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The Means to be Employed when Praying to Allah

Since we have been discussing the obstacles and the factors of the ascension of deeds, it would be appropriate as well to talk about the means that we must employ when supplicating Allah, the Exalted.

Allah Himself has invited us to take recourse to Him. He says:

“They {themselves} are the ones who supplicate, seeking a recourse to their Lord...”¹

He also says:

“O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and seek the means of recourse to Him...”²

In fact, these means have been ordained by Allah , out of His mercy, for those of His creatures whose deeds and prayers are not strong enough to ascend to Him; as He is the Most Merciful of all merciful.

He, the Exalted, says:

“To Him ascends the good word and He elevates righteous conduct.”³

‘A good word’ and ‘righteous conduct’ are part of human life. The ‘good word’ is one’s belief in Allah, his sincerity to Him, his confidence and hope in Him, and his entreating Him. While the ‘righteous conduct’ is the deed which one performs out of belief, sincerity, confidence, and hope in Allah.

The ‘good word’ ascends to Allah as per the assertion of the Qur’an, but it is the ‘righteous deed’ which elevates the ‘good word’ to Allah, as affirmed also by the Qur’an itself. The ‘good word’ cannot ascend to Allah without the ‘righteous deed’. Nevertheless, sometimes the ‘righteous deed’ is weak and ineffective, and so it is unable to elevate the ‘good word’ to Allah. Subsequently, the prayer of a person would fail to ascend to Allah, and therefore it would not be answered.

For this reason, Allah, out of His mercy for his creatures, has decreed in human life and kept at his

disposal ‘means’ (*wasai*) through which he may seek recourse to Allah and which may assist him to ascend to Him. Were it not for these means, a person would not have been able to raise his prayer and imploration to Allah.

The Qur’an has pointed to these means. Among such means is the prayer of the Holy Prophet (S) and his pleading for forgiveness for his nation (*ummah*). He, the Exalted, says:

“... Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful.”⁴

This verse is clear in that the pleading for forgiveness by the Prophet (S) on behalf of the believers is among the ‘means’ which Allah has encouraged His servants to seek recourse to when supplicating Him and seeking His forgiveness.

What has been reported in history of the coming of the believers to the Holy Prophet (S) during his lifetime and his seeking forgiveness for them, applies after his demise also; for the Prophet of Allah (S) is living even after his death and provided for near Allah, the Exalted.

Pleading with the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

The Islamic narrations are replete with great emphasis on asking for help from the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny (‘a).

Dawud al-Barqi says: “I used to listen to Abu ‘Abdillah as-Sadiq (‘a), he mostly used to implore Allah for the sake of the Five, that is the Prophet of Allah, Amir al-Mu’minin, Fatimah, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn (peace be upon all of them).”⁵

Sama’ah is reported to have said, “Abu al-Hasan al-Kazim (‘a) said to me, ‘O Sama’ah! If you sought a need from Allah, then say, ‘O Allah, {I beseech You} for the sake of Muhammad and ‘Ali, for they enjoy status and rank with You, and {I implore You} for the sake of that status to bless Muhammad and his Progeny, and do with me such and such.’”⁶

Means of Recourse to Allah in the Supplication of Kumayl

In the supplication of *kumayl*, we find a set of means by which Imam ‘Ali (‘a) has sought recourse to Allah, the Exalted. Actually, these means which have appeared in this supplication constitute the second part of it.

But in order for us to discuss the means which the Imam (‘a) employs in this supplication and through which he seeks his needs, it is necessary to give a brief explanation about the structure of this supplication, the key concepts it entails, and the methodology based on which the key ideas presented

in this supplication have been arranged. In actual fact, each of the famous supplications that has reached us from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) entails specific concepts and a particular methodology based on which those concepts are organized. Each of these supplications has a specific way to commence it and to bring it to close.

