

## Lesson 5: Supplication

### The Importance of Supplication



{قُلْ مَا يَعْבוُّكُمْ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا}

**Say: 'My Lord esteems you not at all were it not for your supplication, for you have cried lies, and it shall surely be fastened. (Al Furqan 25:77)**

The sentence “My Lord esteems you not at all were it not for your supplication” indicates that the Lord does not hold for a group of people any value, due to their past actions, had they not been under the shadow of their supplications and worship.

Of course, with regards to the words “your supplication”, there are two meanings. One is supplication and crying with special attention to Allahﷻ, such is in the narrations when we read: A person of supplication is a person who will not perish.<sup>1</sup> So from a group of people who were not of those who supplicated, the complaint will be that instead of supplication, you opted to go towards idols, desires and tyrants, and so retribution will be seen. And one where the meaning is the invitation from Allahﷻ to people, because His Divine Tradition is one that invites people with Truth and complete proof over them. What makes one a better presence and of more value is the very acceptance of the invitation of Allahﷻ, yet you did not accept the invitation and belied it, so hope of good in you is non-existent and retribution for your action will be delivered.

In one place Allahﷻ states in the Holy Qur'an:

{وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ}

***I have not created jinn and mankind except to serve Me. (Ad Dhariyat 51:56)***

And when combined with the Ayah above, that had it not been for your supplication you would not have had any value, it is apparent the supplication is the heart and soul of worship.

Yes, even with the fact the Allahﷻ is All Knowing of everything, yet supplication remains our duty. Supplication in every place and at every moment is beneficial. This is because Allahﷻ states

{فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ}

***I am near (Al Baqarah 2: 186)***

So if we are sometimes recipients of the wrath of Allahﷻ, it is because the distance we have placed between our self and Allahﷻ through the effect of sin.

## **The Attention of Allah To Those Who Supplicate**

{وَ إِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَ لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ}

***And when My servants question thee concerning Me -- I am near to (I) answer the call of the caller, when he calls to Me; so let them respond to Me, and let them believe in Me; haply so they will go aright. (Al Baqarah 2: 186).***

Supplication, is a reason for so much affection from the Lord that in this Ayah, Allahﷻ uses the first person pronoun seven times (see underlined words above). This affection occurs in the instance where the person wants to seek help from Allahﷻ through supplication.

Question: Why is it that sometimes our supplications are not answered?

Answer: In “Al-Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qur'an”, we read that in this Ayah, Allahﷻ states that

{أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ}

***I answer the call of the caller, when he calls to Me (Al Baqarah 2: 186).***

Allahﷻ will answer the call of the caller that only calls upon Him, with complete sincerity, and requests good. So if a supplication has not been answered, it is either because our request from Allahﷻ was not for the better, and in reality would have been for the worse for us, or if it was in reality for the better for us, we did not request frankly and with complete sincerity where it was contaminated with an appeal to others. Or it could be that the answering of the supplication would not lead to our benefit, such as that

stated in the narrations, in such cases in we are protected from calamity or our future generations are protected or compensation is granted in the Hereafter.

In Usul Kafi, we read that the one who consumes what is unlawful or does not enjoin good and forbid evil, and who supplicates without attention or presence of the heart, their supplications are not answered.

The meaning of supplication is not to leave earning a living and work, but rather reliance upon Allahﷻ along with effort. That's why in the narrations we read: Supplication without effort will not be answered.

May be the placement of an Ayah of supplication in amongst Ayahs relating to fasting is due to it being more appropriate that the month of Allahﷻ be spent along with supplication.

Question: Given that the work of Allahﷻ is fixed based upon law and based upon deeds and traditions, what role does supplication play?

Answer: Just as the rules relating to the prayers and fasts of a traveler are different to that of one who is in their own residence, one who supplicates is different to one who is negligent of Allahﷻ and the tradition of Allahﷻ benefits the former, not the latter. Yes, supplications and conversations with Allahﷻ increase the capacity of one to be able to accept the beneficence of Allahﷻ.

