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Imam Husain AS related that once on a cold, wintry night he accompanied his father Imam Ali AS to the Sacred Mosque of the Ka'ba and performed the tawaaf. The night was pitch dark and there was no one there except his father and himself. After a while, they heard the mournful voice of someone reciting the following poem:

“O Thou that answers the prayers of the disconsolate in the depth of darkness; O Thou that wards off the baneful influences of calamities and diseases. Lo, those who surrounded the Ka'ba sleep and wake up; But Thou, Exalted be thy Name, never sleeps. Forgive me by the Grace of Thy Bounty and Thy Mercy. O Thou towards whom all creation bows down in this Sanctuary! If Thy Mercy be not such as gives hope to the transgressors, then who is there to take pity on the sinners by His Bounty?”

Imam Ali AS sent Imam Husain AS towards the man to bring the man to him. Imam Ali AS asked the man his name and he replied;

“My name is Manzil Ibn Lahiq. In my youth, I was persisting in sin, while my father used to guide me towards repentance. But I heeded him not. Instead of listening to him, I used to beat him. Now it came to pass that my father had kept some money hidden away from me. One day I found it and was going out with the money, to spend it on my follies, when he stopped me and tried to take it away from me, but I twisted his wrist and ran away with the money. Thereupon my father kept a fast and went and performed the rites of the Sacred Mosque. Then he lifted up his hands and prayed that God may inflict upon me the disease of paralysis. Hardly had he done so when I was struck with paralysis and my father went back to his home.

I then besought my father to pray for my recovery in the same place where he had prayed for my affliction. My father, in his infinite love and kindness, granted my request and we both set out towards Mecca, but as my ill-luck would have it, on the way here my father's camel suddenly took fright and he was thrown from its back and killed in a moment. Now I am left to spend the rest of my days in this condition, helpless and forlorn, and people taunt me, saying that I am being punished for courting my father's displeasure.”

On hearing the sad tale, Imam Ali AS was moved by pity and compassion and taught the man a prayer to recite after performing ablutions. The man followed the instructions, He did so, and the effect was miraculous! Next morning when he came to Imam Ali AS, he was perfectly cured and carried the text of the prayer in his right hand and exclaimed,

“Really this prayer is the 'Isme Azam' because when I lifted up my hands and read this dua several times, a deep sleep fell upon me and I dreamt that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) came and treated me with his own hands. When I woke up, I found that the illness had completely departed from me. May God reward you, O Amirul Mo'mineen AS for this miraculous prayer.”

In view of the above-mentioned incident, this dua is called Dua-e-Mashloul (the Prayer of the Paralytic). Dua-e-Mashloul brings countless blessings and it is reported that this dua contains the Isme Azam (the Greatest Name of Allah SWT). It is further reported that regular recitation of this dua awards prosperity, soundness of mind and health and is a way of achieving the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allah SWT.

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“...I pray unto Thee, My God, and I ask Thee, My Cherisher and Sustainer, and I hope from Thee, my Chief, and I crave Thy acceptance of my prayer, O my Protector, even as Thou hast promised me, and I call upon Thee even as Thou hast commanded me. So, do unto me what pleases Thee to do, O Generous One!”

(Extract from Dua-e-Mashloul)

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Q: What about the leather products made in a European country, if we are unaware of the source of that leather? It is said that some European countries import cheap leather from Muslim countries and then use it for manufacturing various products. Can we consider such leather pure? Are we allowed to say salat in them? Can such a weak probability [about it originating from a Muslim country] be given any credence?

A: If the probability of the leather originating from a zabihah (an animal slaughtered Islamically) source is so weak that people would not normally give any credence (for example, the probability of 2%), it is to be considered impure and this cannot be used in salat. But if the probability is not so weak, it can be considered pure and using it in salat would be permissible.

(Q.65, “A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West” in accordance with the rulings of Ayatullah al-Seestani)