Similarly, each of these supplications has a structure and a layout peculiar to it. It contains one primary concept embraced by a number of other secondary concepts. In other words, every prayer has a fundamental point to convey, and there are other subsidiary points surrounding the main one. It involves a style of beseeching Allah, the Exalted, and a way of commencing it and bringing it to close.

Had the scholars devoted enough academic importance to this issue, they would have come up with positive and remarkable achievements. Anyway, I do not intend to present here the structure of the supplication of *kumayl*, nor the primary concepts it entails. Rather, I just intend to briefly give an explanation about the general framework of this supplication and the main ideas which have appeared in it, in order for us to consider –through this general frame– the ‘means’ employed by Imam ‘Ali ('a) in this prayer for seeking his needs from Allah.

General Frame of the Supplication of Kumayl

The supplication of *kumayl* is among the famous and important prayers among the believers. It is recited on Thursday nights, collectively and individually.

This supplication belongs to Imam ‘Ali ('a) which he taught to Kumayl bin Ziyad an-nakha'i. Thereafter, the believers received it through this channel and passed it on generation after generation.

This prayer is rich with such concepts as servanthood (*'ubudiyyah*), repentance and submission; and filled with vivid illustrations of petition, call for help and returning to Allah.

However, I do not intend, by these considerations, to give a commentary of this supplication and the ideas it entails, as this would take long. Perhaps Allah will grant me the *tawfiq* to undertake such a work in future.

This prayer has been particularly arranged in three stages, such that each stage prepares the ground for the next stage. Comprehending this structure and the foundations on which it is based helps us a lot in reading this supplication and in pondering over the concepts and ideas that have appeared in it, and also in interacting with them.

I hope Allah, the Exalted, will make this endeavour beneficial and useful for those of the believers who are consistent in reciting this supplication.

Structure of the Supplication of Kumayl

As mentioned above, this prayer consists of three stages.

The First Stage is like a preamble to the supplication. It prepares the supplicant for praying and imploring Allah, the Exalted, and to stand before Him. The wrongdoings veil a person from Allah and withhold prayer. In order for one to stand before his Lord entreating Him, he needs first to put behind him this impediment.

In this introduction, ‘Ali (‘a) begins with two requests from Allah. The first one is forgiveness from Allah, “O Allah, forgive me those sins which tear apart protection. O Allah, forgive me those sins which bring down calamities...”

The second request is His remembrance, thankfulness to Him, and proximity to Him, “And I beseech You by Your generosity to bring me closer to Your proximity, and grant me with thankfulness to You, and to inspire me with Your remembrance.”

Both of the above things are necessary for one who intends to stand before Allah imploring Him. He has no choice but that Allah should, first, forgive his sins and remove the veils from his heart, and, secondly, allow him to get closer to Him, be grateful to Him, and inspire him with His remembrance.

The second section of the preamble involves the presentation of poverty, need, and desire (*raghbah*) toward Allah, “O Allah, I ask You with the asking of one whose indigence is extreme, and who has stated to You in difficulties his need, and whose yearning for what is with You has become great...”

Here, we come across two realities. Firstly, there is no escape from Allah, “O Allah, Your power is great, Your position is high, Your deception is hidden, Your command is manifest, Your domination is overwhelming, Your power is prevalent.”

Secondly, there is no refuge with other than Him, “O Allah, I find no one to forgive my sins, no one to conceal my wrongdoings, and no one to change my bad deeds into good except You, there is no god but You.”

In the third section of the preamble, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) mentions the wretchedness and misfortune of man, “O Allah, my tribulation is tremendous, my bad state is excessive, my acts are inadequate, my fetters have tied me down, my far-fetched hopes have held me back from my gain, and this world with its delusions, my own soul with its offences, and my delaying {to act} have deceived me, O my Master.”

