

His Excellency, Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī's Message for the  
Commemoration of Mullā Ṣadrā Day

*I seek refuge from the accursed Shayṭān.*

*In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.*

All praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds. Blessings be upon all the prophets and messengers, and the guiding and guided Imams—especially the Seal of the prophets and the Seal of the trustees (may manifold praises and salutations be upon them). We associate ourselves to them and disclaim their enemies in God's presence!

After a warm welcome to all the noble guests, honourable professors, and respected students of the universities and the seminaries. May Allah accept your acts of worship in this most blessed month.

Before beginning the main address, there is a point regarding “divine invitation” that calls for your attention. God the Exalted is a host during the month of Ramadhan, in time, and is a host in the Land of Revelation (Mecca) for the pilgrims (of the Haj and Umrah), in space. However, God states while you are “guests of The Merciful” in that time or in that space that you too can be hosts. I am both a good host and a good host and custodian, and while you are my guests, you can also be My hosts: “I am with those broken hearts” (أَنَا عِنْدَ الْمُتَكْسِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ). If we respect the rites of the invitation in this time (Ramadhan) and that space (the pilgrimage) and reach the status of a righteous servant, we attain broken hearts and if someone has a broken heart they become a host for God, as God is the guest for broken hearts: “I am with those broken hearts” (أَنَا عِنْدَ الْمُتَكْسِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ).

The advent of this inauspicious corona-virus pandemic has caused many broken hearts; we hope that God the Exalted accepts the invitation of these broken hearts and the sincere prayers made in these days. We hope that He removes this illness from the earth in the best possible way and grants success to our dear medical researchers in finding a cure, and we hope that by the grace of this Islamic system the developed vaccine can, by the grace of Islam, protect humanity from any perils!

Regarding the late Sadr al-Muta'allihin (Mulla Sadra): as you are aware, apart from the intellectual discussions found in the *Asfar* and his other works, Sadr al-Muta'allihin has a commentary on the *Usul al-Kafi* by the late al-Kulayni. The reason for selecting the *Usul al-Kafi* is the abundantly rich sermon found in the first volume of this book—for which the late Mirdamad has a complete commentary in his *al-Rawashih al-Samawiyah*; in the last line which states: “إِذْ كَانَ الْعَقْلُ هُوَ الْفُطْبَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْمَدَارُ وَ بِهِ يُحْتَجُّ وَ لَهُ ” الثَّوَابُ وَ عَلَيْهِ الْعِقَابُ ” meaning that the cultural pole and axis of Islam is the intellect. The axis for cognitive and scholarly development and erudition is the intellect. In the supplication-tribute of *Jami'ah Kabirah* we have been taught by the Imams (peace be upon them); the blessed Imam Hadi (peace be upon him) has instructed us that when we attain an audience with the Imams through visitation of their shrines, after general invocations we should invoke the following: “أَنْتِي ... مُحَقَّقٌ لِمَا حَقَّقْتُمْ مُبْطِلٌ لِمَا أَبْطَلْتُمْ” I speak to you through conviction and certitude; I speak to you through annulling all absurd talk. This has not been learned nor compiled by the lay-person. The exceptional apprentices of the Imams (peace be upon

them) like al-Kulayni—who states that the cultural axis of a people is their intellect—learned this and the late Sadr al-Muta'allihin provided its exegesis.

If this axis were to be ensnared and shackled by people, neither will that people experience freedom nor will that nation take benefit from the blessings and emancipation that freedom provides. The late al-Kulayni's statement that the cultural axis of a people is their intellect—*إِذْ كَانَ الْعَقْلُ هُوَ الْقُطْبُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْمَدَارُ*—*وَيَهُ يُحْتَجُّ وَ لَهُ الثَّوَابُ وَ عَلَيْهِ الْعِقَابُ*—has been expatiated by the late Sadr al-Muta'allihin through firstly showing the axial nature of the intellect and knowledge with effort and endeavour; secondly, accepting to be exiled; thirdly, tolerating harshness from friends and acquaintances; and as a result he was able to remove the binds from intellection and remove the binds from knowledge.

