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Part 1: Introduction, Discussions about Supplication

﴿قُلْ مَا يَعْبَأُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ﴾

“Say, ‘Why should my Lord care for you, were it not for your supplication?’”¹

The simplest and most natural relationship of man with God is to remember Him. This affects his heart and soul. Occasionally, the effect of this remembrance is manifested by the tongue.

Supplication [*du‘a*] is a weapon of the faithful [*mu’minin*], a means of proximity to God, the essence of worship [*‘ibadah*], remembrance of the Truth, and communion with the Lord of the worlds. Asking for a request is an excuse to stand before the Doorstep of the Beloved and appeal to the Self-sufficient Being. Supplication is a source of spiritual vitality and the key to divine bestowals. Supplication means being enthralled by divine mercy.

Supplication has greatly been emphasized and is of immense value in Islamic culture. So, it is important to clearly define its essence.

What is the essence of supplication? Is supplication an independent reason for the acceptance of requests, or similar to other natural or common reasons? In case it is an independent reason, can it not be an exception to the cosmic precedents [*sunan-e takwini*] of God? Does supplication not contribute to one’s laziness? What and to what extent are the effects of supplication? What is the use of supplication? What educational role can it play in the life of man?

Does the effect of supplication lie only in its content, as claimed by some people, in the sense that it has an inspirational dimension which prompts a person to move towards his goal? Or, does it have other effects? God has promised in the Qur’an to hear the supplication of His servants, then why are most of our prayers not granted? Does supplication have some etiquettes and conditions? If yes, what then are

those conditions? What is meant by “arrogance in supplication”, which has been prohibited by the Qur’an?

These are the various dimensions examined in this chapter.

What is the essence of supplication [du‘a’]?

Life in the world is such that consciously or unconsciously man’s attention is drawn to material things. But the truth is that man is created to have proximity to God [*taqarrub*], and he must utilize everything he has to attain this goal. One of the best ways is to allocate a specific time everyday to the sincere remembrance of God. This remembrance is illustriously manifested in prayer. In the ritual prayer [*salah*], there are supplications in the state of *qunut*² and other positions, besides those to be recited before and after the daily obligatory prayers as mentioned in the traditions [*ahadith*]. In fact, the ritual prayer itself can be considered a “supplication”. As stated, *salah* literally means supplication.

The essence of supplication is attention [*tawajjuh*] to the Worshipped Being and it is considered spiritual ascension [*mi‘raj*] for the faithful. Supplication does not mean mere recitation of some words and observance of certain acts. The essence or spirit of supplication is man’s soulful attention to the Lord and Cherisher of the worlds. The extent of this attention is commensurate to the degree of one’s gnosis [*ma‘rifah*] and love of God. As such, one must pay attention to the Attributes of God before and during prayer.

The essence of supplication is nothing but worship and because of the attention to God at the time of its performance, it is perhaps even preferred to other forms of worship. In the noble traditions, the Apostle (S) is reported to have said:

الدُّعَاءُ مَخُّ الْعِبَادَةِ.

“Supplication is the brain of worship.”³

In the Holy Qur’an, while dealing with the issue of arrogance in supplication God also says:

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

“Your Lord has said, ‘Call Me, and I will hear you!’ Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility.”⁴

In this verse, God has not said “those who are disdainful of supplication to Me,” but described supplication as “worship,” introducing it as a requisite of servitude; for the threat of hellfire is intended for those who refuse to worship and not to those who refuse to make supplication.⁵

This might raise the question: How should man worship God whenever he needs something from Him? To answer this question, the essence of worship must be clarified.

The essence of worship is for man to regard himself as the servant [*‘abd*] and subject [*mamluk*] of God, not to allocate any sovereignty to himself as well as an independent will vis-à-vis that of God. Rather, he must consider himself and his possessions as belonging to God. He must totally submit to the will of God, acknowledge his servanthood before his Lord and voluntarily express his ontological servitude to Him. In other words, he must express himself to God, thus:

إِلَهِهِ أَنْتَ الْخَالِقُ وَأَنَا الْمَخْلُوقُ وَأَنْتَ الْمَالِكُ وَأَنَا الْمَمْلُوكُ وَأَنْتَ الرَّبُّ وَأَنَا الْعَبْدُ... وَأَنْتَ الْقَوِيُّ وَأَنَا الضَّعِيفُ

“O Lord! You are the Creator and I am a creature. You are the Master and I am a subject. You are the Lord and I am a servant... You are the Mighty and I am weak.”⁶

In reality, worship is an expression of the same; sometimes, through the heart’s attention and at times by verbal expression or bodily gestures and signs. If ever bowing down [*ruku’*] and prostration [*sujud*] are considered acts of worship, it is because they express humbleness before the infinite majesty of God.

Supplication is an actual indication of belief in the Mastership, Lordship, Greatness, and Power of God.

One who stretches his hands above, bows down and prostrates on the ground, sheds tears, and implores God to grant his requests, demonstrates his utmost humbleness and abjectness before the Greatness of God. He regards himself as poor, weak, abject, and helpless, and God as rich, powerful, great and mighty. Through his physical state, he expresses this truth.

It is true that supplication apparently means petition to meet material and spiritual needs, but in reality, it is a confession of one’s poverty and impotence. It is true that a supplication is always in verbal form but words express inner state and have no substance of their own. Neither the type of words nor the manner of expressing them has any effect on events in the world. Supplication must emanate from the heart and soul. Utterance of some words by the tongue without any attention of the heart cannot be deemed as supplication. The essence of supplication is nothing but the highest form of worship.

The independent effect of supplication

Can supplication independently cause the granting of a prayer and can a phenomenon come into being as the result of supplication without inevitable causes?

From the perspective of the Qur’an, the answer to this question is affirmative. Instances have been mentioned in the Qur’an in which without the agency of apparent causes, supplication has brought a thing into existence. For example, by answering the supplication of Prophet Zakariyya (Zechariah) (‘a), God gave him a son (Yahya (‘a)) in his old age. Other cases have also been mentioned. So, according

to the Qur'an, this point is undeniable.

Is this not an exception to the precedent set by Allah? The Divine will is for things to happen through their own causes, as mentioned in this tradition:

أَبَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْرِيَ الْأَشْيَاءُ إِلَّا بِالْأَسْبَابِ.

“Allah refuses to bring things into existence except through their causes.”⁷

Does it not violate the law of causation? In reply, it must be stated that this issue is similar to that of miracles performed by prophets [*i'jaz*] and non-prophets [*kiramah*]. Just as it is said concerning miracles of the prophets (‘a), that they are a precedent [*sunnah*] prevailing over natural and common precedents, the grant of prayer is also a divine precedent prevailing over other precedents.

Just as citing the verse, ***“Yet you will not find any change in Allah’s precedent, and you will never find any revision in Allah’s precedent”***,⁸ to deny miracles is not correct, the same verse and tradition, quoted above, cannot also be cited to negate the effect of supplication. In any case, denial of extraordinary events is incompatible with the Qur'an.

One of the principles of the religious or divine outlook is to believe in *i'jaz*, *kiramah* and the like. This belief does not exist in materialist schools of thought, and those who believe in it are accused of denying the law of cause and effect. It is argued that acceptance of such things is a violation of the law of causation. If the law of causation is accepted, all things must come into being through their respective causes and conditions; otherwise, it is impossible for them to have existence. How can one believe that without the agency of natural causes, a thing can come into being? Thus, this belief is repugnant to the law of causation.

Is supplication in conflict with the law of causation?

Does belief in miracles or extraordinary affairs mean denial of the law of causation? Is the law of causation a general law whose acceptance necessitates the denial of miracles and any effect of supplication?

The question is: If the law of causation is a general and unalterable law, how can miracles and the effects of supplication be accepted? To answer this question, it is necessary to make some preliminary remarks.

Acceptance of the law of causation is different from acceptance of specific causes in every case and confining causes to only the known ones. These two are erroneously treated as identical.

In philosophy, there is an axiomatic and indisputable principle of causation⁹ whose propositions are as

follows:

Some creatures in the world are in need of the existence of other creatures or beings, and without the latter the former cannot exist. The example is will, [*iradah*] which is an effect [*ma'lul*] and depends on a person [*nafs*] (having that will). The philosophical rule of this discussion states that an indigent being [*mawjud-e faqir*] or contingent effect [*ma'lul-e mumkin al-wujud*] is in need of the being that would provide its needs. That is, if we see that the needs of a needy being are met, it is obvious that the cause [*'illah*] of its existence has provided its needs. Therefore, the phenomena and anything which has no existence of its own must come into being on account of the effects of other factors.

As this rule is self-evident and indubitable, scientists in all fields of science are looking for the cause of the existence of phenomena. The efforts of scientists in discovering the causes of phenomena throughout history have been anchored in the principle that the effect cannot be without any cause. What mankind has so far discovered has been due to the blessing of this principle.

The error committed in this regard pertains to the identification of specific causes. That is, after accepting the principle that the effect cannot be without a cause, specific causes for specific effects must be determined. To determine the specific cause of every phenomenon is beyond the ambit of philosophy as it is within the domain of science.

As such, the philosophical law of causation is that every effect is in need of a cause for which philosophy uses general descriptions. But philosophy does not present a specific cause for certain effects as it is part of the responsibility of science to identify the causes through experimentation. As a rational law, the law of causation states that besides the creatures which are limited, restricted and needy, there must be something on account of which they come into being. But its characteristics and effects cannot be established by the law of causation. In other words, knowledge of the specific causes of a phenomenon cannot be attained through the law of causation. As stated earlier, knowledge of the specific causes is the business of experience and science, while the law of causation is a rational law which does not depend on experience.

For instance, let us assume that while a scientist in a laboratory tries to discover the cause of a phenomenon, another phenomenon comes into being; let us say, a light emits, or a sound is heard, etc. As soon as he sees or hears it, he is informed of its existence and understands that the said phenomenon is not without a cause. He understands it according to the rational law of causation and there is no need for experience. However, the intellect alone cannot identify the cause behind the existence of a phenomenon. If it could identify it, there would be no need for experience. The fact is that to find out the cause of a phenomenon requires experience or experiment. So, to know certain causes is the business of experience and science, and not that of the intellect.

Whenever they do not know the cause of a phenomenon or they cannot find, in the domain of their experience, that which indicates the mechanism of the emergence of that phenomenon, some people

admit that the law of causation has some exceptions.

Nowadays, as some physicists have not been able to discover the cause of some hidden phenomena (for example, how a certain electron goes out of its axis), they have claimed that these phenomena have no causes, believing that in such cases, the law of causation is defective! How do they then believe that the law of causation is flawless? What they are supposed to know is the specific cause of phenomena, the failure to discover which is due to a defect in their experiment.

Therefore, to know the specific cause lies in experience, but the more important question (second error) is this: Can the sole cause of a phenomenon be known through experience? If under certain conditions we perform an experiment and find out that the emergence of a thing depends on another and the relationship between the two is established—for example, through experiment we find out that whenever A is present, B is also present and whenever A is absent, B is also absent—could this experience prove that B cannot exist except through the existence of A?

For many years, mankind has been using specific means to produce fire. Can it be said that except through these means one can in no way produce fire? As we always use fire to generate heat, do we have the right to say that heat cannot be generated except by means of fire? Can it be claimed that at any time and in any part of the world heat can be produced only through fire? Does experience advance such a conclusion? Does it produce the result that under certain conditions, heat is caused by fire? We only have the right to say that, as far as we know, heat is caused by fire, but we have no right to assert that heat is caused by no other thing. This claim shows ignorance, and it does not behoove a researcher to negate the effect of an unknown or intangible factor.