This wretchedness and misfortune is undoubtedly the outcome of man’s own deeds. This is why ‘Ali (‘a) beseeches Allah, the Exalted, to forgive him his sins and not to let them impede his prayer from Him, “So I ask You, by Your might, not to let my evil deeds and acts veil my supplication from You, not to disgrace me because of the hidden things You have come to know from my innermost secret, not to hasten in punishing me for what I have done in privacy of my evil acts, wrongdoings, continuous

negligence, my ignorance, my manifold passions, and my forgetfulness.”

In the fourth section, he emphasizes on a noble concept which we have just mentioned, and that is, man cannot find shelter during hardships and misfortune with other than his Master, “O Allah, who do I Have other than You, so that I may implore him to remove my affliction and to have regard for my affairs?”

The fifth section of the preamble involves two confessions; confession of wrongdoings, and the confession that man has no argument against Allah in transgressing His boundaries, violating His commands, and in following his lowly desires.

In the sixth and the last section of the preamble, after one has confessed his disobedience, sins and wretchedness, and after one has declared that there is no refuge from Allah but with Him, and after one has sought Allah not to punish him on account of his wrongdoings and offences, and, in one word, after displaying his humility and indigence before Allah, the Exalted, the servant declares that he has turned to his master in confession of his sins, regretting them, broken and apologizing, out of knowledge that there is no refuge from his misfortune and hardships except with Allah.

He (‘a) says: “Now I have come to You, O Allah, after my shortcoming and my immoderation toward myself, proffering my excuse, regretful, broken, apologizing, pleading for forgiveness, repenting, acknowledging, submissive and confessing. I find no place to flee from what I have done, nor any place of escape to which I may turn in my affairs, other than Your acceptance of my excuse and Your entering me into the compass of Your mercy.”

With the above phrase, the preamble comes to an end. A servant is now prepared to stand before Allah, to supplicate and entreat Him. He has affirmed all this by the statement ‘Now I have come to You, O Allah.’

The Second Stage is the one in which the Imam (‘a) mentions the means (*wasā’il*) by which he seeks recourse to Allah. To my knowledge, there are four ‘means’.

The first means is the previous grace and mercy of Allah toward His creatures, and His love for them, “O You who gave rise to my creation, to the remembrance of me, to the nurture of me, to goodness toward me, and to my nourishment, bestow upon me for the sake of Your having given rise {to me} with generosity and Your previous goodness to me.”

The second means is our love for Him and our confession of His Oneness, “Can You see Yourself tormenting me with Your fire after I have professed Your Unity, and after Your cognition my heart has embraced, Your remembrance my tongue has constantly mentioned, and Your love to which my mind has clung, after the sincerity of my confession and my supplication, humble before Your Lordship?”

The third means is our weakness in resisting the punishment, the thinness of our skins and the frailty of our bones, “You know my weakness before a little of this world’s tribulations and punishments, and

before those ordeals which befall its inhabitants, even though it is a tribulation whose stay is short, whose subsistence is but little, and whose period is but fleeting. So how can I endure the tribulations of the next world and the great ordeals that occur within it?... O Allah, my Lord, my Master, my Protector, for which things would I complain to You, and for which of them would I lament and weep; for the pain and severity of the chastisement, or for the length and period of tribulation?”

The fourth means is the seeking of refuge by a slave who has fled from his Master and disobeyed Him, and his asking and calling upon Him for help when he has no way out and does not find any refuge except with his Master.

The Imam (‘a) illustrates this means remarkably with the following words, “So by Your might, my Master and my Protector, I swear sincerely, if You leave me with speech, I will lament to You from the midst of the Fire’s inhabitants with the lamentation of the hopeful; I will cry to You with the cry of those crying for help; I will weep to You with the weeping of the bereft; and I will call upon You, where are You, O Helper of the believers, O Goal of the hopes of {Your} knowers, O Succor of those who seek assistance, O Beloved of the hearts of the sincere, and O Lord of the worlds.”

By putting forth these four means, the second stage of this prayer comes to the end. The supplicant sought recourse to Allah with these means in order for him to be able to stand before Allah, supplicating and beseeching Him.

