

O Allāh, Enrich Every Indigent (Poor One)

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَغْنِ كُلَّ فَقِيْرٍ

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The Supplicant's All-Embracing Spirit

[*Allāhumma aghni kulla...*]:

One preposition employed in nearly every verse of this supplication is “*kull*” which means “every”. The supplicant always tries to seek the betterment of every human being. He assumes a Divine spirit throughout the invocation. Egoism no more exists. He frees himself from the shackles of yearning only for the betterment and comfort of his self. The Holy Prophet (s) and his infallible progeny were of such character. They yearned for the betterment and emancipation of all. In order to understand this exalted spirit better, study the following quotations of the Holy Qur’ān and traditions:

1. Almighty Allāh says in the Qur’ān [Chapter al-A‘raf– 7: 156]:

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ

“And My Mercy encompasses all things [i.e. every dependent being].”

2. And in [Chapter al-Anbiyā’– 21: 107] addressing His Noble Messenger, He says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ۚ

“And we have not sent you but as a mercy for the worlds.”

3. And in [Chapter al-Kahf – 18:6] addressing His Beloved, He says:

﴿فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا﴾

“Then it is near that you will kill yourself in grief, for their outcomes, if they do not believe in this announcement.” [MK. Trans.]

4. The following is a radiant verse for the daily du‘ā’ of the holy month of Rajab:

يَا مَنْ يُعْطِي مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلْهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْرِفْهُ تَحَنُّنًا مِنْهُ وَرَحْمَةً.

“O One Who always gives [even] to one who does not ask Him and who does not (even) know Him, out of His Kindness and Mercy.”

5. Almighty Allāh says in [Chapter Tāhā– 20:2]:

﴿مَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى﴾

“We did not send the Qur’ān so that you distress yourself [in the path of propagation by struggling to force the people towards it].”

6. And in [Chapter al-Fātir– 35:8] He says:

﴿فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ﴾

“...And therefore do not consume yourself, in grief for them [due to their unbelief]...”

7. And in [Chapter al-Mumtahana– 60:8] He says:

﴿لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ﴾

“Allah does not forbid you from doing good and acting fairly with those who have not made war against you on account of religion nor driven you out of your homes; surely Allah loves those who act equitably.”

8. In a will¹ addressed to his son – Hujj Sayyid Ahmad Khumayn² – the late ³ayatullah Khumayn⁴ says: “...These are the miracles of the Noble Messenger (s)...who, standing at the apex of the peak of human perfection, sees the realities clearly and without any intervening *hijab* (curtain). At the same time he is present in all the dimensions of humanity and stages of being, and being the highest manifestation of:

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ

“He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden.” [57:3]

wants all human beings to achieve such a perfection. It was painful for him to see that they failed to achieve such a station, and perhaps the verse:

طه. مَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى

“T^h: We have not sent down the Qur’an to you that you distress yourself.” [20: 1–2]

makes an oblique reference to this fact, and perhaps this hadith from him also refers to it:

مَا أُودِيَ نَبِيٍّ مِثْلَ مَا أُودِيتُ.

“No Prophet was made to suffer torment like me.”²

9. Marh³m Am⁴n al-Islam Tabras⁵ in his *Majma‘ al-Bay‘an* narrates the following:

ولبت في قومه ألف سنة إلا خمسين عاماً... وكان يدعوهم ليلاً ونهاراً، فلا يزيدهم دعاؤه إلا فراراً، وكان يضربه قومه حتى يغشى عليه، فإذا أفاق قال:
“اللهم اهدِ قومي فإنهم لا يعلمون.”

“Prophet N^h (as) lived among his people for 950 years...And he would invite them day and night, but it

would add nothing in them save repulsion. Sometimes his people would beat him so much that he would fall unconscious, and on regaining consciousness, he would say: “O Allāh guide my people for they do not know.”³

10. Following is the first verse of a beautiful poem attributed to Imām ‘Alī (as)⁴:

When he saw Ibn Muljim he recited the following near ‘Amr bin Ma’dikarb:

أُرِيدُ حَيَاتَهُ وَ يُرِيدُ قَتْلِي.

I seek his life and he wants me to be killed

11. It is narrated that Prophet ‘Isā (as) once said⁵:

كُنْ كَالشَّمْسِ تَطْلُعُ عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالْفَاجِرِ.

