We will Forgive you (for) your wrongs and would Increase (for) the good doers” [2:58]

The righteous ones from the Bani Israel (the nation of Prophet Musa^{-as}), were Commanded by Allah^{-azwj} to prostrate (perform Sajdah) on the earth at the door of ‘Hitta’ to show their submission and reverence to Allah^{-azwj}. There are several Ahadith which state that the earth is a purifier and the preferred place of Sajdah, e.g.,

مَجَالِسُ الصَّدُوقِ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ الْوَلِيدِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ الصَّفَّارِ عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ أَنَانَ عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِي عَمِيرٍ عَنِ حَمَّادِ بْنِ عَثْمَانَ عَنِ إِسْمَاعِيلِ الْجُعْفِيِّ عَنِ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص جَعَلَتْ لِي الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا وَ طَهْرًا الْحَبْرَ.

(The book) ‘Majaalis’ of Al Sadouq – from Muhammad Bin Al-Hassan Bin Al Waleed, from Muhammad Bin Al-Hassan Al Saffar, from Al-Husayn Bin Al-Hassan Bin Aban, from Al-Husayn Bin Saeed, from Ibn Abu Umeyr, from Hammad Bin Usman, from Islamil Al Jufy,

‘From Abu Ja’far^{-asws} having said: ‘Rasool-Allah^{-saww} said: ‘The earth has been Made to be a Masjid (place of Sajdah) for me^{-saww} and a purifier’ – the Hadeeth”.¹

مَعَانِي الْأَخْبَارِ، وَ الْحِصَالُ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الشَّاهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ جَعْفَرِ الْبُعْدَادِيِّ عَنِ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ السُّحْتِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْأَسْوَدِ عَنْ أَيُّوبَ بْنِ سُلَيْمَانَ عَنْ أَبِي الْبَخْتَرِيِّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْمُنْكَدِرِ عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ص قَالَ: قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى جَعَلْتُ لَكَ وَ لِأُمَّتِكَ الْأَرْضَ كُلَّهَا مَسْجِدًا وَ تَرَاتِمًا طَهْرًا الْحَبْرَ.

(The books) ‘Ma’any Al Akhbar’, and ‘Al Khisaal’ – from Muhammad Bin Ali Bi Al Shah, from Muhammad Bin Ja’far Al Baghdady, from his father, from Ahmad Bin Al Sukht, from Muhammad Bin Al Aswad, from Ayoub Bin Suleyman, from Abu Al Bakhtari, from Muhammad Bin Humeyd, from Muhammad Bin Al Munkadir,

¹ Bihar Al-Anwaar V 77 – The Book Cleanliness – Ch 12 H 1 (Chapters on uncleanness and its purifiers)

‘From Jabir^{-ra} Bin Abdullah^{-ra}, from the Prophet^{-saww} having said: ‘Allah^{-azwj} the Exalted Said: “I^{-azwj} have Made for you^{-saww} and for your^{-saww} community, the earth, all of it as a Masjid, and its soil as a purifier” – the Hadeeth”.²

Sajdah is not allowed except upon the dust of earth, or upon what the earth grows, excluding that which is eaten or worn

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَبِي عُبَيْدٍ اللَّهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْعَبَّاسِ عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَ أَخْبَرَنِي عَمَّا يَجُوزُ السُّجُودَ عَلَيْهِ وَ عَمَّا لَا يَجُوزُ قَالَ السُّجُودُ لَا يَجُوزُ إِلَّا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ أَوْ مَا أَنْبَتِ الْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا أَكِلَ أَوْ لَيْسَ فَمُلْتُ لَهُ جَعَلْتُ فِدَاكَ مَا الْعِلَّةُ فِي ذَلِكَ قَالَ لِأَنَّ السُّجُودَ هُوَ الْخُضُوعُ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فَلَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَكُونَ عَلَى مَا يُؤْكَلُ وَ يُلْبَسُ لِأَنَّ أَبْنَاءَ الدُّنْيَا عِبِيدَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ وَ يَلْبَسُونَ وَ السَّاجِدُ فِي سُجُودِهِ فِي عِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَلَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يَصْعَ حَبْهَتَهُ فِي سُجُودِهِ عَلَى مَعْبُودِ أَبْنَاءِ الدُّنْيَا الَّذِينَ اغْتَرَبُوا بِغُرُوبِهَا وَ السُّجُودَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ أَفْضَلُ لِأَنَّهُ أَنْبَغُ فِي التَّوَاضُعِ وَ الْخُضُوعِ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ.