Thus, experiment and experience (science) cannot point to man the particular cause of a thing. Experience can only prove what is within the domain of human perception and it has no right to deny what is beyond that. So, the claim that science negates the things mentioned by the prophets (‘a) or the effects of supplication is baseless. Science states that as far as experience shows, every person comes from his or her father and mother. But it has no right to assert that other than the agency of his or her parents, no person can come into this world.

In principle, experience can never prove what is impossible. Impossibility is not an empirical concept. It is rather a philosophical concept which can only be proved through reasoning. What can be proved through experience is the absence of occurrence but impossibility is beyond the scope of experience. No matter how advanced a field of science is, it cannot negate miracles, the effects of supplication and the like, claiming that such things do not exist. Given these preliminary remarks, the following points become clear:

The acceptance of miracles or extraordinary things does not mean denial of the law of causation or acknowledgment of exceptions to the law of causation, for these things are existentially caused by God. That is, the acceptance of these affairs is tantamount to the acceptance of God as the Cause.

Concerning natural causes, however, if an effect emerges without a known natural cause, does it mean violation of the law of causation?

In view of the stated preliminary points, it cannot be claimed that for an effect to exist, the natural cause is confined only to what we know and there is nothing else, for it is possible in some cases that an extraordinary thing happen whose cause is unknown to us.

In addition, in the law of causation a supernatural cause for a natural affair cannot be denied. No field of science can deny the effect of a supernatural thing in the emergence of a natural thing. In fact, such an effect is even confirmed by a field of science. The spiritualists who have strong inner powers can exercise control over some material phenomena and perform acts which cannot be done through natural means. This is a thing which cannot be denied nowadays.

Hence, the occurrence of supernatural things does not mean contravention of the law of causation or the philosophical principle of cause and effect. So, the argument of those who cite verses such as the noble verse, ***“Yet you will not find any change in Allah’s precedent, and you will never find any revision in Allah’s precedent”***¹⁰ is incorrect, because the occurrence of an extraordinary event does not necessarily mean revision in Allah’s precedent [*sunnah*].

In addition, the abovementioned noble verse pertains to human beings and informs them that whenever a people rebel against God, belie and negate the divine signs, corruption will spread in their society and the way for reform and truth will be hampered, others will be led into error and they will not be able to find the way of truth. The precedent of Allah is for Him not to give respite to these people but to destroy them with a heavenly or earthly chastisement. This verse relates to those cases and has nothing to do with natural laws, and it does not intend to suggest that Allah’s precedent is that every material phenomenon is caused by a material cause; for example, heat is always caused by fire.

Even assuming that the said verse can be applied to all the laws governing the world, are the divine laws only those laws that we know? If there are laws which we do not know, are they also laws of God?

One of the precedents of Allah is that whenever expediency dictates, an act is performed unnaturally. How does science or philosophy prove that Allah’s precedence holds that every natural phenomenon must come into being only through a material and natural cause?

As such, to prove a miracle or the effect of prayers does not mean negation of the cause of the emergent phenomenon but rather means to prove a cause presently unknown.

Thus, the law of causation as a necessary and general law can be reconciled with miracles and extraordinary affairs, and does not conflict with them.¹¹

Does supplication make people lazy and lax?

One of the issues raised about supplication has something to do with its socio-psychological dimension. Some people raise the objection that people's faith in the effect of supplication makes them lax in their life activity—in their personal as well as social affairs. Accordingly, this laxity willy-nilly brings about social backwardness and becomes an effective instrument in the hands of tyrants, who keep the people engaged in supplication and devotional acts, while they plunder their resources.

The fact of the matter, however, is that every truth can be misused in one way or another. If a truth is misused, one should not reject the essence of that truth. Supplication does not mean that we should not struggle nor make any effort to fulfill individual or social needs. Supplication means that the faithful [*mu'min*] considers God as the Real Effector. Whenever he feels the need to solve his problem, he turns to God besides employing the materials means at his disposal to solve his problem, for God has enjoined and willed so. However, he does not consider these factors to have independent results. As a result, even if the material factors are not available, he will not be dejected, for he regards God as All-powerful to meet his needs through non-material means. In view of this, belief in the power of prayer induces him to struggle and be hopeful.

If a person relies only on material factors, he will only work if he is hopeful of their availability. But the faithful is not hopeless even when he knows that the conventional factors are not available.

During the Battle of Badr, when the Muslims were in utmost difficulty and their soldiers and military equipment were far inferior to that of the enemies, they resorted to supplication and God also answered their supplication. He sent three thousand angels to their rescue and they emerged victorious. [12](#) If the Muslims had no belief in supplication or had a low morale, they would have withdrawn and eventually been defeated.

So, belief in supplication does not end up in withdrawal and defeat. On the contrary, sometimes the absence of belief in supplication gives way to defeat. This objection actually results from the lack of proper knowledge of supplication. The notion that man must only pray and not work does not represent the true meaning of supplication. Once we ask something from God, we have to regard Him as the Real Effector and whatever we possess as belonging to Him, and not that we have to regard whatever we possess to be our own and seek the help of God through other means. Does the existence of man and whatever he possesses not belong to God?

Supplication does not mean that man should ask God to do something through other than the conventional means. This is actually determining what God must do. It is like the one who has bread on his table but still asks: "O Lord! Give me provision through other means." This is not a valid supplication.

If a person really wants something from God and recognizes Him as the All-efficient and All-wise, he must use whatever is at his disposal, and if he feels anything lacking, he must ask it from God. Hence, to

the person whom God has bestowed sight but does not open his eyes and only says, “O Lord! Let me walk with closed eyes and reach my destination,” it must be said: “Has God not bestowed sight for you to use?!”

Supplication does not mean that we have to discard the blessings God has bestowed upon us out of His infinite wisdom and say, “O Lord! Give the same thing through other means.” This is actually like saying, “O Lord! I do not accept Your scheme. You told me to see with my eyes but I want to see with my ears!” It is narrated that Prophet Musa (Moses) (‘a) got sick and the Israelites prescribed a certain herbal medicine, but he said, “I refuse any medical treatment as I am waiting for God to cure me.” After sometime, his awaited recovery was nowhere in sight. God revealed to him: “By My Power and Glory! I shall not cure you unless you use the same herb for your treatment. O Musa! Do you want to discredit My wisdom by your reliance [*tawakkul*]? Except Me, is there anyone who has the power to cure you through the roots of this herb?”

Naturally, God’s wise design is not consistent with our whims and caprice:

﴿ وَلَوْ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ﴾

“Had the Truth followed their desires, the heavens and the earth would have surely fallen apart [along] with those who are in them.”¹³

So, we must use, in the best possible manner, whatever is at our disposal and accept God’s scheme and wisdom. The causes and factors He has provided in the world are based upon the dictates of His wisdom. Everything is beneficial to us and contributes to solving our problems. Thus, we must not set them aside and ask for provision through other means. If we use whatever is bestowed upon us, we will realize that God has already provided the means to solve our problems. The only thing lacking is our failure to use them.

Of course, God is not incapable of providing those things through other means, but not to use the means placed at our disposal does not represent supplication and reliance on Him [*tawakkul*]. It is rather an act of abuse or misinterpretation of Islamic concepts that some people hold. *Tawakkul* does not mean belief in God without using the material means He has provided.

Therefore, those who truly rely on God [*mutawakkilin*] are far more active than other people. The struggle of the Islamic combatants [*mujahidin*] who go to the battlefield by relying on God and fight with the enemy considering victory as coming only from God is far greater than that of those who do nothing and only pray.

﴿ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴾

“And victory comes only from Allah, the All-mighty, the All-wise.”¹⁴

The true *mujahid* asks for victory and help from God without ignoring, rather, using whatever God has given him. So, true supplication is practiced by one who uses all the means and factors God has provided, not discarding them and asking for the realization of his needs through other means. According to the traditions [*riwayat*], the supplication of such people will not be accepted. In some narrations, it is reported that a certain man had an impious wife and prayed to God to save him from her evil but his prayer was not accepted because God had given him the right to divorce her whenever he wished to.¹⁵ If she was indeed impious and living with her was against his felicity in this world and the hereafter, he should have divorced her. So, his supplication had no sense.

Of course, if his intention in his supplication was for God to give him more endurance to deal with such a woman so as to attain spiritual perfection or for Him to reform her character, his supplication was ideal; otherwise, it was useless, because the means to be relieved from her mischief was at his disposal and he was not using it. If this person was really serious in what he was praying for, he should have used the means God had provided him.

The Messenger of Allah (S) is reported to have said:

اَلْدَّاعِي بِلَا عَمَلٍ كَالرَّامِي بِلَا وَتَرٍ

“The supplicant who is devoid of action is like the arrow without any bow.”¹⁶

In another *hadith*, he (S) said: “The supplication of one who stays at home and asks for sustenance from God will not be accepted.”¹⁷

So, Islam does not replace means and factors at the disposal of man with supplication. It rather wants him to realize that causes are not independent of God. The effect of all causes emanates from Him. Thus, even with the existence of causes, man must focus his attention towards God. He must ask God for all his needs even if all the common means to acquire them are accessible. Even if his daily bread is provided, the faithful person turns to God and asks Him to remove his hunger. In his view, all things are means and the ultimate effect emanates from God. So, supplication is desirable under all conditions—whether man has access or no access to the common means.

When common means are accessible, supplication shows that he does not consider these means as independent, and believes in God as Self-sufficient and in his own need for divine blessings. When common means are not accessible, supplication shows that he does not consider the Power of God as limited to common means, and believes that He can meet his needs through other than common means. Hence, supplication is desirable under all conditions.

If a person with strong faith feels hungry, he will ask God to satiate him and then go to the kitchen and

eat. In this case, his eating does not contradict his supplication. That is, he only regards God as the Real Agent in meeting his needs, believing that as God wills and gives this effect, food removes one's hunger and as such, he consumes it; otherwise, the presence or absence of food makes no difference to him, because he believes that God could satiate him in whatever way He likes.

God thus revealed to Prophet Musa (‘a): *“O Musa! Ask Me for whatever you need, including your food’s salt.”*

The essence of supplication is for man to understand and acknowledge that he has nothing of his own and whatever he possesses comes from Him. The power to move and act comes from Him. God has provided the means and instruments, as well as the power to think and reflect. These are all divine blessings that must be utilized in meeting one's needs. Asking God actually means that man must acknowledge that all means belongs to God. This is the essence of servitude, which requires obedience.

Therefore, belief in the power of prayer does not make one lazy. On the contrary, it serves as a stimulant for man to strive and make more efforts.

Effects of supplication

Educational effects

What is the educational role of supplication? Does supplication have a fundamental role in the life of man?

Some people argue that the educational effect of supplication is limited to its inculcation in a person. That is, once a person utters something good, he inculcates it in his mind. For example, by reciting *Du‘a’ Makarim al-Akhlaq*, it is inculcated in one's mind that he must reform his moral conduct [*akhlaq*], acquire good attributes and abandon bad habits. These people consider the educational effect of supplication as confined to these things, and those supplications which lack these features as ‘imperialist supplications’!

This notion is a product of shortsightedness and lack of understanding of Islamic teachings. The greatest effect of supplication is no other than the essence of servitude embedded in it that propels man's spiritual perfection and humanity. Of course, it is possible that in some supplications these inculcations and the like also exist but these effects are similar to the movement of the jaw at the time of eating. While chewing the food, it is also engaged in physical exercise. This exercise cannot be considered the true benefit of eating food; the true benefit of eating is to procure the elements needed by the body.