“Be like the sun; it shines upon the virtuous and sinful.”

12. Sayyid Radī al-Dīn ibn Tawūs is one of the great Shī‘a scholars whose works enjoy a certain veneration in the scholarly circles. In his well-known prayer manual – *Iqbāl al-‘Imā*, which indeed is a masterpiece of devotional supplications, he narrates the following:

كنت في ليلة جليلة من شهر رمضان، بعد تصنيف هذا الكتاب بزمان، وأنا أدعو في السحر لمن يجب أو يحسن تقديم الدعاء له ولي و... فورد على خاطري أن الجاحدين لله جل جلاله ولنعمه، والمستخفين بحرمته، والمبدلين لحكمه في عبادته وخليقته، ينبغي أن يبدأ بالدعاء لهم بالهداية من ضلالتهم، فإن جنايتهم على الربوبية والحكمة الإلهية والجلالة النبوية أشد من جناية العارفين بالله وبالرسول (ص).

“Some time after having written this book, during one of the great nights of the holy month of Ramadān, when I was praying at sahar time for those of whom it is compulsory or good to present in prayer and also for myself and... then the following thought crossed my mind: it behooves one to first pray for the guidance of those who deny Allāh and reject His blessings and those who belittle His Sanctity and change His rule [over His servants and creation], because their crime in relation to the lordship of God,

Divine wisdom, and prophetic majesty is more grave than the crime of those who know Allāh (swt) and His Messenger (s)..."

Then, after a few lines he says6:

فدعوت لكل ضال عن الله بالهداية إليه، ولكل ضال عن الرسول بالرجوع إليه،
ولكل ضال عن الحق بالاعتراف به والاعتماد عليه. ثم دعوت لأهل التوفيق
والتحقيق بالثبوت على توفيقهم، والزيادة في تحقيقهم، ودعوت لنفسي ومن...

"So I prayed for all those who have deviated from Allāh to be guided towards Him, and all those who have deviated from His Messenger to return to him, and all those who have strayed from the truth to admit it and rely on it. Then I prayed for the people of Divine succor (*ahl al-tawfīq*) to be established on their path and for the men of realization (*ahl al-tahqīq*) to attain greater realization, and [then] I prayed for myself and those..."

Therefore, when reciting the verses of this supplication of the holy month, the supplicant should open his heart for all in unison with the Prophet (s) and his infallible progeny.

Objection

Does the aforesaid mean that we should also pray for the material well-being of every hypocrite and disbeliever, when we know that they are the sources of corruption and mischief in the society? Don't we know about their evil state described in various places in the Qur'ān? How can we yearn for the material prosperity of such people?

Response

Almighty Allāh wants both the spiritual as well as the physical betterment of every human being. The purpose of human creation according to the Holy Qur'ān, as shall be soon discussed, is not only meant for the believers, but for the entire caravan of humanity. The verses cited above clearly indicate how the Prophet (s) suffered agony due to the adamant stance of the disbelievers. 'The agony' was due to the all-embracing spirit that he possessed. He wanted the salvation of every human being.

The supplicant who is submissive to Almighty Allāh should also like the same to be realized for every human being. However, it would be wrong for him to seek their material prosperity for the sake of material prosperity. When seeking the material prosperity of every human being, one must ask Almighty Allāh for that material prosperity that would serve as a means for the goal of human existence. One should desire, for example, that every human being receives food and shelter, so that they can worship

Almighty Allﷻh and attain His proximity.

There are different reasons why some human beings are deprived of basic necessities of life. The fundamental cause of many of the deprivations is the ‘deficiency of the receptacle of Grace.’ Otherwise the Creator’s Grace is abundantly poured down to all. The Holy Qur’ﷻn so beautifully expounds this truth in chapter ar-Ra’d (13), verse 17:

﴿أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا...﴾

“He sent down water from the sky, and the channels flowed, each according to its measure...”

Those who consume foods that would ruin their digestive system, for example, create the gateway of deprivation from food themselves. Those who engage in sin, hamper their sustenance themselves. Both material and spiritual prosperity depend on the receptacle. Otherwise the All-Merciful can never be thought to be stingy or subjective. He is always *al-Jawﷻd* and Open-Handed.

Therefore, clean and pure water descends from the sky, but dirty receptacles always receive dirty water, narrow receptacles always receive less water, perforated receptacles always lose water, etc. This is a universal law that the Qur’ﷻn so beautifully expounds.

