

Lesson 26: The Role of Pure Supplication and Meritorious Deeds

This section of the Noble Prophet's (S) counsels is in connection with supplication of Allah, the need to conform supplication to proper deeds and the invaluable role of a righteous individual in the home and society. Beyond a shadow of doubt supplication or appealing to Allah is one of the manifestations of devotional service and sincere obedience to Allah and in this regard a great deal of the verses of the Gracious Qur'an and *hadiths* have been recorded and detailed discussions have been held.

The Concept of Supplication

In regard to the meaning of supplication, the late Raghīb Isfahani has said, "Supplication is similar to calling out or evocation, with the difference that in calling out sometimes 'O....!' and other terms besides that are used and a name does not accompany it; but supplication is used in circumstances where a name is brought, like 'O so and so!' of course evocation and supplication are sometimes used interchangeably."¹

The late 'Allamah Tabataba'i has said, "Supplication by Allah, the Exalted, is of two types: existential [*takwini*] and institutional [*tashri'i*] (or revealed divine law)." Existential denotes bringing into being something which Allah has willed, as if that thing which he has willed is being summoned or called. Allah, the Exalted, states:

يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ وَتَظُنُّونَ إِن لَّبِئْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

"The day He calls you forth, you will respond to Him, praising Him, and you will think that you remained only a little."²

However, institutional supplication of Allah, the Exalted, implies that by means of the verses of the Glorious Qur'an, He charges people with the duty to accept His religion, but the supplication of a slave of

Allah denotes that the slave attracts and acquires the mercy and grace of the Lord by means of devotional service and obedience to Him.

It is for this reason that in reality worship is tantamount to supplication because the servant places himself in the station of servitude and connection to his Lord by means of his invocation (with a feeling of dependence on Allah and a feeling of lowliness and humility) so that he may attract Allah's attention to himself because of His Sovereignty and Lordship, and this is what supplication means. The word of Allah alludes to this same meaning:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

“And Your Lord says: Call Me, and I will answer you! Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility.”³

In this verse Allah has first used the expression ‘Call Me’ (which is equivalent to supplicate or invoke Me) and then after that He has employed the term ‘worship’.

It ought not be mistakenly understood that the meaning of hearing and responding to the supplication of the invoker is that whatever he asks for at whatever time will be granted to him. Such an interpretation of the acceptance and granting of supplication is not compatible with religious explanations. All too often what the invoker supplicates for is not in his good interests and granting his request harms him, because he is not aware of what is expedient for him.

In his will to his son, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) states:

“Then he has placed the keys of His treasures in your hands in the sense that He has shown you the way to ask Him. Therefore, whenever you wish, open the doors of His favor with prayer and let the abundant rains of His mercy fall on you. Delay in acceptance of the prayer should not disappoint you because the granting of prayer is according to the measure of your intention. Sometimes acceptance of prayer is delayed with a view to its being a source of greater reward to the asker and of better gifts to the expectant.

Sometimes, you ask for a thing but it is not given to you, and a better thing is given to you later or a thing is taken away from you for some greater good because sometimes you ask for a thing which contains ruin for your religion if were to be given to you. Therefore, your request should be for things whose beauty should be lasting and whose burden should remain far from you. As for wealth, it will not last for you and may bring harm to you in life and in the hereafter.”⁴

Differences among People in Supplication and Requests

In regard to man's incentive in supplication and why so much emphasis has been laid on invocation of Allah, it ought to be said in brief that the path towards man's perfection is devotional service to Allah and one of the manifestations of servitude to Allah is that man ought to present his needs only to Allah and ask Him only to grant them.

The truth is that people are different in regard to their levels of devotion and their stations of service to Allah, and their needs too are varied: the needs of those who are at the lower levels of knowledge and faith and are at the beginning of the path towards perfection are materialistic. When they request a thing from Allah, their needs are worldly—they request more sustenance, healthy children, a good wife, a grand house, provision of the needs of life and other things of this nature.

Of course, for a human being that is at the lower levels of faith and has not attained the higher levels of divine knowledge, it is very proper that he request these same material needs from Allah instead of asking for higher needs. In reality his requests from Allah are indicative of the fact that he has faith in Allah and believes that Allah is able to grant him his needs.