Similarly, the true benefit of supplication is to pay attention to God and serve Him. The benefits sometimes derived from some supplications are insignificant compared to the essential benefits. The perfection of man lies in the realization of his poverty in relation to God and his acknowledgment of this truth. ¹⁸ As long as man refuses to acknowledge this fact, he will not properly understand his poverty and not attain spiritual perfection.

Supplication perfects man's knowledge. Supplication in itself is a form of worship and worship, in turn, is the only means of attaining perfection. Therefore, supplication is one way of attaining perfection.

In a noble verse, God says:

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

“Your Lord has said, ‘Call Me, and I will hear your [supplications]!’ Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility.”¹⁹

That is to say: “Verily, in utter humiliation and abjectness those, who arrogantly refuse to worship Me and consider it unfitting to be humble before Me, will enter hell.” The two statements in the noble verse quoted above serve as the main and secondary statements. Supplication is a form of worship, and whoever refuses to worship Him shall taste painful and humiliating punishment.

After the main benefit of supplication, some secondary and other benefits are also derived, which are as follows:

Other effects

1. Knowledge of God

The main reason behind supplication and imploration is to know God. This knowledge is the source of all felicity and improvement.

Some people came to Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) and asked him: “Why are our prayers not answered?” The Imam (‘a) said: “It is because you pray to Him whom you do not know.”²⁰

The Blessed Names of God which we recite²¹ and praise are all replete with numerous meanings and reciting them has abundant blessings. One of these blessings is the attention paid to their meanings and attributes, thus, increasing man's knowledge about God.

Once we mention the Names of God such as *Al-Rahman*, *Al-Rahim*, *Al-Sami‘*, *Al-Basir*, *Al-Mun‘im*, *Al-Ghafur*, and others, we are reminded that our Lord is All-beneficent, All-merciful, All-hearing, All-seeing, Affluent, and All-forgiving, and as such, we tend to become hopeful of His mercy and forgiveness. By pondering or reflecting on these Attributes, the supplicant sees himself in communion with God whose Power encompasses everything. In essence, ‘easy’ or ‘difficult’ are meaningless to Him. This point gives new hope and enthusiasm to him who does not pin his hope on anything but God.

In this short treatise, there is no need to mention the effect of hope, enthusiasm, struggle, and the enduring of difficulties. Also, attention to the fact that God sees and hears what we do and say encourages the person to do good deeds and avoid evil utterances and thoughts. Moreover, some

supplications constitute a complete course on monotheism and theology on an extremely high level. Imam al-Husayn's ('a) *Du'a' Arafah*, Imam 'Ali's ('a) *Du'a' al-Sabah*, Imam al-Sajjad's ('a) *Du'a' Abu Hamzah al-Thumali*, and many other supplications, especially those included in *Al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah*²² are some of these supplications.

2. Acquisition of excellent morality

As mentioned in noble *ahadith*, acquisition of excellent morality is highly enjoined in religion:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

“Behave according to the conduct of Allah.”²³

Through his supplication, the supplicant endeavors to emulate those divine attributes. Just as God possesses such Attributes as All-beneficent and All-forgiving, he also tries to be kind and forgiving to others.

3. Purity and cleanliness

Cleanliness of clothing and lawfulness of the food taken by the supplicant, as well as the lawfulness of the place of supplication are among the disciplines of supplication. The Holy Prophet (S) said: “Anyone who wants his supplication to be accepted must purify his food and occupation.”²⁴

Once the supplicant is bound not to obtain his daily bread through unlawful means and not to indulge in unjust works or activities, he will attain spiritual perfection. The society whose members have such orientation will be a prosperous community with an illustrious abode!

4. Suppression of the self

The most fundamental benefit of supplication, nay all forms of worship, is the prevention of the rebellion of the self [*nafs*]. In *Khuṭbah al-Qasi'ah*, Imam 'Ali ('a) has mentioned detailed points while talking against arrogance. In a certain part of this sermon, he ('a) says: “This filthy disposition is the greatest trap of Satan and his most powerful instrument of deception.”²⁵

Elimination of selfishness is like uprooting all moral vices and preparing oneself for the acquisition of all virtues. God thus says in the Qur'an:

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا﴾

“One who purifies it is felicitous.”²⁶

By standing before God and paying attention to His Greatness and Majesty and at the same time taking into account his own insignificance and helplessness, the supplicant expresses his absolute poverty to God. In so doing, he sees himself not in need of any creature but Him. So, supplication means humbleness accompanied by contentment and high spirit.

Conditions for the acceptance of supplications

Although God promises in the Holy Qur'an that He answers the supplications, saying ***"Call Me and I will hear,"***²⁷ why are supplications usually not answered? What are the conditions for the acceptance of supplications?

This question is posed by all those who are engaged in supplication.

Scholars of scholastic theology [*'ilm al-kalam*] argue that it is possible to not fulfill a threat [*wa'id*] and such an act is rationally not bad. However, not to fulfill a promise [*wa'dah*] is rationally bad and it is impossible for God to do something bad. So, not to fulfill the promise of answering the supplications as stated in the abovementioned verse is rationally bad provided that there is also no rational reason behind this non-fulfillment of promise. The Qur'an itself states:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ﴾

"Indeed Allah does not break His promise."²⁸

This verse is sufficient proof for us to expect that all our prayers would be accepted by God. In view of the need to be truthful to one's promise and God's emphasis on this point, what is the reason behind the non-acceptance of our supplications?

This question was repeatedly posed to the pure Imams (‘a) who gave different answers commensurate to the diverse levels of understanding of individuals. In some traditions, certain conditions have been set for the supplicants, or certain disciplines or times have been stipulated for the supplication.

Does it mean that these points are generally applied to the verses? In other words, is our supplication acceptable provided that it is made at a certain place, time and condition? If it is made in other than the specified times and conditions, will the promise of God not be fulfilled? Or, do these traditions have other meanings?

What we can deduce from the outer dimension of the verse is that it is generally applied, and the probability of its being limited is very weak. To explain this point, let us cite an example. If a generous person makes a promise to invite his guests to a party and amid their presence he does not entertain most of them, will they not question him as to why he is not fulfilling his promise? If he answers that it is because of their untidy clothes and their being late for a few minutes, his excuse will be unacceptable,

because his invitation was a general one and those conditions (tidiness and punctuality) were not mentioned in the invitation. So, he must fulfill his promise and entertain all of them or have indisputable justification for doing otherwise.

To understand this verse better, it is necessary to examine it closer:

1. What does it mean by “call” [*ud‘u*]? Does supplication [*du‘a*] mean mentioning our request even without necessarily understanding it? Or, does it mean without paying attention to it even though we understand it? Or does it mean so, even if it is against our inner liking, assuming that we pay attention to it?

It is true that verbal utterance associated with request is called ‘supplication’—for example, as we call someone and need something from him—but words indicate what is in the mind and cannot be treated absolutely. It does not mean that the form of expression affects world events and that every word in any language is effective. As stated earlier, supplication is a matter of the heart and the tongue only tells what is in the heart. So, supplication must originate from the heart and soul of man and he must truly be asking for something. If he only utters some words without any sincerity, he is not truly asking for something and, indeed, is not engaged in his supplication.

2. Supplication must truly represent “Call Me” [*ud‘uni*]. That is, the request must be addressed solely to God. If a person observes the abovementioned conditions but his heart is not focused on God, he has actually not supplicated. For example, we pray for knowledge; we truly like knowledge; and we are serious in our request; yet, we think that to be learned has nothing to do with God as it depends only on our own efforts and endeavors. We say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّیْ اَسْأَلُكَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا وَعَمَلًا صَالِحًا.

“O Allah! Grant us beneficial knowledge and righteous conduct.”

Yet, deep in our hearts we do not believe that God bestows knowledge on man. In other words, we are only after the inspirational aspect of supplication that knowledge is something good which must be acquired. By “O Allah” [*Allahumma*] we actually mean “God willing” [*insha’ Allah*] which we only ceremoniously recite in many of our activities. It is not actually suspension of the will of God. Similarly, at the beginning of many works, we recite “In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful” merely as words of compliment. Yet, only rarely do we really remember God and sincerely begin our activity with His Name. The same is true in the case of most of our supplications. It is true that outwardly, we are asking something from God but in reality, we do not have firm conviction that God must grant our request. In this case also, we must not expect the acceptance of our supplication.

Such ‘supplications’, which are mere utterance of some words and are not really requesting something from God will never be accepted because our true request is not addressed to God. Rather, we rely

upon material means and our own power. Even if those who are engaged in such ‘supplications’ are asked whether or not God really endows knowledge to man, they will answer and argue that acquisition of knowledge has nothing to do with God!

The reason behind the non-acceptance of such ‘supplications’ is the fact that they do not have faith in the power of God and in reality, they are not asking God for anything. Therefore, true supplication is the request which is addressed to God and which we truly believe that only He can grant. If it is not so, it is sheer words of compliment. But as to what extent these words of compliment are beneficial is a different story, which requires a separate discussion. We must ask for forgiveness of God for such manner of supplicating for with this kind of supplicating and frame of mind, we have treated God as weak and impotent and we believe in things about Him which are beyond His Station.

The verse ***“Call Me and I will hear”*** is a condition expressed in command. It is actually, “If you call, I will answer you.” This condition will be realized if first of all, we are serious in our request, and secondly, our request is addressed to God whom we regard as the only One who can grant our request. In this manner, the conditions for the acceptance of supplication will materialize. Can it be said that such a supplication might still not be accepted?

It is narrated that the Israelites were afflicted with drought for a long period. Prophet Musa (‘a), along with a group, went out of the town to pray for rain [*salat al-istisqa’*] and the following was revealed:

كَيْفَ أَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُمْ وَقَدْ أَظْلَمَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ ذُنُوبُهُمْ... يَدْعُونَنِي عَلَى غَيْرِ يَقِينٍ

“How can I answer them (their supplication) when they are engrossed in sins... They call on Me yet they do not have certainty [yaqin]?”²⁹

Another point worth mentioning here relates to the conditions necessary for the acceptability of supplication. Sometimes, we ask God for something, thinking it is good for us and can contribute to our spiritual perfection. But in reality, we are wrong. We do not know whether the grant of our request is ultimately good for us or not. If we knew the repercussions of the grant of our request, we would definitely make a different request. Such requests are like those of a child who does not know its harmful effects, which if he did, he would never ask for it.

In cases when we ask for our general welfare but we are wrong in identifying what is exactly good for us, it is possible that our supplication is granted, but according to our general welfare. In such instances, God, the Exalted, may overlook our mistake and grant our request according to the general welfare that we ask from Him. He grants us something else, which is what we would ask Him for if we only saw the whole picture. In this case, God has not deprived us of His grace and at the same time, He has corrected our mistake.

Keeping in view of the three points—serious request, request addressed to God, and what is really good

for us—which can be inferred from the abovementioned verse, it can be said that the verse has general application.

There are also cases when instead of granting a request in this world, God gives a person a distinct station in the hereafter. This is related to the third point that can be inferred from the verse in question. That is, if a person who has faith in the hereafter, realizes that his request in relation to a worldly affair is insignificant in comparison to the otherworldly reward, he will definitely prefer his perfection and felicity. If the truth is made manifest to him, he will certainly request them for the hereafter.

As God, the Exalted, is aware that the faithful are more interested in the affairs of the hereafter, He sometimes reserves their worldly requests for the hereafter. When they find out what station they will occupy in the next world, they will thank God and be pleased with the arrangement set by the Lord. This point has been mentioned in *Du‘a’ al-Iftitah*:

وَلَعَلَّ الَّذِي أَبْطَأَ عَنِّي هُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّي لِعِلْمِكَ بِعَاقِبَةِ الْأُمُورِ.