Likewise, the invocation and the visitation of vicegerents (اوليا) of Allahﷻ changes the condition that one is in. Just like if a father takes along his child as a guest, the host will accept them with more love and affection than if they went alone. So supplication, visitation and invocation is reason for the changing of the conditions of someone, not the disruption of the Absolute Divine Tradition.

## The Etiquette Of Supplication

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

***And your Lord hath said: Pray unto Me and I will hear your prayer. Lo! those who scorn My service, they will enter hell, disgrace (Ghafir 40:60).***

Supplications have etiquettes and conditions that need to be met including:

I. Supplication must be with faith and deed.

{ يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ }

***He answers those who believe and do righteous deeds (Al Shura 42:26).***

III. With sincerity

{فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ}

***So call unto God sincerely (Ghafir 40:14).***

V. With humbleness and in secret

{ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً}

***Call on your Lord, humbly and secretly (Al Araaf 7:55).***

VII. With fear and hope

{وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا}

***And call unto Him with in fear and hope. (Al Araaf 7:56).***

IX. During some special hours

{يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ}

***Call upon their Lord at morning and evening (Al Anaam 6:52).***

XI. The one who is supplicating should benefit from the heavenly divine names

{وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا}

***To God belong the Names Most Beautiful; so call Him by them (Al Araaf 7:180).***

Of course, we must bring to attention that some deeds such as sin, oppression, and not forgiving those who have sought forgiveness from us, are a barrier to the answering of supplication. Or sometimes, the answering of a supplication means the need to break the world order of creation. Like the example of the student that answered a geography question incorrectly, that the surface of the sea is higher than that of the mountain top, the student requested from Allahﷻ that the two be swapped. Anyway, Allahﷻ being All Able, is also All Wise.

The answering of supplication is two sided. That means that if people are awaiting the answering of their

supplication, they also need to answer and accept the invitation of Allahﷻ so that your supplication can also be answered by Allahﷻ.

{اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ}

**Respond to God and the Messenger when He calls you unto that which will give you life (Al Anfaal 8:24).**

## The Beautiful Names of Allah

{وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا}

**To God belong the Names Most Beautiful; so call Him by them (Al Araaf 7: 180).**

Although all Divine names and attributes are beautiful and good, and Allahﷻ has all the Perfection which cannot be comprehended nor counted, in the narrations we have 99 names which have been emphasised and anyone who calls upon Allahﷻ with these names will have their supplications answered.

In the Qur'an, up to 145 names of Allahﷻ are noted and 99 names in the narrations, either because some of the names can be combined and are practically applied to be the same as each other, or it could mean that the names of Allah are not limited to a number. In some narrations and supplications there are even more names that have been noted, like in the supplication of Jawshan Kabeer. Of course, some of the Divine Beautiful Names have special effects, blessings and importance.

Imam Redha(pbu) states: We, the Purified Household, are the Beautiful Names of Allahﷻ for which the deed of none will be accepted without comprehending us.

نحن والله الأسماء الحسنى التي لا يقبل الله من العباد عملا إلا بمعرفتنا

He also stated any time you come across problems and hardship, invoke help from Allahﷻ through us as a medium, and then recited

{وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا}

**To God belong the Names Most Beautiful; so call Him by them.  
(Al Araaf 7: 180).**

It has also been narrated from him that he stated

إن الخالق لا يوصف إلا بما وصف به نفسه

*The Creator cannot be described except with how He described Himself.*

That means we cannot ascribe names to Allahﷻ of our own, such as calling him chaste, brave and the like. [3](#)

[1.](#) (Al Kafi ) V4 P228

[2.](#) (تفسير اثنا عشرى – Twelver Interpretation)

[3.](#) (تفسير فرقان – Tafseer Furqan)

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