It is for this reason that he extends his begging hand to Allah and not to human beings. It is natural that if he requests these very needs from Allah, He will grant his needs because Allah Himself told Prophet Moses (‘a):

“O Moses! Ask for all your needs from Me, even the fodder for your sheep and the salt for your bread dough.”⁵

Man's perfection lies in the fact that in order to secure needs, whether material or spiritual, he ought only to ask from Allah and from no one other than Him and not believe in the effectiveness of any other save Allah; otherwise, if one requests from any other save Allah, Allah will render him hopeless. Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) says:

“Allah, the Exalted, states, ‘I swear upon My honor, glory, greatness and the dignity of the Throne that I render futile and unachievable the hope of anyone who puts their faith in anyone save Me and I make him wear the dress of disgrace among the people and keep him far from My proximity and My graces. He puts his hope in other than Me when he is in difficulty, in spite of the fact that I am the One who sends problems, and he puts his faith in all else other than Me, and in his imagination he knocks on the door of everyone save My door regardless of the fact that the keys to all the closed doors are in My possession and the door of My house is open to any person who calls upon Me’.”⁶

Unfortunately, a lot of our supplications and invocations are not real, that is to say we do not ask Allah in spite of the fact that the real effector is Allah and it is proper that man ought to only present his requests to Him.

However, when man has a need, he goes to see a person who will solve his problem. If he wants money, he extends his hand to someone who will give him money and/or he goes to look for a job from which he can earn an income, but a true believer initially sets his heart on Allah and presents his request to Him and then takes recourse to other human beings as a result of duty and because Allah has made worldly agents a means of attaining our needs and not because we are independent and self-sufficient.

In any case, man's perfection, faith and awareness of Allah are increased to the extent that man's heart is attentive to Allah and asks the Divine Essence to remedy his needs. We cannot fathom the invaluable alchemy and precious elixir that being attentive to Allah is and how effective asking for material and worldly needs from Allah is on the perfection of man's soul.

The late 'Allamah Tabataba'i used to narrate that his instructor the late Ayatullah Mirza 'Ali Aqa Qadi used to say, "Sometimes man is heedless of Allah and Allah afflicts that servant for some time with hardships and encumbrances in order to compel him to say one '*Ya Allah* (O my Allah!)" because this '*Ya Allah*' is very effective on man's soul and gives fruit to the illumination of the soul."

With regard to what has been said, it becomes clear how effective paying attention to Allah is in illuminating the heart and in elevating man's soul and how much it can aid him in progressing and advancing towards perfection even in circumstances where he does not feel a great need.

Of course, man does not comprehend this fact and he ought not to comprehend completely because this cosmos is a place of examination and if the effects of everything completely manifested themselves in this world, the examination would not take place as is befitting. Some things should remain hidden in order for the test to be administered in the best possible form.

For this reason man must never forget Allah and he ought to request everything, including his material needs, from Him. Man must know that his supplication—even for material needs—and his attention to Allah is tantamount to acknowledgement of his servitude and recognition of the Lordship of Allah and this attention in asking one's needs from Allah is effective for the perfection of the soul.

It will be that much greater if one's awareness grows and faith increases and a person supplicates for spiritual needs in addition to material affairs and he invokes Allah to grant him the grace to perform acts of worship, the opportunity to acquire knowledge, the ability to serve mankind and the power to abstain from sin. Above and beyond this, is supplication for others including friends, neighbors, classmates, believers and every person who has a right upon us, such as teachers.

Higher than this group are human beings who are so preoccupied by praising and adoring Allah, the Exalted, at the time of supplication that they are prevented them from asking for their own needs. When they want to supplicate for their needs, they remember the divine attributes of His glory and beauty and engage in praising and adoring their Lord and do not become satiated no matter how much they praise Allah. It is for this reason that there remains no opportunity for them to request anything for themselves. A man who is in love, whose eyes are fixed on his beloved and is absorbed in the beauty of his darling

does not see himself so as to ask for anything for himself.

People who have attained this level of knowledge still feel that Allah, the Exalted, wants the effects of servitude and devotional obedience to manifest themselves in all their limbs and members and in all the aspects of their being, just as one of the effects of devotional service and obedience to Allah is that man ought to place his forehead on clay as a sign of humility and submission in the presence of Allah. Other effects of devotional servitude include tears of enthusiasm for the glory of Allah, tears due to fear of the greatness of Allah that flow from the eyes, and the trembling of the heart; in the same way, in addition to the rest of the limbs and members of the body, the effects of humility must be manifested on the tongue and one of the effects of obedience and devotional servitude to Allah is that a slave ought to request a thing from his Lord.