“Perhaps slowing down [in the grant of my requests] may be a blessing in disguise because You alone know the consequences of all affairs.”

The Messenger of Allah (S) is reported to have said:

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَدْعُو بِدَعْوَةٍ لَيْسَ فِيهَا إِنْثَمٌ وَلَا قَطِيعَةٌ رَحِمَ إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا إِحْدَى ثَلَاثَ: إِمَّا أَنْ يُعْجَلَ دَعْوَتُهُ وَإِمَّا أَنْ يُدْخَرَهَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَإِمَّا أَنْ يَكُفَّ عَنْهُ مِنَ الشَّرِّ مِثْلَهَا.

“No Muslim who supplicates—unless it is for committing sins and severing kinship ties—is given by Allah one of these three things: He grants his request; He reserves it for him in the hereafter; or in lieu of it, He repels calamity to befall him.”³⁰

In addition to the abovementioned points, other reasons for the non-acceptance of supplications are also mentioned in traditions. For example, it is mentioned in some traditions that those who abandon the duty of “enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil” shall be afflicted with two calamities. Firstly, their supplications will not be accepted and secondly, the vilest and most corrupt of people will rule over them.

Some people complained to the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) that their supplications were not being accepted. The Imam (‘a) stated the reason behind it:

إِنَّ قُلُوبَكُمْ خَانتُ بِتَمَانٍ خِصَالٍ: أَوَّلُهَا إِنَّكُمْ عَرَفْتُمْ اللَّهَ فَلَمْ تُؤَدُّوا حَقَّهُ كَمَا أَوْجَبَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَا أَغْنَتْ عَنْكُمْ مَعْرِفَتُكُمْ...
الثَّانِيَةُ

“Your hearts have committed treachery in eight things (and for this reason, your supplications are not being accepted).

- (1) You recognize God but you do not give His due right.
- (2) You believe in His Messenger, yet you violate his *Sunnah*.
- (3) You read His Book but you do not act upon it.
- (4) You say that you are afraid of God’s punishment or wrath but you commit acts which draw you closer to it.
- (5) You say that you yearn for His reward, yet you do things which keep you away from it.
- (6) You enjoy His blessings but you do not express your gratitude.
- (7) You are commanded to be enemies of Satan but you befriend him.
- (8) You place the defects of people before your eyes but are negligent of your own defects.

Given this, how can you expect your supplications to be accepted when you have closed their doors? Be wary of God; reform your actions; purify your intentions; enjoin what is good; and forbid what is evil so that your supplications might be accepted.”[31](#)

In addition, we do not consider what we can usually get through common means as an acceptance of our supplication and as coming from God. This is while the Qur’an attributes to God all things and affairs. Moreover, unconditional acceptance of supplication is not incumbent upon Allah, as explicitly stated in the Qur’an. If the supplication of every person is supposed to be accepted, there would be sets of contradictions and the system of the universe would be in disarray. God says, thus:

﴿وَلَوْ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ﴾

“Had the Truth followed their desires, the heavens and the earth would have surely fallen apart [along] with those who are in them.”[32](#)

God not only turned down the supplication of His prophet ﷺ adhrat Nuh (Noah) (‘a) to save his son, but also reproached him for it:

﴿قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ فَلَا تَسْأَلْنِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ﴾

“Said He, ‘O Noah! Indeed he is [a personification] of unrighteous conduct. So do not ask Me [for

something] of which you have no knowledge. I advise you, lest you should be among the ignorant. [33](#)

In addition to these points, even assuming that apparently the noble verse “*I will answer you*” means unconditional acceptance of supplication, the moments for the acceptance of supplication are specified by God. After ʿAdhrat Ya‘qub (Jacob) (‘a) who was a prophet prayed to God for the return of ʿAdhrat Yusuf (Joseph) (‘a), in spite of his prayer being accepted, it took around forty years before Yusuf (‘a) was able to return to him.

It is mentioned in some traditions that sometimes a faithful person would supplicate to God but God would tell the angels: “His supplication is accepted, but delay its materialization because I want to hear his voice (praying to Me).” [34](#)

This proves that purification of the soul is attained through a connection with God and supplication. The acceptance of supplication is sometimes delayed because the true perfection of man lies in his connection with God and not in the acceptance of his supplication. For example, the supplication of one who is sick, seeks refuge in God from the pain he is suffering and prays to Him for his recovery, contributes to his spiritual perfection and proximity to God. If he recovers on the very first day, he will no longer pray or pay attention to God, and his attention towards God will decrease.

Another example is of a person who prays for wealth to be spent in the way of Allah and thus attains spiritual reward. Since God knows that once he becomes wealthy he will forget his Lord, He will not let him attain his ambition. However, God will provide his sustenance through other means and, thereby, he will obtain the same spiritual reward.

God exercises such an authority [*wilayah*] over His faithful servants. This is one of the forms of His *wilayah* over the faithful.

God’s Mastership [*wilayah*] over the faithful

God’s authority, guardianship or mastership [*wilayah*] over man has many forms, among which are the following:

1. His general *wilayah* over entire creation.
2. His special *wilayah* over the faithful [*mu’minun*]. The Qur’an points to this kind of His *wilayah*, thus:

﴿اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا﴾

“Allah is the Master of the faithful.” [35](#)

This *wilayah* is limited to the faithful. Similarly, the guidance of God is of two kinds. One is the general guidance which encompasses all mankind by endowing them with the intellect and other faculties. God has also specific ‘guidance’ for the faithful. That is, those who wholeheartedly accept the invitation of the prophets (‘a) and the divine message will find the right path and be encompassed by divine guidance. God will bestow upon them more light, proper understanding, and profound knowledge. This guidance is limited to those who have faith in God and entrust everything to Him. In *Du‘a’ ‘Arafah*, we read:

إِلَهِي أَغْنِنِي بِتَدْبِيرِكَ عَنْ تَدْبِيرِي وَبِاخْتِيَارِكَ عَنْ إِخْتِيَارِي.

“O Lord! By Your Design and Decision, make me needless of my design and decision.”³⁶

Those who have attained this station are also encompassed by the special *wilayah* of Allah. He exercises *wilayah* in all aspects of their lives, managing their life affairs and making them needless of their own plans. As such, instead of health He chooses sickness for His faithful servant, or poverty instead of wealth. On account of his prayer for recovery, the health condition of a sick person may sometimes get even worse! This worsening of the health condition is a blessing of God so that he should acquire more preparedness and endurance and, consequently, attain further perfection. For this reason, instead of being accepted, some of our supplications will be reserved for us in the hereafter, or granted in another form according to the demand of our worldly welfare.

Of course, these cases are beyond the comprehension of everybody. Only those who have these stations can understand these words.

God exercises this kind of *wilayah* only on His special servants and not on all people. Of course, God is immune from bias but since others do not like it, He does not exercise such a *wilayah* over them, for man must act according to his freewill and entrust himself to God out of his own volition so that God can do whatever He deems good for him. But to those who do not want it, God does not exercise by compulsion His special *wilayah* over them.

The essential desirability of supplication

That which is more important than the acceptance of supplication is the supplication itself or earnest imploration and petition to God. Usually, we supplicate for the fulfillment of our needs. That is, whenever we face a problem in our life and we feel something lacking, we extend our hands above and pray to God.

Of course, apart from the fact that this practice is a requisite of belief in the Divine Lordship and expression of servitude, it can play a constructive role in man. It must be noted, however, that the philosophy of supplication, and fervent prayers and litanies, in general, is not only the fulfillment of needs—especially worldly needs. Rather, as can be inferred from most of the supplications transmitted

from the Infallibles (‘a), supplication itself or fervent prayer to God—regardless of the acceptance or non-acceptance of supplication—is particularly significant. The act of requesting [*alab*] itself is more important than the requested thing [*ma‘lub*].

Fervent prayer to God and communion with Him is so valuable and pleasing that if a person could comprehend it, he would never pay attention to mundane and worldly matters, let alone asking for them. Therefore, that which is of immense importance in supplication is the act of fervently praying to God. Its value is far greater than the grant of the request. The mere fact that the servant finds opportunity to have a private meeting with his Master and amorous talk with Him is far valuable for him than the grant of his requests. He has not only been granted permission to talk with God who is the Lord of the worlds but has also been invited by God by the words “*Call Me*”.³⁷ What a sublime felicity for such a servant!

Faith and certainty in supplication molds the personality and nurtures the feelings of man. In his inner world, the supplicant has pleasures and fortunes which are impossible for a non-supplicant to obtain and grasp. This state is indicative of the personality and spiritual growth of the faithful.

Etiquettes of supplication

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) said:

إِحْفَظْ آدَابَ الدُّعَاءِ وَانْظُرْ مَنْ تَدْعُو وَكَيْفَ تَدْعُو.

“Observe the etiquettes of supplication, and consider to Whom you supplicate and how you supplicate.”³⁸

How must we supplicate? Does supplication have its own etiquettes and requisites? Is it in need of a particular time and place?

It can be learned from the traditions of the pure and infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) and the Qur’an that there is no specific time and place for supplication. The door of divine mercy is always open to all those who are in need, and whenever a person turns his heart to God, God will answer him.

Of course, there is no doubt that some periods such as the Night of Ordainment [*Laylat al-Qadr*] and the night preceding Friday, and some places such as Masjid al-‘Aram and the sites of martyrdom of Imam al-‘Usayn (‘a) and the other Imams of guidance have special importance. However, the Qur’an and traditions have also mentioned other etiquettes of supplication, the most important of which is to pay attention to the Greatness of God before and during the supplication.

In one verse, God says:

﴿ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً﴾

“Supplicate your Lord, beseechingly and secretly.” [39](#)

From this verse, two points can be deduced: to supplicate in a low voice and humble manner.

1. God is close to His servants and can hear their supplications. So, there is no need to shout. The Muslims had been prohibited from raising their voice in the presence of the Apostle (S). [40](#) How much more if the addressee is God? One who feels that he is in the presence of God is ashamed of raising his voice.

2. The word *tadharru‘* [humble entreating or beseeching] is mentioned many times in the Holy Qur’an and whose existence shows that contrary to the notion of some people, supplication is not mere ‘conditioning of the mind’. Rather, other things exist in supplication; otherwise, perhaps ‘conditioning of the mind’ could possibly be better in forms other than *tadharru‘*.

In two verses of the Holy Qur’an, a similar concept about *tadharru‘* is mentioned. In one verse, God says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ﴾

“We have certainly sent [apostles] to nations before you, then We seized them with stress and distress so that they might entreat [Us].” [41](#)

In another verse, He says:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ﴾

“We did not send a prophet to any town without visiting its people with stress and distress so that they might entreat [Allah for forgiveness].” [42](#)

What is emphasized in these two verses is the implicit invitation to the people to entreat or beseech [*tadharru‘*] God.

Why *tadharru‘*? What benefit can *tadharru‘* give us? Why does God emphasize it?

The psychological makeup of man is such that if he does not humbly entreat God, he will gradually succumb to moral vices. *Tadharru‘* suppresses his egoism and selfishness, and makes him see his position in relation to God, the Exalted, because it is attained through humbling oneself. A person cries and weeps once he humbles himself and feels helpless. This is the best condition for worship and

expression of servitude to God.

It is narrated in a *hadith qudsi*⁴³ that God said to ʿĪsā (Jesus) (ʿa):

يَا عِيسَى لَا تَدْعُنِي إِلَّا مُتَضَرِّعًا.