Ali Bin Ahmad narrated to us, from Muhammad Bin Abu Abdullah, from Muhammad Bin Ismail, from Ali Bin Al Abbas, from Umar Bin Abdul Aziz, from Hisham Bin Al Hakam who said,

‘I said to Abu Abdullah^{-asws} (Imam Jafar Sadiq^{-asws}), ‘Inform me about what the Prostrations (Sajud) are allowed upon, and about what it is not allowed?’

He^{-asws} said: ‘The Prostrations are not allowed except upon the earth or upon what the earth grows on, excluding what is eaten or worn (originating from the earth)’. So, I said to him^{-asws}, ‘May I be sacrificed for you^{-asws}! What is the reason with regards to that?’

He^{-asws} said: ‘Because the Prostration, it is the humbleness to Allah^{-azwj} Mighty and Majestic, so it is not befitting that it should happen upon what is eaten or worn, because the sons of the world are enslaved to what they are eating and they are wearing, and (when) the prostrator in his Prostration, (he) is in the worship of Allah^{-azwj} the High, therefore it is not befitting that he should place his forehead during his Prostration upon a thing which the sons of the world are enslaved to, and have been deceived by its deception. And the Prostration upon the earth is the most preferable, because it reaches in the reverence and the humbleness to Allah^{-azwj} Mighty and Majestic’.³

أَبِي رَجَمَهُ اللَّهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ عَنِ السَّيَّارِيِّ أَنَّ بَعْضَ أَهْلِ الْمَدَائِنِ كَتَبَ إِلَى أَبِي الْحَسَنِ الْمَاضِي عَ يَسْأَلُهُ عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ عَلَى الرَّجَاجِ قَالَ فَلَمَّا نَقَدَ كِتَابِي إِلَيْهِ فَكَرْتُ فَمُلْتُ هُوَ بِمَا أَنْبَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَ مَا سَكَانَ لِي أَنْ أَسْأَلَ عَنْهُ قَالَ فَكَتَبَ لَا تُصَلِّ عَلَى الرَّجَاجِ فَإِنَّ حَدِيثَكَ نَفْسَكَ أَنَّهُ بِمَا أَنْبَتِ الْأَرْضُ فَإِنَّهُ بِمَا أَنْبَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَ لَكِنَّهُ مِنَ الرَّثَلِ وَ الْمَلْحِ وَ هُمَا مُسْوَخَانِ.

My father narrated, from Muhammad Bin Yahya, from Muhammad Bin Ahmad, from Al-Sayari who said,

‘One of the people of Al-Madain wrote to Abu Al-Hassan^{-asws} asking him^{-asws} about the Prayer upon the glass. He said, ‘So when I had written my letter to him^{-asws}, so I thought to myself, ‘It is from what the earth grows, and it was not for me that I should be asking him^{-asws} about it’.

² Bihar Al-Anwaar V 77 – The Book Cleanliness – Ch 12 H 2 (Chapters on uncleanness and its purifiers)

³ ILLAL AL SHARAI – V 2 Ch 42 H 1

He said, ‘So he^{-asws} wrote back: ‘Do not Pray upon the glass, for you have discussed it within yourself that it is from the growth of the earth. So it is, from what the earth grows, but it is from the sand and the salt, and they have both been metamorphosed’.⁴

Allah^{-azwj} Blessed the dust of Karbala and Elevated its Status

The dust of Karbala is the most blessed and sanctified earth, hence followers of Ahl Al-Bayat^{-asws} prefer to perform Sajdah on a tablet made out from the dust of Karbala. See for example, three Ahadith reporting that Allah^{-azwj} Decided to elevate and Bless the dust of Karbala when these humbled and submitted to the Will of the High and Exalted^{-azwj}.

حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو الْعَبَّاسِ الْكُوفِيُّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ أَبِي الْخَطَّابِ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدِ الْعَصْفَرِيِّ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ ثَابِتٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ: خَلَقَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى أَرْضَ كَرْبَلَاءَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ الْكَعْبَةَ بِأَرْبَعَةِ وَعِشْرِينَ أَلْفَ عَامٍ وَ قَدَسَهَا وَ بَارَكَ عَلَيْهَا فَمَا زَالَتْ قَبْلَ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ الْخَلْقَ مُقَدَّسَةً مُبَارَكَةً وَ لَا تَزَالُ كَذَلِكَ حَتَّى يَجْعَلَهَا اللَّهُ أَفْضَلَ أَرْضٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَ أَفْضَلَ مَنْزِلٍ وَ مَسْكِنٍ يُسْكِنُ اللَّهُ فِيهِ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ.

