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Supplications of the Friends of God

One of the most important instructions of the Shaykh was planning regular periods to spend in seclusion with God for supplications and whispered prayers which he referred to as "begging at the doorstep of God" and stressed:

"Recite supplications for an hour every night; even if you are not in the right mood for it, do not give up seclusion with God."

He also said:

"There are amazing blessings in waking up at dawn and the last one third of the night. Whatever you want from God can be obtained through begging at dawns. Do not be negligent of begging at dawns; whatever blessings you achieve can be gained by that. A lover hardly goes to sleep and yearns nothing but union with the beloved. Dawn is the time of meeting and union with Him."

Any treasure of happiness that God granted to Hafiz.

Was by virtue of supplications at nights and litanies at dawns.

Supplications of the Shaykh

The reverend Shaykh would recite the following supplications very frequently and recommended his disciples to recite them too: supplications of *Yastashir*, *Adila*, *Tawassul*; whispered prayers of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) in the Masjid of Kufa which begins with, "اللهم اني أسألك الأمان يوم لا ينفع مال ولا بنون" "*Allahumma inni as 'aluka al- aman yawma la yanfa 'u malun wa la banun* (O Lord! I beseech You to bestow safety on me the day neither property nor children will be of any benefit)," as well as the fifteen whispered prayers (*Munajat Khamsa 'Ashar*) of Imam al-Sajjad (a). From among the latter, the Shaykh stressed reciting 'The Whispered Prayer of the Utterly Poor' (*Munajat al- Mufta qirin*) and especially 'The Whispered Prayer of the Devotees', (*Munajat al-Muridin*). He would say:

"Any of these fifteen *Munajats* (whispered prayers) has got its own virtues (blessing)."

His Regular Supplication

Dr. Farzam narrated that one of the Shaykh's regular supplications was the following one:

"O Lord! Teach, perfect, and train us for Thyself O Lord! O Sustainer! Prepare us for meeting with Thyself."

Thursday evenings, after prayers the reverend Shaykh would usually recite the Supplication of Kumayl or one of the above mentioned whispered prayers or supplications, and commented on them.

"Recite the Supplication of *Yastashir*!"

Ayatollah Fahri¹ quoted the reverend Shaykh as saying:

"I said to God: O God! Everybody has amorous and joyful whispering with his Beloved; I too wish to enjoy this blessing, what supplication should I read? I was told in a spiritual state to recite the supplication of *Yastashir*. "

That was why he would recite the supplication of *Yastashir* very fervently and lively.

"Find a Pretext to Seek 'Him'!"

The reverend Shaykh believed that if one has a real longing for God and is not content with other than Him, the Almighty God will eventually undertake his affairs and lead him to (sublime) destination. In this regard, the Shaykh related the following interesting example:

"A child who is quibbling and throwing around every toy or sweetie that he is given and would not stop the grudge and cry so much that finally his father embraces and caresses him; then he calms down. Thus if you do not care for the luxury of world and quibble and (this way) find a pretext to seek 'Him', the Almighty God will finally undertake your affairs and raise you up. That's when you attain the real joy."

The Value of Weeping and Whispered Prayer

The reverend Shaykh believed that a man will merit whispered prayer and dialogue with God Almighty only when he drives away the love of other than God from his heart. If a person's vain desire is his god, he cannot say "O Allah!" truthfully. He said in this regard:

"Weeping and whispered prayers are worthwhile only when man has no love other than love of God in his heart."

An instructive intuition is quoted from the shaykh which confirms the above statement

A Penny in Response to "Ya Allah!"

Ayatollah Fahri quoted the Shaykh as saying

"I was walking through the Bazaar when a beggar asked me to give him something. I reached into my pocket, to give him some money, my hand felt a two Rial coin, I pushed it aside and found a ten *shahr* coin² to give him instead. At noon I went to the mosque and said my prayers. After performing prayers, I raised my hands to pray to God, saying "O Allah!" As I uttered the phrase, I was shown (intuitively) the same two Rial coin which I left in my pocket (and held back from giving to the beggar)!"