The Importance of Manifesting Indigence and Incapacity in the Presence of Allah

When man perceives that Allah, the Exalted, wants him to manifest his servitude with all his being and all his physical and inner powers, he ought to know that he must show his incapacity and humility by means of his tongue and present his request to Allah and that this begging and asking is a sign of lowliness in the presence of the Lord.

Those who have tasted the sweetness of this neediness towards Allah know what glory and honor it brings to hand. Indeed, those who have attained the highest levels of gnosticism and awareness still feel that they must invoke Allah in supplication and make the effects of servitude flow on their tongues, this manifestation of servitude is worship and it is relevant.

Allah wants man to manifest poverty and indigence in His presence and it is natural that once all the limbs and members of man are consistently conformed in the course of devotional service to Allah and in discharging commendable deeds—for example through supplication to Allah by means of the tongue—man will attain desirable results because all his limbs and powers are consistent with one another. When he supplicates, it is as though he is requesting and asking the Divine Presence with all his being and it is natural that the expansive mercy of Allah has encompassed him:

...وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

“And when my servants ask you about Me, [tell them that] I am indeed near. I answer the supplicant’s call when he calls Me...”⁷

In supplication man asks for something from Allah and He too grants it to the human being, but for the person who has tasted the love of Allah and the enjoyment of prayer as intimate dialogue with his Lord, the greatest pleasure is that when he says ‘*Ya Allah* (O my Allah)’, in response to him it is said ‘*Labbayk*

(Here I am)'.

However, when a person's heart is directed towards Allah alone and he is not attentive to anyone else, Allah grants him when he requests. A human being ought to ask for all his needs from Allah; he must ask for his bread from Allah when he is hungry and show poverty and indigence to the Absolute Self-sufficient with all his being, and like Prophet Moses (‘a), say:

رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ ...

“...O my Lord! I am indeed in need of any good You may send down to me.”⁸

Prophet Moses (‘a) said this after fleeing from Egypt and heading towards Midian when he had no food and no house to sleep in. At night he slept on the ground in the desert and ate herbage due to intense hunger. As Imam ‘Ali (‘a) states:

“If you want, I will, as a second example, relate to you concerning Moses (‘a) the Interlocutor of Allah, when he said, **‘O my Lord! I need whatever good You may grant me.’ (Qur’an 28:24)** By Allah, he asked Him only for bread to eat because he had nothing to eat save the herbs of the earth, and the greenness of the herbs could be seen from the delicate skin of his belly due to his thinness and the paucity of his flesh.”⁹

Moses (‘a) found his way to Midian after escaping from Egypt. One day he saw a group of people busy drawing water from a well and two girls by the side waiting for the men to finish drawing water and go aside so as to find the opportunity to draw water for their sheep. Moses (‘a) approached those two girls and asked, “Why have you come here?” When he heard why they were there, he felt pity for them as a result of which he drew water for them and satiated their goats.

Thereafter, the two girls went away without giving him anything. After a while, one of the two girls returned and said, “My father wants you to go to him so that he may compensate you for helping us.” When Moses (‘a) went to Shu‘ayb (Jethro), the father of the girls, Shu‘ayb married one of his daughters to Moses (‘a) and thereafter material life, wife and children, ease and peace were secured for Moses (‘a).

Yes, if a person asks for something from the deepest recesses of his heart from Allah, He bestows upon him. It is not necessary for a person to recite long and detailed supplications and spend much time on supplication—it is enough for him to request his needs with his entire being from Allah so that He may grant his invocation. However, when a person recites supplications, even long and detailed supplications, and his heart is fixed on other than Allah, his invocations are not effective. If, in addition to preparedness of the heart, man has commendable deeds, his supplications are granted even faster.