It is noteworthy that the word “*Rahﷻm*” that we always utter when starting Chapter *al-Fatiha* does not literally indicate that His ever-rewarding Mercy and Guidance is only reserved for the believers; rather such Mercy is poured down upon all, but only those receptacles who believed in the truth and have the capacity to accept can absorb the same. For a better understanding of this vital truth those who are interested may look at *al-Salﷻt* of the late Syatullﷻh Khumaynﷻ.7

The Benefits of Prayers in Absence

Another very important trend in the supplication is praying for others in their absence. There are several Qur’ﷻnic verses and traditions that lay great emphasis on this and enumerate good reward for the same. Following are examples worthy of consideration:

1. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said8:

لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَسْرَعُ إِجَابَةً مِنْ دَعْوَةِ غَائِبٍ لِغَائِبٍ.

“Nothing is accepted as quickly as one’s supplication for another in his absence.”

2. It is reported from Imām al-Sādiq (as) that he said:

دُعَاءُ الْمُؤْمِنِ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ يَدْفَعُ عَنْهُ الْبَلَاءَ، وَ يَدْرُّ عَلَيْهِ الرِّزْقَ.

“The du‘ā of a believer for another believer dispels calamities from him and showers him with abundant sustenance.”

Absolute Need of the Human Being

In the culture of the Holy Qur’ān every human being, whatever status he may have in this world, is needy. The Holy Qur’ān [35: 15] says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ۚ

“O human beings, you are needy to Allāh, and it is Allāh Who is Affluent, the Praised one.”

This verse is in complete harmony with intellectual proof, which considers every dependent being to depend on a source, Which is Independent and Whose existence is Necessary and Essential. Therefore, all human beings together with their possessions as well as all the other dependent entities, entirely stand and subsist by the cause of Divine Grace. We read on Thursday nights:

يَا دَائِمَ الْفَضْلِ عَلَى الْبَرِيَّةِ.

“O One Who continuously Bestows Grace on the creation.”

Almighty Allāh is *Rabbu’l ‘ālamīn*. The meaning of ‘*Rabb*’ should not be equated to the word “Lord” as it is normally translated. *Rabb* – as mentioned by *Tafsīr al-Mazān* – means “*al-Malik al-Mudabbir*” (The Owner and Manager of affairs), which indicates that Allāh owns every entity in its entirety and manages it by making it subsist and controlling its affairs each and every moment. Thus we should try to remove the irrational thinking of some people who separate God from creation and say that he is resting. Exalted is He, from such limitations.

Therefore if, the soul owner “in the real sense of the word” is Allāh, every human being is poor and indigent.

A Step Towards Eradication of Poverty

On reciting the verse under discussion, the supplicant always imagines, that he or she is praying for all those who are outwardly needy and have no source of stable livelihood. This is also a correct translation of the verse. However, in view of the introduction presented above, we must understand that the dimensions of poverty are not limited to what we normally imagine.

When we pray to Allāh to enrich the poor, we should also have taken a practical step to enrich others to the extent permitted by our limitations. This, as explained previously, is what is required of us.

If we carefully ponder over the verse under discussion, we will realize that the supplicant does not merely seek ‘the temporal satisfaction’ of the needy. Many of us temporarily satisfy the needy in the holy month of Ramadān by purchasing some household necessities, such as food stuffs and clothes, etc. and are pleased for having done something that Almighty Allāh desires. Obviously such acts are highly recommended and carry a lot of benefit, but are different from what we are trying to seek from our All-loving Creator in this particular verse: we are not merely after the temporal satisfaction of the poor; we are praying to Allāh to assist the needy with a permanent source of income. “O Allāh, *aghni* (enrich) *kulla faqr* (every poor person).

Having realized this subtle point, the supplicant should think of how to play an active role in making the poor affluent. Several examples of how this may be achieved may come to mind. However, each depends on the supplicant’s limitation: one who is extremely rich, may think of supporting the poor to start small businesses of their own and enrich them thereby; one who owns a small-scale business and is need of employees, would employ the poor and thereby help them up to a certain extent. One may also be an employee of someone himself, but due to his acquaintance with other wealthy men, would try to intercede on the poor’s behalf and get them jobs.

The readers will realize the variety of the options in this noble venture. The significant point here is that every one should take “a step” and participate.