What is meant by freeing the intellect and knowledge is that some had limited knowledge to the confines of quiddity, more specifically to accidental quiddity. They would usually classify knowledge as a type of category of being: some would classify it as part of the primary category of "quality"; others like Fakhr al-Razi considered it part of the primary category of "relation" which is relation in essence. They firstly, made knowledge out to be a quiddity; secondly, they did not classify it as an essence and considered it an accidental; thirdly, among the nine specific accidentals, some are of a lower order than others, they classified knowledge among the weaker of them, like the category of "relation" or "quality" and the likes of them.

On the other hand, when they want to speak about knowledge they identify it as a noetic existence; they talk about knowledge but they are actually thinking of mental existence—how are knowledge and mental existence related?! Knowledge and mental existence are as different as night and day! Mental existence is mental existence and knowledge is a concrete existence, except that its locus is in the soul. Potency is a concrete existence whose locus is in the soul, Justice is a concrete existence whose locus is in the soul. Knowledge is not of the modality of Potency and Justice, its of the modality of human life and has a concrete existence but its locus is in the soul—mental existence is of one existential order and knowledge is of a greater existential order! When they want to define knowledge, they say: "knowledge is a form within the mind acquired from a thing", but this refers to the known and not knowledge itself! Its existence is a mental existence; neither is that existence the same as knowledge existentially, and neither is that known, the actual object of our knowledge. We have knowledge of that form, but what is our knowledge itself? Our knowledge is not that form, that form is our known. The existence of that form is not knowledge, rather it is a mental existence. Due to the inability of the scholars, due to the absence of the field of philosophy and the intellect, two things limited and constrained the concept of knowledge: one, that they believed the modality of knowledge to be that of quiddity and they confined it to the domain accidentals; the other that when they wanted to discuss knowledge, they spoke on knowledge but had mental existence on their minds. The topic of discussion is knowledge, but what they are discussing is mental existence. When they answer the question: "what is knowledge?", they say: "A form within the mind acquired from a thing", but that is the known whose existence is a mental existence.

Therefore, due to the negligence of some of our own, knowledge was confined and on the other hand contemporary trends have confined knowledge in another way, utilizing knowledge to fulfill their needs and they say that we are not concerned with reality we want this to solve our problems. We are not trying to disclose the truth, we want our needs met by means of aeronautical expedition; maritime needs met, terrestrial needs met, meet our building engineering needs, our farming needs met; we see

knowledge as a utility to meet our needs. But how much of reality does this knowledge disclose for us? Can we achieve certainty in the confines of sense perception or is it only to the degree of estimation and conjecture? They will say that it is not a matter of concern, this extent is enough to meet our needs.

So in the past knowledge was confined in those two ways, and contemporarily knowledge is confined in the way just mentioned. If knowledge is for meeting needs then when someone dies they no longer have problems, no activity, no farming, no livestock, no industry; there is no need for knowledge, in which case this eternal being is an empty-handed being. We have to ponder more regarding our essence such that we are eternal beings. An eternal being isn't confined by years or months. An eternal being sheds its limitations, it doesn't perish; death is shedding a limitation, not perishing. So that which has been imprisoned or held captive by the act of our very own needed to be freed. That it was confined by westerners or non-westerners who say that knowledge is for us to meet our needs and not to disclose reality and truth, this one way knowledge has been confined.

This second type was met with the endeavor and attempt of many scholars and theologians and philosophers that: one, knowledge has a reality; two, it discloses reality; three, it is an immaterial being; four, it remains with us eternally; five, we preside with knowledge in eternity. Others have made this effort, however Mulla Sadra made a greater effort to free knowledge in this part.

The two herculean feats that Mulla Sadra accomplished are: First, he not only disassociated knowledge from the categories, but he went on to free it from the realm of quiddity; and he saw knowledge to be a modality of existence. When it is a mode of existence, it is not a mode of quiddity, and when it is not a mode of quiddity, it is neither a substance nor an accident; and if it is not a substance or accident, to have acquired knowledge of it is not possible. This is because concrete existence must be found, and one must be present to it to know it, otherwise the word "knowledge" signifies neither a quiddity, nor a substance or accident. Mulla Sadra did this feat when it comes to the discussion of knowledge, establishing that knowledge is a modality of existence, that it is gradational, and that it is not a modality of quiddity. Secondly, he profoundly separated knowledge from mental existence and held that the former is [real] existence. Hence the word 'knowledge' is a word that signifies a concept, and this concept has a referent, and this referent exists in the soul, and not the mind; it has no relation with the mind and mental existence! Let it not be that a person should speak in terms of knowledge but think in terms of mental existence!