The Need to Conform Supplication to Commendable Deeds

Perhaps the reason why the supplication of people who commit indecent deeds is not granted and why they are not successful in their requests from Allah is that they do not have complete attention to Allah. This is because improper deeds cause one to fall in love with other than Allah and perhaps also become fond of something that is hated by Allah. In this case, how is it possible for such a person to turn to Allah? People who acquire pure and complete attention to Allah are those whose deeds are decent and proper and far from corruption. It is for this reason that the Noble Prophet (S) states:

“O Abu Dharr! Supplication accompanied by good and proper deeds is enough to the extent that salt is necessary for food.”

In the same way that for food a specific amount of salt is necessary and there is no need for extra, supplication too is enough to that same measure for a person who has good and proper deeds. In reality invocation is the spice of life of a person who seeks prosperity.

For this reason, it is not necessary for such a person to supplicate and present his requests to Allah constantly and when that person makes a request, Allah responds to it. For those who do not have commendable deeds and do not help other people, it is not clear whether invocation is beneficial to them even if they supplicate a lot; in order to make this issue more clear, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

“O Abu Dharr! The similitude of a person who supplicates much without performing good deeds is like that of a person who shoots an arrow without a bow.”

A person who invokes Allah a lot but does not perform his duties correctly is aware of the value of supplication and is truthful in his entreaty and truly has a request from Allah, but he does not act upon his duties in regard to other matters and the effects of devotional service do not become manifested in his personal conduct. He is negligent in connection with his eyes and ears and the other limbs of his body and in reality he is obedient to the carnal soul and the devil.

Such a person, however, ought not to be devoid of hope in Allah, for Allah is more benevolent than to drive a person who comes to knock on His door away without any response. Nevertheless, the condition of such an individual is very different from that of a person whose entire conduct and deeds show the effects and manifestations of devotional service to Allah and who traverses the path of servitude to his Lord with all his being and is not negligent even for one moment in regard to discharging his duties and serving mankind and the Creator.

The similitude between the supplication and request of these two individuals is that of two people who want to hit a target with an arrow but when one wants to throw his arrow he does so with his bare hands. The distance it will cover will be much less and it will not hit the target as is intended. However, the other puts his arrow in the bowstring and then shoots and it covers a longer distance and hits the target. The

example of a person who supplicates but does not perform good deeds is like that of a person who throws his arrow without a bow. Without any doubt the distance covered by his arrow will be much less.

From what has been said, the status and role of supplication in the life of man has become clear and it has become apparent that invocation of Allah is like salt which is added to food. The life of man ought to be filled with devotional service and worship of Allah whether in relation to personal and individual matters, in connection with his household, neighbors and in relation with the society and the creatures of Allah.

The effects of devotional service to Allah have to become manifest in the conduct and deeds of man. In the meanwhile, he also ought to invoke Allah for the reason that this very supplication is an effect of servitude to Allah which manifests itself on the tongue (and without the least doubt requesting and attention ought to arise from the deepest recesses of the heart).

The other point that has become clear from the explanation of the Noble Prophet (S) is that man through good and decent deeds attains his goals very quickly and, when he invokes Allah, he is like that person who shoots the arrow by means of the bow and his arrow reaches its target very quickly. He is like a person whose food is ready and only needs to add a specified amount of salt to it in order for it to be ready for eating. For this reason good and commendable deeds help man attain his desires.

Of course, the desires of human beings are different. The people who have attained the highest levels of devotional service to Allah have sublime requests: their requests include the desire to gain proximity to Allah, to be free of want of other human beings, attain the prosperity of this world and the bliss of the hereafter and also to have the perpetuity of the blessings which Allah has granted to them. They realize that only Allah grants them their needs and not anyone else. On the other hand, people who are at the lower levels of servitude and awareness of Allah are preoccupied with thinking about their stomachs, clothes, houses and other needs and their requests are connected to themselves alone and of course Allah grants them their needs.