Historical Examples

The life history of our Holy Prophet (s) and the infallible Imāms (as) are a practical translation of this verse of the du‘ā. Many examples can be cited, but due to the brevity of this work, we shall only mention a few:

1. Historians have narrated how Imām Hasan al-Mujtabā (as) in all his greatness and magnanimity would help the needy with large amounts of money in one go. It is also narrated of him that thrice during his lifetime the Imām (as) spent half of his wealth on the needy. [*Tārīkh al-Khulafā* – Suyūṭī]
2. Farazdaq is a well-known character to the lovers of the Ahlu’l Bayt (as). When the Ummayyad governor of the time – Hishām bin ‘Abdul Mawlik tried to belittle Imām Zaynu’l ‘Abidin (as) by asking

about his identity, Farazdaq recited a beautiful couplet about the exalted character of the Imām (as). This made Hishām very angry and he terminated the continuous help that he used to give Farazdaq and he imprisoned him as well. Imām (as) sent a good amount of money to him in prison, but Farazdaq did not accept it at first. Then the Imām (as) insisted and he finally accepted. Later with the prayer of the Imām (as), when he was released, he informed the Imām (as) of how he was regularly paid by Hishām and that his name was afterwards deleted from Hishām’s payroll. Imām (as) thereupon gifted Farazdaq an amount of money that would suffice him for 40 years. Farazdaq’s life too extended for another 40 years. [*al-Manāqib*]

3. In his *Manāqib*, Ibn Shahr ṣhṣh narrates that Imām Zaynu’l ‘abidin (as) took the responsibility to cater for 100 needy families. [*al-Manāqib*]

Therefore, we should try, through our sadaqāt, to ‘eradicate’ poverty. One of the best methods of doing so is to gather even very small amounts of support from those who would like to eradicate poverty and use the same for this sublime purpose.

Enriching the Motive of Our Action

There is another significant issue, which must be inculcated in this holy month of grace. When we ask Almighty Allāh to ‘enrich all the poor’, we should do so because “we ourselves desire it”. That is, our untainted disposition yearns for it. At times someone does something and gets happy thereby due to the reward that awaits him. However, sometimes the act in itself is enjoyable for the person. Saḥt, for example, to those who are not humble before God is burdensome and difficult. The Holy Qur’ān [2:45] says:

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

“And take recourse in patience and prayer, and that is indeed hard except for the humble.”

But one who has cleaned his heart and loves to whisper to the Only Beloved says:

قُمْ يَا بِلَالُ فَأَرْحِنَا بِالصَّلَاةِ.

“Stand O Bilāl, and make us happy with prayer.”¹¹

And says:

قُرَّةُ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ.

“The delight of my eye (*qurratu‘ayn*) is in prayer.”¹²

There is a vast difference between those who tire themselves in anticipation of Divine reward and those who tire themselves because they highly enjoy praying to the only Beloved.

Therefore, let us struggle to become “extinct in the spirit of Allāh,” and practically try to enrich the poor because we naturally enjoy the same; and because it is “our need” and “our concern”. Let us remove the specks of “anticipation” of reward.

Readers however should not be led to believe that those who expect reward are sinners. No; rather they enjoy a lower stage, but are good doers and must be encouraged as well. All of us start from this lower step and by Divine succor ascend slowly and gradually. We may easily claim to have ascended to the higher level, but between ‘contention’ and ‘reality’ there can be utter remoteness.

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1. Jelwehīye Rahmānī, Translated by Al-Tawhīd Journal, v. XI, Nos. 3&4 pg. 68
 2. Kanzu'l 'Ummī, v. 11, tradition no. 32161
 3. Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān, v. 4, pg. 866
 4. Minasha'r al-Mansūb ila 'l Imām al-Wasiyy 'Alī bin Abī Tālib, pg. 64
 5. Iqbāl al-‘īmī, v. 1, pg. 385
 6. Iqbāl al-‘īmī, v. 1, pg. 384
 7. Tafsīr Surat al-Hamd, pg. 23
 8. Mīzān al-Hikma, v. 2, pg. 887, tr. 5730
 9. Ibid.
 10. Misbāh al-Kaf'amī, section 46, pg. 647
 11. Mīzān al-Hikma, new ed., v. 1, pg. 62
 12. Bihār al-Anwār, v. 82, pg. 193
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