Abu Al-Abbas Al-Kufi told me on the authority of Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn Abi al-Khattab on the authority of Abi Saeed al-Asfari on the authority of Amr ibn Thabit, who from his father who said:

Abi Jaffar^{-asws} (Imam Mohammed Baqir^{-asws}) said: Allah^{-azwj} Created, blessed and sanctified the land of Karbala twenty-four thousand years before He^{-azwj} Created the Kabah. Hence it was blessed and sanctified before the creation of any created being and it will remain this way until Allah^{-azwj} Raises it to Paradise and appoints it as the best land in Paradise. It will be the best abode in Paradise in which Allah^{-azwj} will Make His^{-azwj} friends abide.⁵

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ الْفَرَسِيُّ الرَّزَّازُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ أَبِي الْخَطَّابِ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ عَنْ بَعْضِ رِجَالِهِ عَنْ أَبِي الْجَارُودِ قَالَ قَالَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ ع أَخَذَ اللَّهُ أَرْضَ كَرْبَلَاءَ حَرَمًا أَمَّا مُبَارَكًا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ اللَّهُ أَرْضَ الْكَعْبَةِ وَ يَتَّخِذَهَا حَرَمًا بِأَرْبَعَةِ وَعِشْرِينَ أَلْفَ عَامٍ وَ أَنَّهُ إِذَا زَلَّ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى الْأَرْضَ وَ سَيَّرَهَا رُفِعَتْ كَمَا هِيَ بِرُتْبَتِهَا نُورَانِيَّةً صَافِيَةً فَجَعَلَتْ فِي أَفْضَلِ رَوْضَةٍ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ وَ أَفْضَلِ مَسْكِنٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ لَا يَسْكُنُهَا إِلَّا النَّبِيُّونَ وَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ أَوْ قَالَ أَوْلِيَ الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَ إِنَّمَا لَتَزْهَرُ بَيْنَ رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ كَمَا يَزْهَرُ الْكَوْكَبُ الدُّرِّيُّ بَيْنَ الْكَوَاكِبِ لِأَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ يَعْشَى نُورَهَا أَبْصَارَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ جَمِيعًا وَ هِيَ تُنَادِي أَنَا أَرْضُ اللَّهِ الْمُقَدَّسَةُ الطَّيِّبَةُ الْمُبَارَكَةُ الَّتِي تَضَمَّنَتْ سَيِّدَ الشُّهَدَاءِ وَ سَيِّدَ شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ.-

Muhammad bin Jaafar Al-Qurashi Al-Razzaz narrated to me, on the authority of Muhammad bin Al-Husayn bin Abi Al-Khattab, on the authority of Abi Saeed, on the authority of some of his men. Abi Al-Jaroud said:

Ali Ibn Hussain^{-asws} said: Allah^{-azwj} Chose the land of Karbala as a safe and blessed sanctuary twenty-four thousand years before He created the land of the Kabah and chose it as a sanctuary. When Allah, the blessed and exalted, shall shake the earth and move it on Judgment Day, Karbala and its dust will ascend while it will be shining and pure. It will be placed in the best of the gardens and dwellings in Paradise. No one but the prophets and messengers – or he said the Ulul Azm from among the messengers – shall dwell in it. Indeed, it will shine among the gardens of Paradise like a shining star shines among the stars for the people of the earth. And its radiating light will blur the vision of the inhabitants of Paradise.

⁴ ILLAL AL SHARAIÉ – V 2 Ch 42 H 5, 342: ص: علل الشرائع، ج2، ص:

⁵ Kamil ul Ziyarah, Ch. 88, H. 4, 269: ص: كامل الزيارات، النص، ص:

And it shall cry out, “I am the sanctified, the blessed and the purified land of Allah, which held the body of the Chief of the Martyrs and the Leader of the Youth of Paradise.”⁶

حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي رَه عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ هَاشِمٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبَّادُ أَبُو سَعِيدٍ الْغَضْفَرِيُّ عَنْ صَفْوَانَ الْجُمَّالِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع يَقُولُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى فَضَّلَ الْأَرْضَيْنِ وَالْمِيَاءَ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَمِنْهَا مَا تَفَاخَرَتْ وَ مِنْهَا مَا بَعَثَ فَمَا مِنْ مَاءٍ وَ لَا أَرْضٍ إِلَّا عُوقِبَتْ لِتَرْكِهَا التَّوَاضُعَ لِلَّهِ حَتَّى سَلَطَ اللَّهُ الْمُشْرِكِينَ عَلَى الْكُعْبَةِ وَ أَرْسَلَ إِلَى زَمْرَمَ مَاءً مَالِحاً حَتَّى أَفْسَدَ طَعْمَهُ وَ إِنَّ أَرْضَ كَرْبَلَاءَ وَ مَاءَ الْفُرَاتِ أَوَّلَ أَرْضٍ وَ أَوَّلَ مَاءٍ قَدَسَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى فَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا - فَقَالَ لَهَا تَكَلَّمِي بِمَا فَضَّلَكِ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فَقَدْ تَفَاخَرَتِ الْأَرْضُونَ وَ الْمِيَاءُ بَعْضُهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ قَالَتْ أَنَا أَرْضُ اللَّهِ الْمُقَدَّسَةُ الْمُبَارَكَةُ الشَّافِي فِي تَرْبِي وَ مَائِي وَ لَا فَخْرَ بَلْ خَاضِعَةٌ ذَلِيلَةٌ لِمَنْ فَعَلَ بِِي ذَلِكَ وَ لَا فَخْرَ عَلَيَّ مِنْ دُونِي بَلْ شُكْرًا لِلَّهِ فَأَكْرَمَهَا وَ زَادَ فِي تَوَاضُعِهَا [وَ زَادَهَا لِتَوَاضُعِهَا] وَ شَكَرَهَا اللَّهُ بِالْحُسَيْنِ ع وَ أَصْحَابِهِ - ثُمَّ قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع مَنْ تَوَاضَعَ لِلَّهِ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ وَ مَنْ تَكَبَّرَ وَضَعَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى.

