

Invocation in Prayers

Previously, we have quoted on the authority of Amir al Mu'minin ('a) that *Salat* is the occasion of fulfilling the desires and achieving one's aims. The *qunoot* in *Salat* has been ordained to enable the worshipper to place his desires and needs in front of his Lord. Also, for prostration, specific supplications have been recommended. Moreover, after the prayers, great emphasis has been laid to invoke and express our needs in front of the Almighty. Imam As-Sadiq ('a) exhorts,

عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْدُعَاءِ فِي أَدْبَارِ الصَّلَاةِ. فَإِنَّهُ مُسْتَجَابٌ.

“It is obligatory for you to supplicate after Salat, for such supplications are answered.”¹

Therefore, invocation is the expression of the need and paucity of our own selves as well as of others along with the confession of the self-sufficiency, generosity, honour, grace, affection and benevolence of the Almighty. Anyone who desires something from others, turns and pays attention towards him. As he finds himself in need and impoverished, he strives to present his wants through pleas and persistence, thereby attempting to attract the attention of the invoked one. Traditions have stated that Allah loves importunity and persistence in invocations. Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a) assures,

وَاللَّهِ لَا يُلِحُّ عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي حَاجَتِهِ إِلَّا قَضَاهَا لَهُ.

“By Allah, no believer persists with Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) in his needs but that He fulfils it.”²

Imam As-Sadiq ('a) informs,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ كَرِهَ إِلْحَاحَ النَّاسِ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْمَسْأَلَةِ، وَأَحَبَّ ذَلِكَ

لِنَفْسِهِ. إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يُسْأَلَ وَيُطْلَبَ مَا عِنْدَهُ.

“Surely Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) detests that people should be importune and persistent while asking each other for some need but loves the same for Himself. Certainly Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) likes that He is asked and sought for what is with Him.”³

On the other hand, anyone who refuses to invoke Allah or express his needs before Him, subjects himself to His wrath. For, he has considered himself to be needless, great and haughty. Allah the Almighty warns,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

“Surely those who are arrogant regarding My worship (invoking Me), will soon enter hell in a degraded state.” (Qur’an, 23:60)

Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) interprets the word ‘worship’ in this verse as ‘supplication’ and then proceeds to say,

وَأَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ الدُّعَاءُ.

“And supplication is the most superior form of worship.”⁴

Hannan Bin Sudair relates from his father, who asked Imam Al-Baqir (‘a), ‘What is the best form of worship?’ Imam (‘a) replied,

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَفْضَلُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْ أَنْ يُسْأَلَ وَيُطْلَبَ مِمَّا عِنْدَهُ. وَمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبْغَضُ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِمَّنْ يَسْتَكْبِرُ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَ لَا يُسْأَلُ مَا عِنْدَهُ.

“There is nothing better near Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) than that He is asked and sought for what is with Him. And the most hateful and detestable person for Allah is he who is arrogant in His worship and does not ask Him for what is with Him.”⁵

Hence, we should not claim that Allah the Almighty knows our needs and wants and thus there is no need for us to ask Him further, if as He deems it proper, He will grant it. For, invocation and supplication is this very attention towards Allah and reaching out to His wealth, generosity, and grant.

At the same time, it is an expression of our being in His slavery and bondage and confessing to His Lordship and Mastership. And this will be the best form of Allah's worship. Therefore, we must implore and beseech Allah. Since apparent pleas without heartily attention is fruitless, we must make efforts to ask Him from the depth of our hearts, even if we don't utter our demands orally.

So, invocation is loved and desirable in all states and at all times but that invocation is more acceptable which is accompanied with its etiquette and conditions of time and place. As said earlier, one of the best times for supplications, is during prayers and after it, because it is that time when a believer rises to converse with his Lord, attains the elevated position of divine recognition and proximity, and his focus and concentration towards his Master is increased.

We hope that Allah the Almighty makes our prayers as a channel towards His nearness a means for the acceptance of our supplications and needs.

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1. Khisal, p. 488
 2. Usul al Kafi, vol. 2, p. 475
 3. Usul al Kafi, vol. 2, p. 475
 4. Usul al Kafi, vol.2, p. 466
 5. Usul al Kafi, vol. 2, p. 466

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