Now, let us enter together with ‘Ali (‘a) in the third stage of the prayer. In this final stage, the Imam (‘a) presents his needs to Allah one after another. The needs begin from the low point related to the petitioner and his actions, and end at the climax where the supplicant aspires and craves the infinite mercy of his Master.

At the lowest point, we say, “O Allah, my Master, I beseech You... to forgive me on this night and at this hour every offence I have committed, every sin I have perpetrated, every ugly thing I have concealed...”

At the culmination of the needs, we say, “And make me among the most excellent of Your slaves in share with You, the nearest of them in station to You, and the most elected of them in proximity to You...”

It is worthy of note here that the wishes which the Imam (‘a) presents before Allah through the above phrases can be classified into four kinds:

The first kind is that He may forgive us our sins, not punish us, overlook the offences we have committed, and what we have perpetrated of evil, “...to forgive me on this night and at this hour every offence I have committed, every sin I have perpetrated, every ugly thing I have concealed, every folly I have enacted –whether I have hidden or announced it, whether I have concealed it or manifested it, every evil act which You have commanded the Noble Writers to record, those whom You have appointed to watch over what appears from me, and whom You have made, along with my bodily organs, witness

against me.”

In *the second kind*, the Imam (‘a) invokes Allah’s mercy in all affairs and in every provision {from Him}. He prays to Allah to increase his share of every good that He sends down, “{And I beseech You} to bestow upon Me an abundant share of every good You send down, goodness You unfold, provision You spread out...”

This prayer is all embracing such that it does not leave out anything of Allah’s mercy.

The third kind which is the longest part of this supplication is the one which attracts the attention of the Imam (‘a) most; that is, his relation with Allah.

Imam ‘Ali (‘a) prays to Allah to make his time filled with His remembrance and connected to His service, and to grant him seriousness in his fear of Him, and to take him closer to Himself and give him a place in His neighbourhood, “I beseech You... to make my times in the night and the day inhabited by Your remembrance, and joined to Your service...”

Strengthen my bodily parts in Your service, fortify the instruments of my soul in determination, and bestow upon me earnestness in my fear of You and continuity in my being joined to Your service, so that I may move easily toward You in the battlefields of the foremost, hurry to You among the prominent, desire fervently Your proximity among the fervently desirous, move nearer to You with the nearness of the sincere, fear You with the fear of those who have certitude, and gather with the believers in Your neighbourhood.”

However, it should not go unsaid here that both of the first and the third types of wishes are peculiar to the relation of a servant with Allah. The difference is in that the first type of wishes are negative in nature, that is, a person pleads with Allah to forgive his sins and overlook them; while the third type of wishes are positive, that is, his only concern is to establish his relation with Allah on a firm ground of sincerity, fear, love and yearning for Him.

In *the fourth kind* of wishes, the Imam (‘a) asks Allah to keep him away from the deception of the tyrants, their trickery and mischief, to return their trickery to themselves, and to protect him from their oppression and harm, “O Allah, whosoever intends evil for me, desire {it} for him, and whoever deceives me, deceive him... and spare me the evil of my enemies from among the jinn and men.”

This was a quick summary of the structure of this holy supplication. However, there is need for further explanation and elaboration.

Four Means of Recourse in the Supplication of Kumayl

We will now talk in detail about the four means of recourse which have appeared in this supplication, and which actually constitute the second part of it, as mentioned earlier.

The first means is Allah's previous goodness (*birr*), kindness (*karam*), and grace (*fadl*) toward His servants. Should there be any shortcoming and flaw in the action and endeavour of a person which keeps him away from Allah, then Allah's previous grace and mercy toward him would intercede with Him on his behalf.