My father told me, on the authority of Ali bin Ibrahim bin Hashim, on the authority of his father, on the authority of Muhammad bin Ali. It was narrated that Safwan Al-Jamal said: I heard:

Abu Abd Allah^{-asws} said: Indeed Allah^{-azwj} has Elevated some lands and water streams above others. Some of them boasted to others and some transgressed and they were punished for not being humble to Allah^{-azwj}. So, Allah^{-azwj} Empowered the polytheists over (the land of) Kabah and made Zamzam water salty, which ruined its taste. Indeed the land of Karbala and Euphrates water were the first land and flowing water which glorified Allah^{-azwj}, the blessed and exalted. So Allah^{-azwj} Blessed them and said to the Land of Karbala, “Speak of that with which the Almighty Allah^{-azwj} has Honoured you (with), for indeed the lands and the waters have boasted to one another.”

The Land of Karbala said: I am the sacred and blessed land of Allah^{-azwj}. Cure has been placed in my dust and water said I am not arrogant. Rather, I am humble and humiliated before He^{-azwj} (the One Lord) who has Blessed me. I do not boast to those who are lower to me in rank. On the contrary, I am thankful to Allah^{-azwj}.

So Allah^{-azwj} Honoured it, Increased His^{-azwj} blessing on it for its humility and rewarded it with (the nearby burial of) Imam Husain^{-asws} and his^{-asws} companions. Imam Sadiq^{-asws} added, “Allah^{-azwj} Elevates those who humble themselves before Him^{-azwj} and He^{-azwj} Degrades those who are arrogant.”⁷

Merits of Tasbeeh (Rosary) made out of dust of Karbala

مِنْ كِتَابِ رَوْضَةِ الْوَالِعِظِينَ قَالَ أَبُو الْحَسَنِ مُوسَى ع لَا يَسْتَعْنِي شَيْعَتُنَا عَنْ أَرْبَعٍ عَنْ خُمْرَةٍ يُصَلِّي عَلَيْهَا وَ خَاتَمٍ يَخْتَمُّ بِهِ وَ سِوَاكِ يَسْتَأْكُ بِهِ وَ سُبْحَةٍ مِنْ طِينِ قَبْرِ الْحُسَيْنِ ع فِيهَا ثَلَاثٌ وَ ثَلَاثُونَ حَبَّةً مَتَى قَلَبَهَا ذَاكِرًا لِلَّهِ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِكُلِّ حَبَّةٍ أَرْبَعِينَ حَسَنَةً وَ إِذَا قَلَبَهَا سَاهِيًا يَغْبُثُ بِهَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ عَشْرِينَ حَسَنَةً.

From (the book) ‘Rowzat Al Waizeen’ –

⁶ Kamil ul Ziyarah, Ch. 88, H. 5, 269, النص، ص:

⁷ Kamil ul Ziyarah, Ch. 88, H. 15, 271, النص، ص:

'Abu Al-Hassan Musa^{-asws} said: 'Our^{-asws} Shias are not needless from four – from a 'Khumrah' (straw mat/Mohr) for praying Salat upon it, and a ring to be wearing it, and a toothbrush he brushes the teeth with, and a rosary (Tasbeeh) from the clay of the grave of Al-Husayn^{-asws} wherein are thirty-three grains (beads), when he turns it doing Zikr of Allah^{-azwj}, Allah^{-azwj} will Write forty good deeds being for him with every seed (bead), and when he turns it carelessly vainly with it, Allah^{-azwj} will Write twenty good deeds for him'.⁸

Abbreviations:

saww: - Sal lal la ho Allay hay Wa Aal lay he Wasallam

azwj: - Az Za Wa Jalla

asws: - Allay hay Salawat Wass Salam

⁸ Bihar Al-Anwaar V 73 - The book of Etiquettes - Ch 18 H 48 / 7