In reality, the Noble Prophet's (S) words are an encouragement for man to embark upon edification of the soul and discharging of duties in which case a person attains his goals faster and Allah accepts and grants one's requests. It does not make any difference whether his supplication is in connection with himself or other human beings and whether it is in relation to worldly desires or spiritual and heavenly affairs. Therefore, the Noble Prophet (S) encourages people to perform good deeds although the real effects and rewards for our decent deeds become apparent in the hereafter and this world is primarily a place of work and the reward for deeds will be granted to man in the hereafter:

“Today is the day of action and there is no reckoning while tomorrow is the day of reckoning but there will be no opportunity for action.”[10](#)

It has been recorded in another *hadith* that:

“Whatsoever a man soweth in the world, that shall he also reap in the hereafter.”¹¹

Here seeds are sown and in the hereafter the produce is collected, but Allah, the Exalted, as a result of His infinite mercy grants some of the effects and produce of the deeds of righteous people right here in this world so as to encourage them to perform more good deeds and to embark upon performance of duties. Even if there are people who have attained high levels of perfection and they do not require such encouragement and their certitude [in Allah] does not increase by seeing more of these effects:

“If the curtains were pulled aside, my certainty could not be intensified...”¹²

There are those for whom all the veils have not been removed, and they need encouragement to embark upon devotional service to Allah and to traverse the course of perfection. One means of motivation is that Allah grants rewards and blessings for good deeds right in this world and grants prayers:

... وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“And if the people of the towns had been faithful and pious, We would have opened to them blessings from the heaven and the earth.”¹³

The Existential Blessings of the Righteous and Upright

More significant than what has been said so far, in the following sentences the Noble Prophet (S) mentions the rewards for good and virtuous deeds—rewards which are beyond imagination such that man does not have any expectation that his good deeds could have such befitting benefits:

“O Abu Dharr! Because of the righteousness of an individual, Allah rectifies and improves the state of his children, his grandchildren and his great grandchildren and protects those dwelling in his house and in his neighborhood for as long as he is alive.”

Allah protects from dangers people who are His devoted servants in this world and, as a result of their blessed existence, He protects their children generation after generation, and even the people living in the neighborhood and cities of righteous and upright people are protected from calamities, too. In the same manner, the existential rays of their spiritual blessings and divine graces encompass their companions and other people living in their vicinity.

The existential rays of believers are not the same; some people are only in contact with their wife and children, others are in touch with their neighbors and workmates too and, beyond that, some people are in contact with the people of one city and even the people of their country.

We all know that the late Imam Khomeini (may Allah be pleased with him) had a bond not only with the people of Iran but with all the Muslims of the world and more than that, with all the oppressed people of

the earth. His existential rays had gone beyond one city and one country and had encompassed the whole world. Allah the Exalted, by means of that able and chosen man included millions of people in His grace.

Indeed, not only does Allah, the Exalted, protect a righteous and virtuous person, grant him graces, consent to his supplication and repel calamities from him, but the blessings and graces that are granted to him also include other human beings, such as his family, neighbors and countrymen and calamities too are repelled from these people in gratitude for his invaluable existence.

This precious role and the commendable effects of being a righteous servant of Allah make one aware of the importance of the precious alchemy of setting foot on the course of Allah and following His orders, for its effects even go beyond the realm of man's existence and include other people. Is it not possible that instead of engaging in deeds for which one has hope of benefit but it is not clear that the desired result will be derived and instead of bearing the many hardships of the world in the hope of bringing to hand favorable results, one could spend the moments of his life performing duties and carrying out the orders of Allah so as to secure both worldly and heavenly desires, and so divine graces include both his being and that of his wife, children, and future generations and even neighbors and the people of one's city and country?

What acts could be more profitable and advantageous than these? Do all the people who do business and trade attain all their worldly desires? Sometimes they make profit and sometimes losses. Besides, what do they gain once they succeed at business? The utmost gain they make is that they live comfortably for a short time in this world.

As has been said, sometimes the supplication of one righteous man protects all the people of one city from calamities and causes the downpour of divine grace upon the people. Beyond the shadow of a doubt in gratitude for the existence of the saints [*awliya*] of Allah and righteous people, a great deal of calamities are repelled from us and as a result of their supplications many graces are granted to us and all too often we do not perceive those graces.

Many times our fathers performed good deeds as a result of which Allah still grants us blessings up to now. Often our teachers and great mentors pray for us, or our neighbors and the believers pray for us in the midst of the night and, as a result of their supplications, Allah grants us graces and repels calamities from us. We do not know where these blessings come from and by means of which people these calamities are warded off.

Do we know what blessings derive from the supplications made in the midst of the night by a righteous human being to the divine presence of Allah? It has been stated in the Qur'an and also recorded in *hadiths* that Allah grants blessings to other people and wards off calamities from them as a result of the presence of virtuous human beings.