“O ʿĪsā! Supplicate Me not but beseechingly.”⁴⁴

In another *hadith*, He said:

يَا عِيسَى ذَلِّلْ قَلْبَكَ.

“O ʿĪsā! Make your heart humble.”⁴⁵

The ability to be in a state of *tadharruʿ* is also realized by the will of God. It is not true that whenever we like, we can cry or be in a state of *tadharruʿ*.

Our expression of humility, meekness, helplessness, and abasement does not benefit God. Through His creative power and out of His mercy and grace, He gives us certain stations or states on account of which our faith, guidance and knowledge are augmented. He gives us a chance to become aware of our sins and acknowledge them. This is one of the graces of God. What become a barrier between Him and us are our egotism and arrogance. If man lifts these veils, he will see himself abased, despicable and helpless before God, thereafter, he will be enveloped by His vast divine mercy. Like waterfall, Divine mercy is always flowing. By confessing our sins while lamenting and beseeching Him, we can be enveloped by it. By breaking the idol of our egoism, we can attain such a station and be able to benefit more from it; otherwise, our actions alone cannot win the mercy of God.

As stated earlier, the kernel of supplication is the expression of abjectness and servitude to God. The more man feels this abjectness, the more he becomes nearer to God. This does not imply that God is like an egotistic and arrogant dictator who wants everybody to be humble before him and thus humiliates his subjects. On the contrary, He is pleased and glad with our worship because it contributes to our spiritual perfection. The peak of perfection for man is to identify his dependence on God. Through this understanding and knowledge, he will achieve a union with God and experience the beatific vision [*liqaʾ Allah*].

Another condition of supplication is to have a feeling of fear and hope [*khawf wa raja*]. In this relationship, on one side is God, the Exalted, and on the other side is the sinful servant. Once a person pays attention to his sins, he will feel ashamed and once he turns his attention towards Divine mercy, he will become hopeful. Man must, on one hand, be afraid of Divine wrath, and on the other hand, bear in mind that God might forgive all his sins. This point has particularly been highlighted in *Duʿaʾ Abu ʿĀmzah*

al-Thumali.

Other etiquettes of supplication have been mentioned in a tradition reported from Imam al-Sadiq (‘a):

“You begin supplicating by praising and eulogizing God and then enumerating His blessings. Thereafter, recount and confess your sins, ask forgiveness of God and invoke blessings on Muhammad and his progeny.”[46](#)

The following acts cultivate man’s relationship with God at the time of supplication:

Being in a state of ablution;

Observing inner and outer purity;

Purging of the heart from rancor against the faithful;

Giving in charity before supplicating;

Forgiving the mistakes of others;

Giving priority to others in supplication;

Invoking blessings on Muhammad and his progeny (S) at the beginning and end of the supplication.

Types of supplicants

People can be divided into four groups in terms of their attention to God:

1. The first group consists of those who in all conditions—both in prosperity and adversity—remember God morning and evening and their supplications are not only limited to the time of afflictions and difficulties.[47](#) Perhaps the reason behind it is that they know that in spite of all the blessings God has bestowed upon them, they are still in need of Him. For this group, blessing and calamity makes no difference. They are meritorious servants of God who always remember Him and He also always remember them:

﴿إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ﴾

“Indeed they were active in [performing] good works, and they would supplicate to Us with eagerness and awe, and were humble before Us.”[48](#)

2. The second group includes a majority of the faithful who in prosperity and comfort feel a sense of pride and negligence. But once they are in difficulty, they will be reminded of their need and express their need to God. This group also consists of relatively good servants of God but He has complained

about them for forgetting Him when they are in prosperity, and when they are in difficulty they resort to prayer:

﴿وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَىٰ بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ﴾

“When We bless man, he is disregarding and turns aside; but when an ill befalls him, he makes protracted supplications.”⁴⁹

Most of those who believe in God are like that. Only a few do not forget and are not negligent of God when prosperous.

3. The third group consists of those who consider some calamities as coming from God. So, once they are afflicted with such calamities, they immediately resort to prayer because believe that they are caused by unnatural causes and due to Divine wrath and anger. For example, when the people of Prophet Yunus (Jonah) (‘a) saw the signs of Divine wrath, they came to their senses before being afflicted, and repented. God saved them. This group does not pay attention to calamities which they do not consider coming from God. Only when they are totally hopeless and no one can help them, they call upon God.

4. The fourth group is composed of those who do not remember God even if calamities befall them and they are in difficulty. God condemns the attitude of this group and considers it more deserving of Divine wrath compared to the third group. Concerning this group, the Holy Qur’an states:

﴿فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“Why did they not entreat when Our punishment overtook them! But their hearts were hardened, and Satan had made, what they had been doing, to seem decorous to them.”⁵⁰

In another place, it states:

﴿ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“Then your hearts hardened after that; so they are like stones, or even harder. For indeed there are some stones from which streams gush forth, and indeed there are some of them that split, and water issues from them, and indeed there are some of them that fall for the fear of Allah. And Allah is not oblivious of what you do.”⁵¹

Now, we have to see to which group we belong. God forbid that we belong to the third or fourth group. God has endowed man with ample blessings but sometimes these blessings are taken away and

difficulties beyond expectation ensue. Can they be considered accidental? Have they nothing to do with God?

The magnitude of considering them as related to God depends on the level of our knowledge. For the faithful, none is outside the will and design of God. Even if he has a headache, he first asks relief from God and then resorts to a doctor and his prescribed medicine. It is true that he takes the prescribed medicine but he regards its effect as depending on the decree of God, for without His decree, it will not become effective. In sum, according to him, the origin of all actions is God and no one has an independent authority in the world or the entire dominion of God. For him, the entire universe is God's dominion and in His dominion no one has the right to exercise authority except by His leave.

Usually, in our ideological conversations and discussions, we say that the will and design of God are all-encompassing; everything is included and nothing is beyond the jurisdiction of His power and authority.

In philosophy, we are also very familiar with the issue of the Unity of Actions [*tawhid-e af'ali*]. Perhaps, like other concepts this topic is very familiar to us but in practice most of us, like many other believers in God, forget this fact. We say that God is Omnipresent and All-seeing but in practice we tend to forget this truth. We prove the Unity of Actions by rational arguments and Qur'anic verses and traditions. Yet, we tend to forget it in practice. Therefore, whenever we encounter problems, they cannot be treated as nothing to do with God. As to what extent these problems originated from God, at least we believe that if He wished, He could have prevented them from happening.

According to a view, all afflictions of man, in the words of the Qur'an, are "Our punishment" [*ba'suna*].⁵² It is wrong to think that some calamities are from God while others are not because everything is within His authority. The ontological decree of God is a calamity to befall upon a person and thus it comes from Him. Anyone who has more knowledge and understands the concept of the Unity of Actions can grasp this point which is elaborately examined in philosophy. Of course, the calamities that God sends down on man are all products of his undesirable actions.

There are many Qur'anic verses and traditions in this regard. In the Qur'an, God says:

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾

"That is because Allah never changes a blessing that He has bestowed on a people unless they change what is in their own souls, and Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing."⁵³

It is possible that for the sake of the man of God, a calamity is withheld from a community although the community had no hand in this withholding of calamity. Or, just as He sends down a calamity out of His mercy, God also withholds it out of a divine scheme or purpose. Yet, He never takes back a blessing He has bestowed on a people unless they do something evil that causes this taking away of a blessing.

In another verse, God says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ﴾

“Indeed Allah does not change a people’s lot, unless they change what is in their souls.”⁵⁴

The meaning of this verse is the same as that of the previous verse, but it is more emphatic. According to this noble verse, we must acknowledge that the changing of some blessings into calamities is the result of our own actions. If we manage our affairs in a different way, the blessing [*ni’mah*] will not turn into vengeance [*niqmah*]. As the saying goes,

از ماست که بر ماست.

It is from us what is upon us.

﴿وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ﴾

“Whatever affliction that may visit you is because of what your hands have earned, and He excuses many [an offense].”⁵⁵

If only Allah wishes to punish all the people for their actions, no living creature will be left on the surface of the earth:

﴿وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ﴾

“Were Allah to take mankind to task for their wrongdoing, He would not leave any living being upon it.”⁵⁶

﴿وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ﴾

“Were Allah to take mankind to task because of what they had earned, He would not leave any living being on its back.”⁵⁷

By sending down worldly calamities on people, God’s aim is to warn and not punish them, so that they turn to Him and realize that they are living under the dominion of God:

﴿ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ﴾

“Corruption has appeared in land and sea because of the doings of the people’s hands, that He may make them taste something of what they have done, so that they may come back.”⁵⁸

Usually, when there is calamity, everybody is afflicted. As the saying goes,

تر و خشک با هم می سوزد

The wet as well as the dry catch fire.

In this case, for those who are not sinful, the calamity is a trial while it is requital for those who are sinful.

Motives behind supplication

Supplication is a voluntary act and requires motivation. The motives of supplicants are so diverse and the value of their supplications depends on the value of their motives.

1. Sometimes, the motive of man in supplicating is the fulfillment of material needs. For example, he asks for money, house, offspring, health, and the like from God. Therefore, his motive is his desire for these things.

It is true that this kind of request is an inferior sign of man’s aspiration but it is good in itself, for it is an indication of the supplicant’s belief in God as the Ultimate Cause. So, such a person is not equal to another person who is also interested in those things but does not pray to God to achieve them.

Since the first person recognizes God and regards Him as the Ultimate Cause in the world, he supplicates to God for the fulfillment of his needs but the second person has no belief in these things. He pursues the realization of his requests only through material means. In comparing these two persons, because of calling upon God and expressing servitude and poverty before God, the first person will attain a certain stage of perfection but his aspiration is not high as it is only limited to the confinement of this world. The second person, however, is totally outside the race and he will achieve no perfection. Thus, this is one of the degrees of supplication which in itself is valuable and desirable.

2. A higher degree or stage is that man’s motive is higher and loftier in which he requests spiritual success in worship. For such a person, the value of spiritual and otherworldly matters is more than that of mundane and worldly matters. Therefore, material things are insignificant for him. If only man knew that God grants whatever he requests—provided that he really believes in the hereafter—he will not ask for worldly matters unless they are intended for otherworldly purposes or for another motive, which will be mentioned later.

For this reason, the recorded supplications of the saints of God [*awliya*] are so sublime and can never be compared to our supplications. It is true that our supplications are desirable and a form of worship as

they are based on faith and can contribute to our spiritual perfection, but their contribution to our perfection is weak. If, instead of supplicating for material requests, man supplicates for spiritual requests and success in worship, God will increase his gnosis [*maʿrifah*] and faith [*iman*] and grant him success in doing meritorious works. As such, he can move fast along the path of perfection. The value of such supplication is more than that of supplication for material needs because it is a sign of man's strong faith in God and the hereafter. According to such a person, the hereafter is much better and abiding:

﴿وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى﴾

“And the Hereafter is better and more lasting.”⁵⁹

3. Sometimes, the motive behind supplication is loftier than that which has been mentioned. In this degree or stage, the motive of the supplicant is merely to talk to God and obey His command. The essence of supplication is his aim. Asking for something is a mere excuse to knock at the Door of the Friend. He supplicates because God commands him to supplicate. In this degree or stage, what is requested is not important. Whether it is spiritual or material makes no difference, although supplication for spiritual matters is better. At this juncture, however, supplication for anything is desirable. Such a person sees himself in the midst of the vast ocean of Divine mercy. So, for the minutest details of his affairs, he supplicates to God.