There are some points in this intuition to be pondered about:

1 The analogy of taking one's vain desire as his god, as the Holy Qur'an clearly asserts:

(أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ)

(Then seest thou such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire?) (al-Jathiyah: 23)

2 To the same extent that man obeys his vain desire, he will be away from God; he is, rather, a slave to what he desires and thus "God" turns into a "two Rial coin" in the realm of intuition!

3. It is worthwhile to give as charity what you like best. A believer should give away in the way of his Beloved what he is fond of rather than what is of no interest to him to give away:

(لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ)

(By no means shall you attain righteousness unless you give (freely) of that which you love.) (Ale 'Imran: 92)

The Way to Proximity to God

The reverend Shaykh believed that the way to attain proximity to God is through doing benevolence to people. If a person wants to find a proper state of mind for prayer and to enjoy *dhikr* and *munajat* with God, he must be at the service of God's creatures for God's sake. He commented in this regard as follows:

"If you want to be graced with proximity to God and take pleasure in whispering prayer to Him, practice benevolence to God's creatures by learning it from the Ahl al-Bayt (a) (about whom the Holy Qur'an says):

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا إِنَّمَا نَطْعَمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

(And they feed for the sake of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive –(saying), 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: no reward do we desire from you, nor thanks.) (al-Insan: 8, 9)

He further said:

"What creates in man a spiritual state of servitude to God after performing obligatory duties is doing good to people."

What should we implore from God?

One of the most significant issues in supplication is that the supplicant should know what to say in his whispered prayer to God and what to request from Him. In his commentary on supplications, the reverend Shaykh emphasized on supplicatory phrases such as:

"يا غاية آمال العارفين" و "يا منتهى أمل الآملين" و "يا نعيمي وجنتي ويا دنياي وآخرتي"

"Ya ghayati amali'l arifin", "Ya muntaha amali'l amilin", and " Ya na 'imi wa Jannati wa Ya dunya i wa akhirati" (O Goal of the hopes of Thy knowers! O Ultimate abject of hope of the hopeful in thee! O my bliss and my garden! O my this world and my Hereafter!)"

and then would say:

Friends! Learn sagacity from your Imam (a)! See how the Imam whispers to God, saying 'I am seeking refuge in you! I have come to embrace you! I want You (I rejoice in You)!

The reverend Shaykh himself would say in his supplications and whispered prayer:

"O God! Accept these (supplications) as preliminary (means) to reunion with Thyself!"

What Does a Lover Want from the Beloved?

After quoting the above instructions from the reverend Shaykh, Dr. Hamid Farzam said: 'Sometimes the reverend Shaykh would relate simple and delicate analogies in order to explain highly mystical issues such as the following:

"A lover knocked at the door of his beloved's house. The latter asked: 'Do you want bread?'

'No.' Replied the lover.

'Do you want water?'

'No.'

'What do you want then?'

I want you! Answered the lover.

Friends! The Landlord must be loved, not His feast and food. As Sa'di said:

'If you expect benevolence from the Friend.

You are bound up in your self, not in love with the Friend.'

He would recite the above poem to us and say:

"You must be in love only with God, and whatever you do must be only for Him. Be in love with Himself; do not even worship Him for rewards!"

He would sometimes tell me in a cute tone:

"Do something that your ringlets entangle yonder (meaning to fall in love with the Eternal Beloved)!"

He would add some very befitting poems –especially from Hafiz – to his instructions that were of great effect, such as the following: 'If you wish the Beloved may not break off the union.

Keep holding on to the (love) link so that He may hold on, too.'

"Complain of being Forlorn!"

The reverend Shaykh would say: "Whenever you manage to engage in nightly begging, complain of being forlorn and implore: 'O God! I have no power to challenge the carnal soul; it has crippled me, come to my aid and deliver me from its grip! 'And (also) appeal to the Ahl al-Bayt for intercession."