His previous grace and mercy toward His servants affirms His love (*hubb*) for them. This 'Divine love' is a means of recourse that one sends forth before seeking his needs from Allah, the Exalted. In case a servant does not deserve Allah's mercy, then His love toward him would qualify him to attain His mercy and grace, and would place the servant in the position of being answered. The Imam ('a) says in this regard, "O You who gave rise to my creation, to the remembrance of me, to the nurture of me, to goodness toward me... Bestow upon me for the sake of Your having given rise {to me} with generosity, and Your previous goodness to me."

He, the Exalted, began first with our creation (*khalq*), remembrance (*dhikr*), nourishment (*tarbiyah*), and showed goodness (*birr*) toward us before we even asked Him for that, and without we deserving this goodness and remembrance from Him. If this is the case, then He is more entitled to do good to us and honour us if we are to pray to Him and ask from Him for all this. And if our wrongdoings and sins obstruct His goodness and mercy, then His love for us would indeed mediate between Him and us, and make us subject to His kindness and mercy.

The second means is our love for Him. In the first means, the Imam ('a) sought recourse to Allah with His love for us, and thereafter seeks recourse to Him with our love for Him. And this is as effective a means as His love for us. This is because the element of love has a great value that nothing can equal it in the eyes of the beloved. However much we may doubt in our love for something, we cannot doubt in our love for Allah and His friends (*awliya*). Love is a commodity which Allah, the Exalted, never rejects. Love is a commodity which Allah, the Exalted, never rejects.

Parallel to this means is our profession of His Oneness, our humility before Him, our prayers, our prostrations, our remembrance of Him, and our testimony that He is our Lord (*rabb*) and we are His servants. However, all these can be summarized in two things, our love for Him and our profession of His Oneness (*tawhid*). And we are confident that 'love' and 'Oneness' are two commodities that would never be rejected by Allah; the two things we can never doubt even for a moment.

Seeking recourse to Allah with this means, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Can You see Yourself tormenting me with Your fire after I have professed Your Unity, and after Your knowledge my heart has embraced, Your remembrance my tongue has constantly mentioned, Your love to which my mind has clung? And after the sincerity of my confession and my supplication, humble before Your Lordship?"

As a comment on these phrases, I recall a story. It is said that after Allah granted him kingdom and power over Egypt, one day Prophet Yusuf ('a) was viewing the city from the balcony of his palace. With him in the balcony was a righteous servant of Allah whom He had bestowed with knowledge and light. A

young man happened to pass under the balcony, so that righteous man said to Prophet Yusuf ('a), "Do you know this young man?" "No", he answered. The righteous man said, "This is the infant who testified to your innocence the day you were accused by the King's wife. ***'A witness of her own household testified, 'If his shirt is torn from the front, she tells the truth and he lies. But if his shirt is torn from behind, then she lies and he tells the truth.'***"⁷

That suckling infant who bore witness in the cradle in favour of you has {now} grown up to become a young man; here he is."

So Prophet Yusuf ('a) called him and seated him beside him. He acclaimed him and bestowed a robe of honour upon him, whilst the pious servant looked in amazement at what Prophet Yusuf ('a) was doing.

"Are you astonished at what I have done with this young man?" asked Prophet Yusuf ('a). The pious man said, "No. But this young man did not do anything except that he testified to your innocence. And it was Allah who made him to speak, so he does not deserve any credit for it. But in spite of this, you gave him such respect and bestowed a robe of honour upon him."

The moral of the story is that if Prophet Yusuf ('a) held that young man in great esteem just because he testified to his innocence, then how can Allah burn the face of a servant who used to prolong his prostrations before Him, or burn the heart of a servant after it is filled with His love, or burn a tongue which frequently remembered Him, testified to His Oneness, and denied partners to Him.

In this regard, the Imam ('a) says: "Would that I knew, my Master, my Lord and my Protector, are You going to inflict Fire over faces that fell down in prostration before Your greatness, or over tongues voicing sincerely the profession of Your Oneness and thanking You in praise, hearts acknowledging Your Divinity through verification, or over minds encompassing knowledge of You until they have become humble, and upon the bodily members speeding to the places of Your worship in obedience and beckoning for Your forgiveness in submission. Such opinion is not held of You! Nor has such been reported about You, thanks to Your grace, O All-generous."