If a person has such a motive, his supplication is of lofty value even though it concerns secondary or trivial affairs. Such supplication is valuable not on account of its being material or spiritual but because he considers God the Ultimate Cause, believing that all things are within His power. Such a supplication is valuable because the supplicant is not interested in what is requested in supplication but since God loves His servant who supplicates, he thus supplicates.

Had only God not obligated supplication—“*Call Me, and I will hear you!*”⁶⁰ and “*And ask Allah for His grace*”⁶¹—he would never ask those things from God, but since God has said that He likes His servant raising his hands towards Him, he thus supplicates. Such a supplication cannot be compared with the rest of supplications. It is only done by the one whose heart is attached to none but God.

As long as man is attached to worldly and even otherworldly matters, consciously or unconsciously, he is in pursuit of obtaining them. Of course, if a person has faith in God and asks from Him whatever he needs, there is nothing wrong. Evidently, everyone asks God for something, depending on one's degree of gnosis and faith. But for those who have attained high levels of faith and gnosis, there is nothing wrong to pray to God for trivial matters for the reason that He wants His servant to ask Him. Therefore, he also prays to God for his secondary worldly affairs.

Thus, sometimes, elaboration in supplication and requesting for secondary matters is desirable because it enhances the spirit of servitude, humility and helplessness before God. Such a supplication shows the

depth of belief of the faithful who does not rely on other than God even in insignificant matters.

At this point, two points are worthy of mention:

1. Man must always pay attention to his needs and ask for them only from God, the Exalted. He must bear in mind, however, that his needs are not limited to mundane and worldly needs. In fact, his main needs are spiritual in nature. Among our greatest and most important needs are the blessings of Islam, *wilayah* and guidance [*hidayah*]. They must also be sought from God.

It is reported in traditions that saints of Allah were praying to God for martyrdom:

وَقَتْلًا فِي سَبِيلِكَ فَوْقَ لَنَا.

“And make us succeed in attaining martyrdom in Your way.”⁶²

Such a request shows the extent of their desire to be in the company of their Lord. We must also learn from them. We must also ask God to grant us sincere intention so that we can talk to Him sincerely, truthfully and mystically.

2. Another point which is encouraged in the Islamic culture of people is to supplicate for others—both for their material and spiritual affairs. Apart from enhancing man’s attention to God, praying for others also increases the believers’ love and affection for one another. Even in supplication, the spirit of sacrifice, love and compassion which the faithful must have towards others must be manifested.

The following is a famous narration [*riwayah*] from Imam ʿĀsan al-Mujtaba (‘a): “One night I woke up and heard my mother (ʿadhrat Faʿimah al-Zahra (‘a)) supplicating only for others up to the end. I asked her, ‘Mother, why do you not supplicate for yourself?’ She answered, ‘Neighbors first, then family’ [*al-jaru thumma’d-dar*].”⁶³

So, supplication for others is loftier than supplication for oneself especially if it is for the spiritual affairs of the faithful.

The meaning of arrogance in supplication

In verse 60 of *Surat al-Mu’min*, God says:

﴿قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ﴾

“Your Lord has said, ‘Call Me, and I will hear you!’ Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility.”⁶⁴

Now, we want to know the meaning of arrogance in supplication. Three forms of arrogance in supplication can be identified:

1. Sometimes, a person does not supplicate due to negligence. Weakness of faith makes him negligent of knocking at the Door of Allah. Therefore, in facing problems he first goes to the material means and is heedless of the Cause of causes. For example, whenever he is sick, instead of turning to God, he refers to a doctor and his prescribed medicine. In many cases, if another person would remind him of his negligence, he will acknowledge it. This lack of attention to God does not stem from arrogance. It is rather due to the weakness of his faith.
2. At times, because of a wrong notion a person refuses to supplicate. For example, he has heard that Allah has inalterable precedents [*sunan*] which must be followed. He believes that God has provided a solution to every problem. So, he asks himself, "What is the use then of supplication? Headache must be relieved by taking some medicine, and not by supplicating." This notion does not originate from one's arrogance. It derives from the defect of his faith. He does not know God correctly and has not grasped the relationship between God and the universe. His knowledge of *tawhid* and the true effects of supplication is weak.
3. There are also times when a person says to himself: "I will solve every problem I have and provide my own needs. Why should I turn to God? Why should I wake up at midnight and express humility to God?" This is arrogance in supplication for he disdains from asking anything from God, regarding it as a sort of defect for him.

Some "religious reformers" claim that Islam does not want man to be humble even before God. They even consider recitations in prayer such as *Allahu akbar* [Allah is the great] and *Bismillahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim* [In the Name of Allah, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate] as political slogans. According to them, man should not bow down and express humility in front of anyone. They assert, "Crying is the practice of kids and old women! If a person returns to his primordial self and recognizes himself as strong and powerful he will never cry. He must never cry even before God."

Unfortunately, these individuals attribute this notion to Islam, labeling it as "Islamology" [*Islamshinasi*]! They should be asked, "If this is Islamology, what then is *kufrrshinasi*?!"

The truth and essence of worship is the expression of humility. We read in the Qur'an thus:

﴿وَعَنَتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ﴾

"All faces shall be humbled before the Living One, the All-sustainer." [65](#)

﴿وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ﴾

*“While to Him submit whosoever there is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will be brought back.”*⁶⁶

The pride of man is for him to comprehend the greatness of God and express humility and meekness before Him. The Commander of the Faithful (‘a) who knew God well said:

إِلَهِي كَفَى بِي عِزًّا أَنْ أَكُونَ لَكَ عَبْدًا وَكَفَى بِي فَخْرًا أَنْ تَكُونَ لِي رَبًّا.

“O Lord! It is enough honor for me that I am Your servant and it is enough pride for me that You are my Lord.”⁶⁷

Expression of servitude to God is the highest degree of servitude and man’s acknowledgment of his being God’s servant is the highest form of human dignity. The more one’s servanthood is expressed to God, the more man attains spiritual perfection and becomes nearer to God. Of course, it is evident that God does not need these things. Rather, as stated earlier, it is desirable to God for the reason that this act contributes to man’s perfection.

Transmitted supplications

It is true that supplication in any language, expression and intonation anytime anywhere, that is based on sincere intention, is wholesome, useful and effective, but the best supplications are those transmitted to us from the *awliya*’ of Allah, such as the supplications quoted from Prophets (‘a) and the meritorious servants of God as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an or recorded in the noble traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) and the pure Imams (‘a). These supplications are superior to other supplications for two reasons:

1. These supplications are transmitted from those who knew the etiquettes of worship better than us. Their knowledge of God was more than that of others and they were also more acquainted with the ways and manners of supplication compared to the rest of people. In addition, because of their more perfect gnosis [*ma’rifah*], whatever they requested is more desirable and better than our requests. Therefore, we must learn from them how to supplicate and what to ask for.

It can be said that the supplications transmitted to us from the Imams (‘a) in general are different in every aspect with our frame of mind and requests in supplication. In most cases, their supplications begin with the praise and eulogy of Allah [*hamd*] and glorification [*tasbih*] by citing “There is no god but Allah” [*tahliil*] and “Allah is the great” [*takbir*]. Instead of complaint and petition, their supplications contain appeals for forgiveness. Instead of denying blessings or complaining against deficiencies and deprivations, the infinite blessings and graces of God are mentioned. What they rarely mention are requests for material and worldly possessions, while nearness to God and His pleasure, as well as, human perfections are always highlighted.

Meanwhile, much of the lofty and sublime knowledge about God which could not be stated through narrations [*riwayat*] have been transmitted through supplications, especially the supplications of Imam al-Sajjad (‘a). While supplicating, the Imams of guidance (‘a) were fervently praying to Him, the Divine Essence. So, they used to express by tongue what was in their hearts and talk to Him the way they knew Him, glorifying and hymning His praises. In narrations, however, since most of their addressees were various people, it was impossible for them to express all their knowledge about God. Instead, they were supposed to express the truths according to their levels of understanding:

كَلِّمَ النَّاسَ عَلَى قَدْرِ عُقُولِهِمْ.

“Talk to the people according to the levels of their intellect.”

The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

إِنَّا مَعَاشِرَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ أُمِرْنَا أَنْ نُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ عَلَى قَدْرِ عُقُولِهِمْ.

“Verily, we prophets have been commanded to talk to the people according to the levels of their intellect.”⁶⁸

2. By reading the supplications transmitted from the prophets and the Imams of guidance (‘a), we are actually following them and are included in the tradition which encourages us to imitate the Messenger of Allah (S) and His *awliya*’. So, by reading the supplications of the Imams (‘a), apart from reciting the best of supplications through the best of etiquettes, we are actually acting upon the conduct of the *awliya*’ of Allah, which in itself is another virtue added to the act of supplicating itself.

Of course, following the holy personages has enormous benefits. The greatest of its benefits, which is relevant to the present discussion, is that man will not be afflicted with arrogance and feel that there are individuals superior and better than him and that he is far behind them. This point has great importance in the purification of the self. Many of those who were purifying their souls—after purging themselves of the moral impurities and reaching some stages of perfection—when they compared themselves with others, saw themselves superior to them and succumbed to arrogance. This itself is one of the moral impurities of man. But once a person realizes that the caravan of the servants of Allah and wayfarers along His path is the caravan ahead of all others, he will feel humble before God. This realization will prevent man from becoming arrogant.

The efforts of those, who have been deprived of the blessing of the *wilayah* of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a)—even if they have sincere intentions and undergone self-mortifications—in self-purification, have become useless because they committed mistakes mostly derived from their arrogance. Since they do not know the station of the pure Imams (‘a) who have been leading the caravan of humanity, they sometimes

imagine that they have attained the station of *quṭbiyyah* [polarity] and *wilayah*. Thus, they sometimes issue statements which never behoove a servant of God. This is while the Holy Apostle (S) who is the best of creation used to recite till the last moment of his life: “I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger.” Such notions can never be held by those who truly follow the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a). This in itself is the greatest blessing of their *wilayah*.

The supplications transmitted by tradition [*ad’iyyah ma’turah*] have such virtues. It must be noted, however, that those who have traversed the high stages of humanity and reached lofty stations of proximity to God sometimes say things in their litanies which are unbecoming for us to say because they are inconsistent with our conditions and dispositions; for us to express them will not be based on sincerity. For example, in *Du‘a’ Kumayl* which is a noble and valuable supplication, ʿAdhrat ‘Ali (‘a) said while addressing God:

فَهَبْنِي يَا إِلَهِي وَسَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَايَ وَرَبِّي صَبْرْتُ عَلَى عَذَابِكَ، فَكَيْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَى فِرَاقِكَ، وَهَبْنِي صَبْرْتُ عَلَى حَرِّ نَارِكَ، فَكَيْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَنِ النَّظَرِ إِلَى كَرَامَتِكَ.

“Then suppose, my Allah, my Master, my Protector and my Lord, that I am able to endure Your chastisement, how can I endure separation from You? And suppose that I am able to endure the heat of Your fire, how can I endure not gazing upon Your Generosity?”

These statements are only suitable to the accomplished *awliya’* of Allah, and everyone cannot claim them. Only he who knows what a mystical union [*wasl*] and separation [*firaq*] is can express such feelings. But he who is ignorant of a union has no right to say that he is suffering from separation from God. Only he who knows what union is and for whom it is desirable suffers from separation. So long as we do not know God nor grasp His perfection, we will never feel pain on being separated from Him. So, we cannot say that we can endure His punishment but not separation from Him?

How can he who cries loudly, (that borders on *kufr*) for suffering from a common headache or toothache, which is not even one-millionth of the pain of the chastisement in the hereafter, ever claim that he can endure the torment of the hellfire but not separation from God?! What do we know of the mystical union with God that we can endure the hellish punishment?

