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3. To Connect with God Through Supplication

His Supplications

Introduction

A supplication, or *Du'aa* in Arabic, is an act of making a request to God and asking for one's need to be filled. In Islam, it holds an important place as a form of worship and a source of achieving nearness and pleasure of God.1

Imam Ali (p) gave the Muslims a large collection of supplications that he had learned from the Prophet (s). Some of the supplications were divinely inspired to the Prophet, and others were brought by the Angel Gabriel. Below are some examples of the supplications. In their original language of Arabic, the supplications have a poetic and rhythmic quality and a profound spiritual effect. Moreover, the supplications offer an example of literary excellence.

A Prayer for Rain

Certainly God tries creatures because of their (unrepentant) evil deeds by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings, and closing the treasures of good, so that he who wishes to repent may repent, he who wishes to turn away (from evil) may do so, he who wishes to recall (forgotten goodness) may recall, and he who wishes to abstain (from evil) may do so. God, the Glorified, has made the seeking of (His) forgiveness a means for the pouring down of livelihood and mercy, as God has said:

"Seek ye the forgiveness of your Lord! Verily, He is the Most-forgiving, He will send (down) upon you the cloud raining in torrents, and help you with wealth and sons (children)." (Qur'an 17:10–12)

May God shower mercy on him who turned repentant, gave up sins, and hastened (in performing good acts) before death.

"O my God! We have come out to Thee from under the curtains and coverings (of houses) when the children and the beasts are crying, seeking Thy Mercy, hoping for Thy generosity and bounty, and fearing Thy chastisement and retribution. O my God! Give us to drink from Thy rain, and do not disappoint us, nor kill us by years (of drought), nor punish us for what the foolish among us have committed, O Most Merciful of all those who are merciful.

My God! We have come out to Thee to complain to Thee, because drought and famine have driven us, distressing wants have made us helpless, and troublesome mishaps have incessantly befallen us. O my God! We beseech Thee not to send us back disappointed, nor to return us with downcast eyes, nor to chastise us (harshly) for our sins, nor deal with us according to our (evil) deeds.

O my God! Do pour on us Thy mercy, Thy blessing, Thy sustenance, and Thy pity, and make us enjoy a drink which benefits us, quenches our thirst, produces green herbage with which all that was lost grows again, and all that had withered comes back to life again. It should bring us fresh and plentiful ripe fruits. With it, the plains may be watered, rivers may begin flowing, plants may grow foliage, and prices may come down. Surely You are powerful over whatever You Will."

(Sermon 142)

A Supplication for Forgiveness

O my God! Forgive me for what You know about me more than I do. If I return (to the sins), Thou return to forgiveness. My God, forgive me for what I had promised to myself but did not fulfill. My God, forgive me for that with which I sought nearness to Thee with my tongue, but my heart opposed it and I did not perform it. My God, forgive me for my winking of the eye, the vile utterances, the desires of the heart, and the errors of speech.

(Sermon 77)

His Supplication Praising God and Abasing Himself

O my God! You deserve handsome description and the highest esteem. If a wish is directed towards You, then You are the best to answer. If hope is invested in You, then You are the Most Honored one from Whom to have hope. My God! Thou hast bestowed on me such power that I do not praise anyone other than Thee, and I do not eulogize anyone save Thee. I do not direct my praise towards others, who are causes of disappointments and misgivings. Thou hast restrained my tongue from praising Your human subjects (in preference to You) and from making eulogies of your creatures (rather than Yours). My God! Everyone who praises, he has the right of (receiving) reward and recompense from the object of praise. Certainly, I have turned to (praising) You with an eye on the treasures of Your Mercy and stores of Your forgiveness.

O my God! Here stands one, who has exclusively believed in Thy Oneness, which is Thy due, and has not regarded anyone deserving of such praises and eulogies except Thee. My want towards Thee is

such that nothing except Thy generosity can cure its destitution, nothing can fulfill its need except Thy generosity. So, do grant us (our requests and needs) and make us free from stretching our hands to anyone other than Thee.

"Certainly, Thou art powerful over all things." (Qur'an 66:8)
(Sermon 90)

A Prayer Seeking the Protection of God

Praise be to God, Who made me such that I have not yet met death (I am still alive), nor am I ill, nor have I been called to account for my evil acts, nor am I without progeny, nor have I forsaken my religion, nor do I disbelieve in my Lord. Neither is my intelligence affected, nor have I been punished with the punishment of people of the past. I am a slave in Your possession; I have been guilty of excesses. You have exhausted Your pleas over me, and I have no plea (before You). I have no power except what You give me, and I cannot evade except what You save me from. O my God! I seek Your protection from becoming destitute despite Your riches, from being misguided despite Your guidance, from being molested in Your realm, and from being humiliated while authority rests with You. O my God! Let my soul be the first of the noble things that You take from me, and let it be the first trust out of Your favors entrusted to me.2

O my God! We seek Your protection from turning away from Your command, or revolting against Your religion, or being led away by our desires, instead of (heeding) the guidance that comes from You. (Sermon 214)

A Supplication Seeking Reliance on God Alone

O my God! Preserve (thy grace on) my face (my person) with ease in life, and do not disgrace me with destitution, lest I may have to beg livelihood from those who (themselves) receive from Thee, or try to seek the favor from Thy creatures, thereby engaging myself in praising them (instead of Thee). In reality, Thou art the Master, who grants and who withholds (to everyone).

"Verily, You have power over all things." (Qur'an 66:8) (Sermon 223)

Supplication for Guidance and Forgiveness

O my God! Thou art the most attached to Thy lovers and the most ready to assist those who put their trust in Thee. Thou seest them in their concealments, knowest whatever is in their consciences, and art aware of the extent of their intelligence. Consequently, their secrets are open to Thee, and their hearts are eager for Thee. If loneliness makes them bored, then Thy remembrance gives them solace. If distresses befall them, they beseech Thy protection, because they know that the reins of affairs are in Thy hands, and that their movements depend upon Thy commands.

O my God! If I am unable to express my request, I am unaware of my needs, then guide me towards my betterment, and guide my heart towards the goal.

O my God! Deal with me according to Thy forgiveness and do not deal with me according to Thy justice. (For Your justice will subject me to retribution.)

(Sermon 225)

- 1. God says in the Qur'an:
- "And your Lord says, Call upon Me, I will answer you" (Chapter 40:160).
- 2. The soul is the nonmaterial (metaphysical and immortal) component of human beings, given by God in a pure and pristine form at the inception of worldly life. At death, it will return to God. During its worldly existence, it may stay pure or may be corrupted and abased depending upon the lifestyle, either God-consciousness or sin, respectively. God will judge it and deal according to his Justice and Mercy.

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