The third means is our weakness to bear the torment, the delicacy of our skin, the frailty of our bones, and our little endurance and patience; for weakness (*da'f*) is an effective means to seek recourse with to the Strong (*qawiyy*), as in every weakness there is something which attracts the Strong, His affection and mercy.

There is some secret in 'weakness' that it always seeks the strong, as there is something in 'power' that it always searches for the weak. Each of them is in pursuit of the other. In its weakness, a suckling infant searches for the affection of the mother, just as the sympathy of the mother seeks the weakness and feebleness of the baby.

In fact, there is no weapon more effective on the Strong than weeping and {entertaining} hope in His mercy. This is the means and weapon of the weak.

‘Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) says in this supplication, “O He whose name is a remedy {for all illnesses}, and whose remembrance is a cure... have mercy upon him whose only capital is hope, and whose only weapon is lamentation.”

The hope that a needy entertains of the rich is his asset. The tears of the weak before the strong are his weapon. Whoever does not understand the norms (*sunan*) of Allah, the Exalted, in the universe with regard to the relation of a weak to the strong and vice versa, cannot comprehend the touching phrases in the speech of the Imam (‘a).

In another whispered prayer (*munajat*) of his, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says: “You are the Strong and I the weak! Has anyone mercy on the weak but the Strong?”

Now, in the supplication of *kumayl*, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) is seeking recourse to Allah with the weakness (*da’f*) of the servant, lack of his means, quick fading of his patience and forbearance, thinness of his skin, and the frailty of his bones. He says: “O my Lord, have mercy on the weakness of my body, the thinness of my skin, and the frailty of my bones...”

Our state in this world is such that if a thorn pricks us, or a burning coal touches us, or a little illness befalls us, then it strips us of sleep, comfort and tranquility. This is bearing in mind that these afflictions are insignificant and their period is normally short, they are meant for testing the mankind, and, above all, they are a mercy from Allah. So what shall be our condition if we are to be driven to the severe torment when it will be said to the angels of punishment, “Seize him, and fetter him. Then put him into hell. Then, in a chain whose length is seventy cubits, bind him.”⁸

The Imam (‘a) says: “You know my weakness before a little of this world’s tribulations and punishments, and before those ordeals which befall its inhabitants, even though it is a tribulation and ordeal whose stay is short, whose subsistence is but little, and whose period is but fleeting. So how can I endure the tribulations of the next world and the great ordeals that occur within it? For it is a tribulation whose period is long, whose station endures, and whose sufferers are given no respite, since it only occurs as a result of Your wrath, Your vengeance and Your anger, and these cannot be withstood by the heavens and the earth. O my Master, so what about me?! For I am Your weak, lowly, base, wretched, and miserable slave. O Allah, my Lord, my Master, and my Protector.”

The fourth means with which the Imam (‘a) seeks recourse to Allah in this supplication is the desperate need (*idtīrar*) of the servant to Allah. This is an effective means to someone before whom one presents his neediness, and does not find any other person to fulfill his wish but him.

By ‘desperate need’, I mean a state in which a servant does not find anyone else to fulfill his need apart from Allah, the Exalted, and does not have any place of refuge except with Allah; the situation in which one takes flight from Allah, but does not find any shelter to seek protection with except Him, the Exalted. Such a scene is among the most effective in attracting Allah’s mercy and clemency.

In her little world, a baby does not see any protector, supporter, or one who can fulfill her needs other than her father and mother. Thus, she develops intimacy with them, and finds with them –within her little horizon– all her wishes, and what she needs of mercy, benevolence and sympathy.

Subsequently, whenever something befalls her, or she becomes afflicted by a calamity, or she becomes afraid of something, she immediately takes refuge with her parents and finds security and mercy with them.