Mulla Sadra brought up knowledge in this way; he brought it out of the confines of quiddity, correcting that implicit error. But he also said that knowledge was in flux, in motion, and that the knower was also moving. He gave due attention to this motion, saying to the person in repose in the caravan of knowledge, in the vehicle of knowledge, the proverbial 'plane' or 'train' of knowledge that is moving, "you are in motion". He established this substantial motion for both knowledge and the knower, saying that these are both in motion and they are both changing until they reach their climax and are in peace. The place of resting is not the graveyard where the dead "rest in peace", rather the real resting place is the place where a person finds stability and subsistence, and not just stillness. A person who becomes still is no longer alive, but a person who finds stability and subsistence is very much alive. So Mulla Sadra's ingenuity was in saying that substantial motion is not just instrumental, as whether we want to or not, we are in motion; hence try to understand well the Straight Path, which is the affair of God. Know that the intellect is a lamp, and it is not the path itself. The Path is only from God, and none other.

The designer [of the Path] is only from God, and none other. He has a Design, a Path; the intellect has a lamp, it has a guide and guiding role. These great feats were accomplished by Mulla Sadra.

Sadra had neighbours who were unkind and made him a stranger, he had students who were unkind and did not develop his discourse, and he had unkind friends. His works remained hidden for almost four centuries, even though during this period there were philosophers who were aware, some of whom were opposed to him and some supported him, while others ostensibly supported him and did short commentaries. But there was no real inheritor, someone who could expound on his fundamental ingenuity where he freed knowledge from the confines of quiddity and accidentality, he emancipated it from the bind of mental existence, he took knowledge from being still and put it in motion; Mulla Sadra did all these great and ingenious things and thereby put society into motion, he changed society; his words are useful even today, as knowledge is an immaterial affair, and we take much benefit from it; one of the benefits pertains to our worldly problems, but the main part of the benefit that we take from knowledge has to do with the afterlife. We and our knowledge subsist, perpetually and eternally; as we are alive with knowledge, and it is because of this that Islam said, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory". There is a special emphasis on the seeking of knowledge in this statement. Islam emphasizes that as long as a person is alive, he must be a knower, and this is the very meaning of 'knowledge'. Because of the blessings of the Islamic order and because of the blessings of the pure blood of the martyrs many of the issues have been resolved. Those of you who are from Fars and Shiraz have a greater responsibility. Both the seminary of Shiraz and the university of Shiraz in general, and that specific area of yours in particular, you are the inheritors of this perspicacity and of this wisdom, the inheritors of this way of understanding and this great heritage, something that Kulayni called the axis and existential pole of the human subsistence of a nation.

I hope and pray that with the blessings of this blessed month of Ramadan, the efforts of you esteemed scholars of the seminaries and universities is such that the Qur'an and the Progeny [of the Prophet] is brought to its fruition by way of this intellectual and cognitive pole of human subsistence so that we can put into practice the verse which says, "that He may make it prevail over all religions". The tradition from the Prophet, upon whom and his progeny be peace, which says, "Islam is superior and is not inferior" is a declarative sentence which implies a imperative sentence, otherwise Islam would not ascend by itself. It is imperative that the intelligentsia and scholars from the seminary and university give proper due to the pole of human subsistence identified by Kulayni as the intellect and go to the shrines of the Imams for pilgrimage and say that I have come as a researcher! "I am a researcher or realizer of that which You have made real, and an invalidator of that which you have made invalid or unreal... a carrier for your knowledge."

I hope and pray that God preserves our political order, our marāḡīḡ, our government and people, our country, our seminaries and universities, each and every member of this noble nation, our elites, and all of us under the benediction of the Qur'an and the Progeny [of the Prophet]! May the departed souls of Allamah Tabataba'i, Mulla Sadra, all philosophers, all jurisprudents, all the righteous godly men be the recipients of the benedictions of God, the prophets, and the saints. May the grace of God be upon them, and may our martyrs be resurrected with the martyrs of Karbala! May the recently martyred also be under divine benediction and this nation of the Master of our Time be protected until his appearance; and may you esteemed seminarians and academics be under his—may we be sacrificed for him—special benedictions!

May Allah forgive us and you. Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allah and His Graces.