Expression of such points is suitable only to personalities such as the Commander of the Faithful (‘a). For us to express them is so far from reality. Yet, such points can be noticed in many transmitted supplications. If we want to utter these statements with the intention of showing our inner state and condition, it is a lie and telling a lie to God is far worse than lying to His creatures. Therefore, in such supplications we must have the intention of narrating [*hikayah*]. For instance, with the intention of narrating, we have to quote what ʿAdhrat ‘Ali (‘a) uttered in supplication, and not with the intention of expressing it by ourselves because it is unbecoming of us. We should also have the intention of praying to God to grant us the necessary gnosis by which we deserve to utter such statements.

Need to reflect on religious laws and repercussions of disrespectful acts

Supplication means asking God for something and talking to Him. Man knows the thing he wants and understands what he talks about. Some people have this wrong notion that reading the transmitted supplications brings no benefit to those who cannot understand them because they do not understand what they are reciting and asking God for; they are just uttering some words. It is better for them not to read them, but talk to God in their respective languages according to their cognition of Him. This view has also been raised against the recital of the Qur'an. They assert that reading the Qur'an brings no benefit to those who cannot understand its meaning and wastes their precious time!

Of course, it is true that there is much difference between an understood supplication and a supplication which is merely a verbal exercise. So is it with the reading of the Qur'an. Further, there is great difference between reading it without the presence of heart and with the presence of heart. Thus, those who do not understand the meaning of the supplications or verses of the Qur'an must learn to understand what they are telling God and what He is telling them. Not to know the meaning of supplications or verses of the Qur'an, however, cannot be a *carte blanche* to abandon their recitation or recite them in another language.

If this notion gains currency, it will reach the point of claiming that it is better for the ritual prayers to be translated into other languages as well, and for every nation to pray according to their own language.⁶⁹ Thereafter, it will gradually be asserted that there is essentially no need for the movements and pauses in prayer, to bend and bow down! Is God a dictator who obliges us to bow down in front of Him? Finally, the spirit of obedience [*ta'abbud*] to the commandments of God and the Apostle (S) will be undermined and uprooted altogether.

The point of deviation of some political groups claiming to be Islamic and whose many members were truly Muslims started from pseudo-intellectual interpretation of religious matters. We must deal with religious issues with extra care. The limits of devotional matters should not be trespassed; otherwise we will meet the same ignominious fate.

Like other revealed religions, Islam has also devotional matters which are not based on our personal understanding, knowledge and philosophy. Basically, the spirit of Islam is this very submission and obedience to God.⁷⁰ The servant of God is he who submits to Him, obeys Him whether he can comprehend the wisdom behind the command or not, tries to know what his Master wants and do it. If he only acts on a thing which he understands, it is actually self-worship and not servitude to God. If we only abide by the orders which we know to be obviously beneficial to us, it is actually self-worship and not the worship of God. The essence of worship of God is for man to abide by the commandment of God whether it is ostensibly beneficial or harmful to him.

When ʿAdhrat Ibrahim (Abraham) (‘a) was commanded by God to sacrifice his son, he never asked himself whether this act was beneficial to himself, his son, the society or not, or even if it was lawful or not. As soon as he received the revelation, he decided to sacrifice his son as he was commanded. This act of Prophet Ibrahim (‘a) shows the spirit of his obedience.

In essence, the philosophy of religious legislation is to enhance the spirit of unconditional submission to God’s Will by servitude and worship.

Of course, we know that the laws of Islam ensure the welfare of individuals and society, but our motive in obeying the commands of God must not be individual or social interests. Instead, we must worship God with the motive of serving Him [‘ubudiyyah]. We worship Him because He is the Master [mawla] and we are His servants. It is evidently clear that the All-wise Master does not command anything silly. But our motive should not be to ensure personal or social interests.

In most cases, many religious laws and decrees are ordained with the purpose of strengthening our spirit of servitude. Most of the *Hajj* ritual and acts constitute such laws; for example, stationing in certain places at specific periods of time; avoidance of perfume; cutting of hair and the like; circumambulating the *Ka’bah* [ʿawaf]; brisk walking or jogging [sa’y] between the mounts of Safa and Marwah in a certain manner at specific times; and other acts. According to a preacher, such acts serve as a sort of “training for servitude”.⁷¹

By observing the conditions and holding the obligatory ceremonies and rituals, one who goes to Mecca to perform ʿajj is actually saying, “O God! Since you have commanded me, I am going to ʿajj. According to your commandments, I stand, run, cut my hair, and apply no perfume.”⁷² In performing the Islamic devotional and religious acts, it has been emphasized that the people must obey the commandments of God and the spirit of obedience must be enhanced in man. Instead of entertaining self-worship and false pretexts in his mind, he must think of obeying the commands of God.

So, we must not look for the reasons and wisdom behind all the laws and decrees of Islam. According to the Islamic law, by referring to the Book and the *Sunnah*, we must act upon whatever is commanded therein, and not try to find a reason. We must examine the source of reference of religious decrees and act upon them after their authenticity is proved.

Of course, the pioneers of religion have stated the wisdom behind religious laws in many cases but it does not suggest that whenever we do not know the wisdom behind a religious decree, we will not accept it or cast doubt upon it. Religious obligations must be observed unconditionally exactly in the way they are ordained. We must accept anything whose wisdom is explained by the pioneers in religion or proved by science and experiment, and also not reject anything whose wisdom is not explained by the pioneers of religion or proved by science and experiment. However, our knowledge must be improved so as to better understand the positive and negative points of the religious laws.

Therefore, reading of the Qur’an, performance of the ritual prayers and recital of transmitted

supplications must be done in exactly the same way as ordained. The movements and pauses in prayer must be observed in the same manner and order. It cannot be asserted that it is better if we perform the dawn [*subh* or *fajr*] prayer after sunrise as we are more mirthful then, and things like that. These statements are repugnant to the spirit of obedience and a kind of interference in God's work. Inside the prison cells of the Shah's regime, there were pseudo-intellectuals who spent hours reading the Qur'an or long *surahs* of the Qur'an such as the *Surat al-Baqarah* (which consists of 286 verses) in ritual prayers but they used to perform the dawn prayer after its ordained time and did not worry about it. Tresspassing the limits of obedience [*ta'abbud*] ends up in such things.

Sometimes, some of them would talk about the issue of discipline. They used to say: "Every person must be well-disciplined and perform every prayer at its appointed time. For example, he must perform the dawn prayer at exactly six o'clock in the morning and the noon [*duhr*] prayer at exactly 12 o'clock noon!"

It is clear, however, that because of the changing religious [*shari'*] times for every ritual prayer, the times for prayers cannot be organized in that way because sometimes, the religious noontime is 12 o'clock while at other times it is a few minutes before or after that. If, in the name of discipline and order, we decide to perform our prayers before or after their religiously appointed times, it is equivalent to disobedience.

Even if performance of religious acts in exactly the way they are ordained has no outward benefit, it, at least, enhances the spirit of obedience in man. This reason alone is enough for man, and the greatest benefit of performing religious acts. Even in cases where the decree of God is outwardly harmful to a person or society, the embedded spirit of obedience compensates for it. This is the spirit of protecting the religion, its traditions and laws. One who is committed to observing religious obligations will never allow the divine law to be violated. For example, when socialist or capitalist economy is suggested instead of the Islamic economy, even if he thinks that it is outwardly more beneficial to society the obedient faithful person will do whatever God has ordered him.

After trespassing the limits of obedience and the sanctity of divine laws, critics will say that the social laws of Islam are meant for a particular period of time in the past and now we have a better code of laws. The ordainment of *khums*⁷³ and *zakat*⁷⁴ accordingly was meant to lessen the class gaps, but nowadays the issue of "public equality" is raised while private ownership has been undermined. As such, *khums* and *zakat* are no more applicable.

Many of those who raise these issues are outwardly not against Islam. Instead, they imagine that such laws of Islam were meant for 14 centuries ago. Today, man can formulate laws for himself as the human intellect has developed and is no longer in need of following revealed instructions!

Thus, the objection based on the benefit of using non-Arabic languages in supplications on the ground of not understanding Arabic, finally ends up in treating the revelation and heavenly laws as antiquated.

The religion is revealed by God and has given none of His servants the right to interfere in it:

﴿إِن الْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ﴾

“Judgment belongs only to Allah.”⁷⁵

﴿وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ﴾

“Those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down—it is they who are the faithless.”⁷⁶

The Sabbathians who were among the Israelites were living by the seaside and their main occupation was fishing. A commandment from God was revealed for them not to go fishing on Saturdays and devote it only to the worship of God. God wished to test them. Fish used to increase on Saturdays as compared to the rest of the week. In a bid to catch more fish and not inflict harm to their economy, they invented crafty methods through which the fish got trapped. They made ponds near the seashore. On Saturdays they would connect these ponds to the sea so that the fish would rush towards them, and then close the connections. The following day, they would catch the fish stranded in the ponds. Outwardly, there was nothing wrong with this practice and it had no conflict with the religious law for they were forbidden to catch fish on the Sabbath and not to fill ponds with fish. It was a trick to circumvent the religious injunctions as our tricks to circumvent God’s decrees with our false justifications for the practice of usury [*riba*]. Most probably, if we were with them, we would have accepted the same practice, but because of this act of violation God transformed those people into apes and annihilated them shortly afterwards.

This is neither fiction nor part of the distorted [*tahrif*] parts of the Torah [*tawrat*] and the Evangel [*inji*l], but mentioned in the Qur’an.⁷⁷

Those who are God-wary must take lessons from these stories. They must not play with the religion of God and His laws and practice “religious fraud”. The religion is that which God has commanded and its laws are exactly those mentioned by the Apostle (S) and the Imams (‘a).

Approaching religious laws with fraud will invite calamities to descend upon us. Playing with the religion of God will lead to the annihilation of the players. In any case, it is necessary to perform the prayers, read the Qur’an and make supplications. Praying in Arabic is obligatory [*wajib*] but reading the Qur’an and making supplications in Arabic are recommended [*mustahabb*]. Again, in spite of the great difference between the supplication whose meaning is understood and whose meaning is not understood by the supplicant, it cannot be asserted that the supplication or reading of the Qur’an by one who cannot understand what he is reciting is useless. Even if it has no benefit except the strengthening of the spirit of obedience to God, it is better than all acts of one who understands their meanings but

introduces innovation in religion [*bid'ah*]. A small act of obedience has preference over hundreds of years of self-formulated acts of devotion. The former is servitude to God while the latter is self-worship.

So are the transmitted supplications. They contain the basis of enhancing the spirit of obedience in addition to other benefits they might have. Can it be said that an illiterate person who sits facing the *qiblah*⁷⁸ and recites the *Du'a' Kumayl*⁷⁹ while in a state of ablution [*wudhu*] pays no attention to God? Does he not want to be encompassed by the noble content of supplication which ʿAdhrat ‘Ali (‘a) asked from God? So, remembrance and attention to God is among the benefits of reading the Qur’an and supplicating in Arabic, which is also very valuable.

Reading of the Qur’an by the faithful during the month of Ramadhan preserves the religion. Similarly, mourning for the Doyen of the Martyrs and other Imams (‘a) has so far ensured the survival of Islam and Shi‘ism. The way it is performed in some cases is not ideal but a sublime spirit is embedded in them—submission to God, honoring the religion and *awliya’* of religion, etc. Of course, we must also strive to improve the way mourning ceremonies are conducted while, at the same time, preserve the spirit of obedience to God. However, until the more ideal way is not yet achieved, these traditions must be preserved.