In regard to a *hadith* which Yunus ibn Zabyan narrates from Imam al-Sadiq, (‘a) which will be discussed

later, we can cite evidence in the Qur'an:

وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضُهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ...

“Were it not for Allah’s repelling the people by means of one another, the earth would surely have been corrupted, but Allah is gracious to the world’s creatures.”¹⁴

In the *hadith* stated by Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) which is related about the above-mentioned verse, it has been recorded as follows:

“Allah, the Exalted, wards off calamities from that Shi’ah who does not perform the ritual prayers in gratitude for our Shi’ahs who do perform the ritual prayers, and if all of them do not pray, they will all be destroyed. Allah, the Exalted, wards off adversities from that Shi’ah who does not fast in gratitude for the Shi’ah who fasts and if all of them unanimously agreed not to fast, they would be ruined. Allah, the Exalted, wards off afflictions from the Shi’ahs in gratitude for that Shi’ah who pays the charity tax and all of them will be destroyed if they concur not to pay the charity tax.

Allah, the Exalted, wards off ordeals from that Shi’ah who does not go on the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) in gratitude for that Shi’ah who goes on the *hajj* and if all of them agreed not to go on the pilgrimage, they would be ruined. This is the purport of the word of Allah in which He states, ***‘Were it not for Allah’s repelling the people by means of one another, the earth would surely have been corrupted, but Allah is gracious to the world’s creatures.’*** I swear by Allah that this verse was not revealed save regarding you and no one was intended except you (the Shi’ahs).¹⁵

In regard to the role of the righteous in the society, the blessings which are granted to people in gratitude for the virtuous, and the afflictions which Allah wards off from other human beings on account of them, it must be borne in mind that the best of people and the Prophets (‘a), is the Last Prophet Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah (S), who is the possessor of the first and the last knowledge and in whom all the exalted human attributes and all the eminent spiritual perfections are assembled, and the Pure and Infallible Imams (‘a) are likewise; additionally, he is infallible and far from any kind of error and sin, and is the fountainhead and spring of all the divine graces; just as the Divine Essence has stated:

*“... I swear upon my glory and honor that if it were not for you, I would not have created the universe.”*¹⁶

In addition to the Noble Prophet (S), the divine presence of the Pure and Infallible Imams (‘a) has been the reason Allah has preserved the cosmos and grants His blessings and graces to His creatures all the time and wards off a great deal of calamities due to the presence of the Divine Proof, Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance). The world would be annihilated if it were devoid of the Divine Proof even for a single moment, as Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) states:

“We are the leaders of the Muslims and the proofs of Allah upon the dwellers of the universe... and the

earth would crumble and become obliterated if it were void of our presence.” After that the Imam (‘a) stated, “The world has never been void of the proof of Allah since Adam was created and the divine proof was either apparent and known or was absent and unknown by the others and until the Day of Resurrection the world will not remain devoid of the proof of Allah and if it were not like this Allah would not be worshipped (that is to say no man would remain alive so as to worship Allah).” The narrator of the hadith asked, “How can people derive benefit from the hidden proof of Allah?” The Imam stated, “In the same way that they derive benefit from the sun hidden behind the clouds.”¹⁷

- ¹. Raghīb Isfahānī, Mufradat, under maddah da‘awa.
- ². Surat al-Isra’ 17:52.
- ³. Surat al-Mu‘min (or Ghafir) 40:60.
- ⁴. Nahj al-Balaghah, pp. 924–925, letter no. 31, trans. Fayd al-Islam.
- ⁵. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p. 303.
- ⁶. Usul al-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 107.
- ⁷. Surat al-Baqarah 2:186.
- ⁸. Surat al-Qasas 28:24.
- ⁹. Nahj al-Balaghah, p. 507, sermon [khutbah] 159, trans. Fayd al-Islam.
- ¹⁰. Nahj al-Balaghah, p. 40, sermon [khutbah] 42, trans. Shahidi.
- ¹¹. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 225.
- ¹². Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 40, p. 153.
- ¹³. Surat al-A‘raf 7:96.
- ¹⁴. Surat al-Baqarah 2:251.
- ¹⁵. Tafsir ‘Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 135.
- ¹⁶. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 15, p. 27, hadith 48.
- ¹⁷. Ibid., vol. 23, p. 5.

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