And then he would recite the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:

(ان النفس لأماراة بالسوء الا ما رحم ربي)

(The (human) soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord bestow his Mercy.) (Yusuf: 53)

The Real Reason for Appealing to the Ahl al-Bayt (a)

The reverend Shaykh used to say:

"Majority of people do not know what appealing to the Ahl al-Bayt (a) is for. They appeal to the Ahl al-Bayt (a) for solving their own problems and difficulties of life,³ whereas we should go to the doorsteps of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) for traveling on the path to monotheism and the knowledge of God. This path is so difficult to pass and it is impossible for man to traverse this path without a light and guide."

The Ziyarat of 'Ashura

One of the points that the reverend Shaykh stressed about appealing to the Ahl al-Bayt (a) was recitation of ziyarat of 'Ashura and would relate accordingly:

"I was instructed in a spiritual state to recite the ziyarat of Ashura."

He recommended:

"Do not miss recitation of ziyarat Ashura as long as you are living. One of the Shaykh's disciples continued reciting ziyarat of 'Ashura for forty years on the instructions of the Shaykh.

The Condition for Getting Answers to Supplications

One of the important conditions for a supplication to be answered is the lawfulness (being *halal*) of one's food. A person asked the Holy Prophet (s): 'I would like my supplications replied'. His Holiness said:

"طهر مأكلك ولا تدخل بطنك الحرام"

"Purify your food and avoid eating *haram* (unlawful)"⁴

"First, Pay for the Salt!"

One of the Shaykh's disciples said: 'A group of us together with the Shaykh set out to go to (mount) Bibi Shahrbanu for supplication and whispered prayer. We bought some bread and cucumbers. Meanwhile, we picked some salt from the cart of the cucumber vendor (without paying for it) and then went up the mountain. When we arrived there the Shaykh said:

"Let's go down, we are rejected. They say: First pay for the salt and then come for prayer and supplication."

The Capacity of the Worshipper

One of the subtle issues for a worshipper to take into consideration is that his demands from God should be proportionate to his spiritual capacity; if he lacks the required capacity he may put himself in trouble by supplication.

One of the Shaykh's friends related: Once business happened to become sluggish and I was so upset about that. Until one day the Shaykh asked me why I was disturbed and I told him the story. He asked if I did not recite the *ta'qibat* (supplications read after obligatory prayers). I answered, yes. He asked what I read. I told him I read the supplication of Sabah of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) and he said:

"Instead of supplication of Saba, read the surah al-Hashr and the supplication of 'Adilah in your *ta'qibat* so that your problems vanish."

I asked him why I should not read Saba. He said:

"This *du'a* consists of such (heavy) statements and phrases that a person must have the capacity and capability to stand.

Imam Ali (a) beseeches the Almighty God in this *du'a*: 'O God! Grant me a pain that I do not neglect you even in those moment (of suffering the pain)¹. Thus, this *dua* demands the required capacity, and you have read it without having such capacity which has created these problems for you. So, instead of Sabah, you read the *sura* al-Hashr and *dua* Adilah; it will solve your problems God willing."

After some time that I had started to read the *sura* al-Hashr and *dua* Adilah, one of my friends lent me ten thousand *tomans*, I worked with that money, bought a house, and gradually my business improved, too.

Courtesy of the Worshipper

Dr. Farzam also said: 'One of the things that the Shaykh emphasized about supplication was the courtesy of the worshipper. Dr. Farzam quotes the Shaykh as saying in this respect:

"Once supplicating, one must be humble and fearful, and sit in a kneeled courtly position facing the *qibla*.

Once my legs were discomforted, it crossed my mind to stretch my legs. The Shaykh who was sitting behind me at the back of the room said:

"Sit aright; in supplication sit in a kneeled position and be courteous."

¹. Paramount Leader's Representative and the Friday Prayer leader of Zaynabiya in Damascus (Syria).

². A ten shahi coin is worth a quarter of a two Rial coin

³. See "How to reach the Reality of Monotheism", Chapter Two Part 3

⁴. Mizan al-Hikmah, IV, 1658: 5599.

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