Evidently, devotional acts cannot be changed, but things, like mourning ceremonies, which are accidental [*‘aradhi*] (and not essential [*jawhari*]), they can be held in better ways. In such cases, the best way is that which emanates from the pure nature of human beings and affirms the religious sentiments of people without being taught by outsiders to do so.

The notion that it is better when mourning ceremonies are held in an organized and peaceful manner like the way demonstrations are held in Western countries is wrong, simply because religious demonstrations must stem from religious enthusiasm, and calmness is incompatible with religious enthusiasm. This can be the case with respect to customs, but those practices whose form and manner of performance have been defined by religion should not be changed in the least. They must be done the way God has commanded even if we imagine that there is a better way of doing the same.

It is reported in a tradition that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) was teaching someone a supplication, saying to him: “Say, ‘O Transformer of hearts! Make my heart steadfast in Your religion’. He said: ‘O Transformer of hearts and the All-seeing! Make my heart steadfast in Your religion.’ The Imam (‘a) said: ‘Recite it as I am teaching you.’ The person asked: ‘Is God not All-seeing as well?’ The Imam replied: ‘Yes, He is, but you have to recite it as I have told you’.”⁸⁰

If a person changes what an infallible Imam (‘a) tells him or what religion has enjoined, it means he wants to say, “I understand things better than the Imam or the sacred religion.” This mentality originates from egoism and arrogance, and is repugnant to worship and servitude. Humility, meekness, helplessness, submissiveness are requisites of worship. Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) said:

“Satan said to God: ‘O Lord! I swear by Your Might that if You would excuse me from prostrating before

Adam (Adam), in exchange for it I will worship You in such a way that no one in the world will exceed me.' God said: 'Verily, I want you to obey what I ask of you'."81

If we want to obey God as we wish, it is actually obeying the dictates of our hearts and not obedience to God. In sum, we have to follow exactly what has been ordained by the religion. We must be obedient in obligatory [*wajib*] and recommended [*mustahabb*] matters and not exceed their limits in the least. Exceeding the limits of religion is tantamount to the annihilation of religion.

This is not in conflict with our endeavor to know the rationality behind religious laws. Many of them have been mentioned in traditions and even the Qur'an. Some may also possibly be proven through science and experience. This in itself is desirable.

Likewise, we must bear in mind that even if one of the rationalities behind religious laws becomes known to us through a saying of the Apostle (S) or an infallible Imam ('a) or through science and experience, it must not be imagined to be the totality of the religious laws' rationalities. There might be other rationalities which are unknown to us.

Therefore, the ritual prayers must be performed and the Qur'an and supplications be read or recited in exactly the same way they are ordained by religion. At the same time, we must strive more to understand their meanings and have the presence of the heart, and bear in mind that the value of the spirit of obedience is far greater than our own innovated forms of worship.

1. – Surat al-Furqan 25:77.

2. – Qunut: supplication recited in the salat after the second rak'ah, in the standing position, with the palms of the hands raised upward. [Trans.]

3. – Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, bab 14, p. 300, hadith 37.

4. – Surat Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) 40:60.

5. – Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 33.

6. – An extract from the litanies [munajat] of Hadrat 'Ali ('a), Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 95, p. 391, hadith 31.

7. – Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, bab 14, p. 90, hadiths 14–15.

8. – Surat Fatir (or, al-Mala'ikah) 35:43.

9. – For a concise treatment of this philosophical principle, see Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, The Elements of Islamic Metaphysics, trans. Sayyid 'Ali Quli Qara'i (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies Press, 2003), chap. 7 "The Cause and the Effect," pp. 68–80. [Trans.]

10. – Surat Fatir (or, al-Mala'ikah) 35:43.

11. – See Ma'arif-e Qur'an [Qur'anic Studies] by the author.

12. – See Surat Al 'Imran 3: 123–124. [Trans.]

13. – Surat al-Mu'minun 23:71.

14. – Surat Al 'Imran 3: 126.

15. – Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p. 256, hadith 10.

16. – Ibid., vol. 93, p. 312, hadith 17.

17. – Ibid., vol. 71, p. 344, hadith 1.

18. – Surat Fatir (or al-Mala'ikah) 35: 15: "O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of Allah, and Allah—He is the All-sufficient, the All-laudable."

19. – Surat Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) 40:60.

- [20.](#) – Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, section 24, p. 368, hadith 4.
- [21.](#) – Surat al-A'raf 7:180: "To Allah belong the Best Names, so supplicate Him by them."
- [22.](#) – The book of fifty-seven prayers known as al-Sahifah (al-Kamilah) al-Sajjadiyyah, which is one of the major Islamic manuals of supplications, was transmitted from Imam Zayn al-'Abidinal-Sajjad ('a), the fourth of the Twelve Imams and the only son of Imam al-Husayn to survive the massacre at Karbala'. See al-Sahifah al-Kamilah, <https://www.al-islam.org/sahifa-al-kamilah-sajjadiyya-imam-zain-ul-abideen> [1] [Trans.]
- [23.](#) – Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 61, section 42, p. 129.
- [24.](#) – Ibid., vol. 93, p. 320, hadith 30.
- [25.](#) – Nahj al-Balaghah (Subh al-Salih), Sermon 192 (Khutbah al-Qasi'ah) [Trans.]
- [26.](#) – Surat al-Shams 91:9.
- [27.](#) – Surat Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) 40:60.
- [28.](#) – Surat al-Ra'd 13:31.
- [29.](#) – That is, they do not have faith that God could grant their requests.
- [30.](#) – Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p. 366, hadith 16.
- [31.](#) – Ibid., vol. 93, p. 376.
- [32.](#) – Surat al-Mu'minun 23:71.
- [33.](#) – Surat Hud 11:46.
- [34.](#) – Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p. 374, hadith 16.
- [35.](#) – Surat al-Baqarah 2:257.
- [36.](#) – Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, "Du'a' 'Arafah of Imam al-Husayn ('a)".
- [37.](#) – Surat Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) 40:60.
- [38.](#) – Muh Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p. 322, hadith 16.
- [39.](#) – Surat al-A'raf 7:55.
- [40.](#) Surat al-Hujurat 49:2: "O you who have faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak aloud to him as you shout to one another, lest your works should fail without your being aware." [Trans.]
- [41.](#) – Surat al-An'am 6:42-4.
- [42.](#) – Surat al-A'raf 7:94.
- [43.](#) – Hadith Qudsi (or Sacred Hadith): a sub-category of hadith, which are sayings of God but differ from the Qur'an as they are expressed in the words of Prophet Muhammad. [Trans.]
- [44.](#) – Muhammad Baqir Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 14, p. 290, hadith 14.
- [45.](#) – Ibid., vol. 14, p. 298, hadith 14.
- [46.](#) – Ibid., vol. 93, p. 317, hadith 21.
- [47.](#) – Surat al-A'raf 7:205; Surat al-Ra'd 13:141; Surat al-Nur 24:36.
- [48.](#) – Surat al-Anbiya' 21:90.
- [49.](#) – Surat Fussilat 41:51.
- [50.](#) – Surat al-An'am 6:41.
- [51.](#) – Surat al-Baqarah 2:74.
- [52.](#) – Surat al-An'am 6:43, 148; Surat al-A'raf 7:4-5, 97-98; Surat Yusuf 12:110; Surat al-Anbiya' 21:12; Surat al-Ghafir 40:84-85.
- [53.](#) – Surat al-Anfal 8:53.
- [54.](#) – Surat al-Ra'd 13:11.
- [55.](#) – Surat al-Shawra 42:30.
- [56.](#) – Surat an-Nahl 16:61.
- [57.](#) – Surat Fatir 35:45.
- [58.](#) – Surat al-Rum 30:41.
- [59.](#) – Surat al-A'la 87:17.
- [60.](#) – Surat Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) 40:60.
- [61.](#) – Surat al-Nisa' 4:32.

- [62.](#) – Part of a supplication recited in the nights of Ramadan.
- [63.](#) – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, section 4, p. 81, hadith 3.
- [64.](#) – Surat Ghafir (or al-Mu'min) 40:60.
- [65.](#) – Surat Ta Ha 20:111.
- [66.](#) – Surat Al 'Imran 3:83.
- [67.](#) – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 77, p. 402, hadith 23.
- [68.](#) – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 1, p. 85, hadith 7.
- [69.](#) – It is said that this point has been raised in Turkey.
- [70.](#) – Imam 'Ali ('a) said: "Islam means submission." [Al-Islam wa huwa't-taslim]. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 68, p. 309, section 35, hadith 1.
- [71.](#) – It alludes to the late Hajj Shaykh 'Ali Akbar Turbati (may his soul be sanctified).
- [72.](#) – It is worth-mentioning that while in the state of ihram, certain things are prohibited for the pilgrim; for example, applying perfume, using a mirror, staying under a shade, removing hair from the body, etc. One of the rituals of Hajj and 'Umrah [optional pilgrimage] is halq or taqsir which means shaving of head or trimming of hair and cutting nails. The two must not be confused. Halq or taqsir is performed at a specific stage of Hajj and by doing so, the pilgrim is no longer in the state of ihram.
- [73.](#) – Khums: literally means one-fifth. According to the Shi'ah school of jurisprudence [fiqh], this one-fifth tax is obligatorily levied on every adult Muslim who is financially secure and has surplus in his income out of annual savings, net commercial profits, and all movable and immovable properties which are not commensurable with the needs and social standing of the person. Khums is divided into two equal parts: the Share of the Imam [sahm al-Imam] and the Share of the Sayyids/Sadat (descendants of the Prophet (S)) [sahm al-Sadat]. Accordingly, the Share of the Imam is to be paid to the living Imam, and in the period of occultation ['asr al-ghaybah], to the most learned living mujtahid who is the giver's marja' al-taqlid [source of emulation]. The other half of the khums, the Share of the Sayyids/Sadat, is to be given to needy pious Sayyids who lack the resources for one's year respectable living in consonance with their various statuses. For more information, see Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, Khums: An Islamic Tax (Toronto: Islamic Education and Information Center, 1992), <https://www.al-islam.org/khums-islamic-tax-sayyid-muhammad-rizvi> [2] [Trans.]
- [74.](#) – Zakat: the tax levied on various categories of wealth and spent on the purposes specified in Surat al-Tawbah (or, Bara'ah) 9:60. [Trans.]
- [75.](#) – Surat al-An'am 6:57.
- [76.](#) – Surat al-Ma'idah 5:44.
- [77.](#) – Surat al-Baqarah 2:65-66; Surat al-A'raf 7:166.
- [78.](#) – Qiblah: the direction which the Muslims face at times of prayers and other acts, which is the Ka'bah in Mecca. [Trans.]
- [79.](#) – Du'a' Kumayl [Supplication of Kumayl]: The supplication taught by Imam 'Ali ('a) to one of his loyal companions and staunch supporters of Islam, Kumayl ibn Ziyad. Usually offered on every night preceding Friday [Laylat'ul-Jum'ah] individually or in congregation after 'Isha' prayers, this supplication envisages divine teachings and solid foundations of religion in order to enable everyone to follow the right path to become a worthy Muslim. The Arabic text, English translation and commentary of this famous supplication are available online at <http://www.al-islam.org/kumayl> [3]. [Trans.]
- [80.](#) – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 148, section 22, hadith 3.
- [81.](#) – Ibid., vol. 2, p. 262, section 32, hadith 5.

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Links

[1] <https://www.al-islam.org/sahifa-al-kamilah-sajjadiyya-imam-zain-ul-abideen>

[2] <https://www.al-islam.org/khums-islamic-tax-sayyid-muhammad-rizvi>

[3] <http://www.al-islam.org/kumayl>