Moreover, if she has done something because of which she deserves to be punished by her parents, and she fears them for herself, then she would turn to her right and left looking for refuge. But when she finds no one to give her protection, then she turns to her parents throwing herself into their arms, asking for their help, at a time when they are intending to punish her.

This scene is among those which, most of the time, brings about the sympathy of her parents, and earns her their love and affection.

Now, in this prayer, the Imam (‘a) points to such a concept. Indeed he had learned to take refuge with Allah in everything such that if any affliction or calamity were to befall him, he would turn to Allah and would not find anyone to fulfill his need but Him.

In such a situation, he also sees a servant of Allah to be subject to the wrath of Allah and his punishment, the very One whose mercy and protection he hopes for. Here, he finds no refuge but with Him, no where to escape but to Him, and no protector other than Him.

So, while the angels of punishment drive him to the hell fire, he screams to Him, the Exalted, seeking security from Him, taking refuge from His anger with His mercy, asking and crying for His help, just like a child who has been subject to the wrath of her parents and does not flee from them except to them and finds no one to protect her except them.

Now, let us listen to the Imam’s lucid and sensitive words which express the spirit of *tawhid* and prayer, “So by Your Might, my Master and my Protector, I swear sincerely, if You leave me with speech, I will lament to You from the midst of the Fire’s inhabitants with the lamentation of the hopeful, I will cry to You with the cry of those crying for help, I will weep to You with the weeping of the bereft, and I will call on You: where are You, O Sponsor of the believers, O Goal of the hopes of Your knowers, O Aid of those who seek assistance, O Friend of the hearts of the sincere, and O Lord of the worlds.”

This was the first aspect of the issue. The second aspect is similar to the first one in being clear and evident with regard to the relation of Allah with His servant. The first aspect can be summed up in the relation of a servant with Allah, by his being in need of Him and taking refuge with Him, whilst the other aspect of the issue is denoted by the relation of a servant with Allah in that he seeks protection in His security, asks for His help and cries for His mercy and grace whilst he is exposed to the punishment of Allah.

Is it then possible that Allah, the Most Merciful of all merciful, hears the cry for help of a servant whose ignorance and heedlessness has driven him to the fire of hell, whilst he asks and laments for His help, calls on Him with the tongue of those who profess His Unity and beseeches Him for delivery from the Fire... but He leaves Him in the torment to be burnt by its flames, encompassed by its groaning, convulsed among its levels, and to be tortured by its keepers, while He, the Exalted, is aware of the sincerity of his love for Him, his profession of His Oneness, his taking refuge with Him, and his neediness to Him?

Listen to these words, “Can You see Yourself –glory be to You O Allah, and Your’s is the praise– hearing from within the Fire the voice of a slave surrendered to You, imprisoned there because of his violations, suffering the pangs of its torment because of his disobedience, and confined within its levels because of his sin and crime, while he laments before You with the lament of one hopeful of Your mercy, calls upon You with the tongue of those who profess Your Oneness, and entreats You by Your Lordship?

O my Protector, so how should he remain in the chastisement while he has hope for Your previous clemency? Or how should the Fire cause him pain while he expects Your bounty and mercy? Or how should its flames burn him while You hear his voice and see his place? Or how should its groaning encompass him while You know his weakness? Or how should he be convulsed among its levels while You know his sincerity?

Or how should its keepers torture him while he calls out to You, “O Lord”? Or how should he have hope of Your bounty in freeing him from it while You abandon him within it? Far be it from You! That is not what is expected of You, nor what is well-known of Your bounty, nor is it similar to the goodness and kindness You have shown to those who professed Your Oneness.”

1. Qur’an, 17:57.

2. Qur’an, 5:35.

3. Qur’an, 35:10.

4. Qur’an, 4:64.

5. Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol.4, pg. 1139, hadith no.8844.

6. ‘Uddat ud-Da’i, pg.38.

7. Qur’an, 12:26 27.

8. Qur’an, 69:30 32.

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