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Asking God For Abundant Goodness

## 21. Be sincere in your asking from your Lord, for in His hand is the bestowal and refusal, and ask God frequently for the best.

There are significant points in this statement, two of which will be dealt with here:

## I. Being Sincere in Supplication

"Sincerity in prayer" means that a believer should ask God only for his needs and in carrying the prayer out a believer should not be in doubt, neither should he employ hypocrisy.

Regarding this, the Holy Qur'an says:

"...and call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience". 1

In this regard, Imam Rida (as) narrates from Imam 'Ali (as), his saying:

"Blessed is he who is sincere to God in his worship and supplication, and does not occupy his heart with

what his eyes see, nor forgets God's remembrance through what his ears hear, and does not become sorrowful at what others have been given".2

Then Imam 'Ali (as) shows the reasons of the philosophy of sincerity in the following manner: since bestowal and withholding is in the hands of God, it is absurd for man to ask or supplicate anybody else or to worship anybody else or assume any partner for God.3

## **II. Asking God For Abundant Goodness**

"Istikhara" means to ask for good or to weigh the importance of an option and to select the best one. 4 It also means to ask God to give him the best. 5

But in the language of Shari'ah (or religion) it means to ask God for the best. We read in supplication 33 of Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah:

"O God! I ask of You the best in Your knowledge, therefore bless Muhammad and his Household, and decree for me the best. Inspire us with knowledge to choose the best and make that a means to being pleased with what You have decreed for us and submitting to what You have decided. Banish from us the doubt of misgiving and confirm us with the certainty of the sincere".6

And in Zurarah's tradition narrated from Imam Bagir (as) we read:

قُلْتُ لاَبِي جَعْفَرِ عليه السلام: إِذَا أَرَدْتُ آمْراً وَآرَدتُ الإستِخَارَةَ كَيفَ آقُولُ؟ فَقَالَ: إِذَا أَرَدتَ ذَلِكَ فَصُمُ الثَلاثَاءَ" وَالْحَمِيسَ ثُمَّ صَلِّ يَومَ الجُمُعَةَ في مَكانٍ نَظِيف رَكعَتَينِ، فَتَشَهَّد ثُمَّ قُل وَآنتَ تَنظُر إلى السَّمَاءِ: (الَّلهُمُّ اِنِّي وَالْاَربِعَاءِ وَالْخَمِيسَ ثُمَّ صَلِّ يَومَ الجُمُعَةَ في مَكانٍ نَظِيف رَكعَتَينِ، فَتَشَهَّد ثُمَّ قُل وَآنتَ تَنظُر إلى السَّمَاءِ: (الَّلهُمُّ الِيِّ عَلمُكَ اَسأَلُكَ بِانَّكَ عَالِمُ الغَيبِ، إِن كَانَ هَذا الأَمْرُ خَيراً فِيمَا اَحاطَ بِهِ عِلمُكَ فَاصرِف عَنِي بِمَا تَعلَمُ فَإِنَّكَ تَعلَمُ فَيَسِّرهُ لِي وَبَارِك لِي فِيهِ، وَافتَح لِي بِهِ، وَإِن كَانَ ذَلِكَ لِي شَرّاً فِيمَا اَحاطَ بِهِ عِلمُكَ فَاصرِف عَنِي بِمَا تَعلَمُ فَإِنَّكَ تَعلَمُ فَيَسِّرهُ لِي وَبَارِك لِي فِيهِ، وَافتَح لِي بِهِ، وَإِن كَانَ ذَلِكَ لِي شَرّاً فِيمَا اَحاطَ بِهِ عِلمُكَ فَاصرِف عَنِي بِمَا تَعلَمُ فَإِنَّكَ تَعلَمُ فَيَسِّرهُ لِي وَبَارِك لِي فِيهِ، وَافتَح لِي بِهِ، وَإِن كَانَ ذَلِكَ لِي شَرّاً فِيمَا اَحاطَ بِهِ عِلمُكَ فَاصرِف عَنِي بِمَا تَعلَمُ فَإِنَّكَ تَعلَمُ فَيَسِرهُ لِي وَبَارِك لِي فِيهِ، وَافتَح لِي بِهِ، وَإِن كَانَ ذَلِكَ لِي الْقَدرُ، وَتَقضِي وَلا أَقْضِي وَانتَ عَلَمُ الغُيوب)، تقولها مئة مرّة

Zurarah said: 'I asked Imam Baqir (as): "If I intend to do something and wish to perform Istikharah, what should I do"? He said: "If you wish to do that, then fast on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; then on Friday perform a two rak'ah (a unit of salat) prayer in a clean place; after performing the tashhahud, look at the sky and say: 'O Allah, I ask You, for You are the Knower of the Unseen and the witnessed, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate – You are the Knower of the Unseen – if this matter is good in what Your Knowledge encompasses of it, then make it easy for me, bless me in it, and open it for me.

If it is bad in what Your Knowledge encompasses of it, then turn it away from me with what You know,

for You know and do not, You determine and I do not, and You decree and I do not, and You are the Knower of the Unseen'. Repeat that a hundred times."7

Of course, there are other kinds of *Istikhara*: *Istikhara* with the Qur'an, with writing on a piece of paper, and *Istikhara* with the rosary (*tasbih*). It is written in the books on Prayers and traditions that a person resorts to *Istikhara* when he is caught between two seemingly good options, but he is unable to choose one option. He does not know whether it is good or evil. When he starts to carry out *Istikhara*, his doubts are eliminated and he will have faith in the option he selects.8

Which one is better? Your worthless idols or the One Who fulfills your needs when you are left with nothing except depression?" And God will help him if He thinks it proper.

They tell us to pray (use supplication: du'a) abundantly, because when we knock on a door, there is hope that it will open; 10 However, this work should be continuous, depending on the intention of the performer of the supplication. 11

- 1. . Qur'an 7:29.
- 2. . Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, p. 16.
- <u>3.</u> . Shirk, or associating partners with God, is of the following types: Shirk in the essence of God, shirk in attributes, shirk in actions, shirk in worship. A believer should avoid all of these and should not appoint any partner for God. He should obey only the Unique God and should ask Him for help.
- 4. Abduh's commentary on Nahj al-Balaghah, vol.3, p.45.
- 5. . Ibn Maytham's Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol.5, p.11.
- 6. . Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah, supplication 33.
- 7. . Wasa'il, vol.5, p.207.
- <u>8.</u> . For further information concerning Istikhara and its kinds refer to the following: Bihar, vol.19, pp.222–288; Wasa'il, vol.5, pp.204–221, vol.4, p.875; Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah, (tr.) Fayz al-Islam, and (tr.) Sayyid 'Ali Khan; and Allamah Kalbasi's al-Istikhara.
- 9. For this, see Imam Khumayni's Kashf al-Asrar, pp.89-97.
- 10. . Bihar, vol.93, p.298.
- $\underline{11}$ . In traditions, it is said the supplication could be recited once or one hundred times depending on the importance of the topic at hand.

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