

The Categories of Supplicants

In this chapter, we discuss one important issue, which is the status of the supplicants.

The First Stage

A request includes only a specific desire; for instance, property, positions or knowledge. A supplicant concentrates only on his special want and sees God as a means that achieves his objective. Of course, this is an asset given by God. It embraces a servant who has not referred to others to achieve his wishes but he has turned towards God only. Imam Ali (s) in his prayer says:

إِلَهِي كُلُّ مَكْرُوبٍ إِلَيْكَ يَلْتَجِيءُ وَكُلُّ مَحْزُونٍ بِكَ إِيَّاكَ يَرْتَجِي. إِلَهِي سَمِعَ الْعَابِدُونَ
بِجَزِيلِ ثَوَابِكَ فَخَشَعُوا، وَسَمِعَ الزَّاهِدُونَ بِسَعَةِ رَحْمَتِكَ فَقَنِعُوا، وَسَمِعَ الْمُؤَلُّونَ
عَنِ الْقَصْدِ بِجُودِكَ فَارْجَعُوا، وَسَمِعَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسَعَةِ غُفْرَانِكَ فَطَمِعُوا، وَسَمِعَ
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِكَرَمِ عَفْوِكَ وَفَضْلِ عَوَارِفِكَ فَارْغَبُوا حَتَّىٰ أزدَحَمَتْ، مَوْلَايَ، بِبَابِكَ
عَصَائِبُ الْعُصَاةِ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ وَعَجَّ إِلَيْكَ مِنْهُمْ عَجِيحُ الضَّجِيحِ بِالِدُّعَاءِ فِي بِلَادِكَ
وَلِكُلِّ أَمَلٍ قَدْ سَاقَ صَاحِبُهُ إِلَيْكَ مُحْتَاجًا.

“O my Lord, every oppressed one resorts to You and every distressed one looks forward to You. O my Lord, the worshippers hear of Your great reward so they submit to You, the ascetics hear of Your great mercy so they become satisfied, the deviants hear of Your generosity so they return to You, the criminals hear of Your great forgiveness so they covet to come to You and the believers hear of Your pardon and favors so they long to You until masses of disobedient servants of Yours crowd at Your gate and they clamor invoking You in Your sanctum and every one of them has a hope leading him to You to fulfill his need.”¹

In Arafah Supplication, Imam Husayn (s) says:

اللَّهُمَّ مَا أَخَافُ فَاكْفِنِي، وَمَا أَحْذَرُ فَقِنِي، وَفِي نَفْسِي وَدِينِي فَاحْرُسْنِي، وَفِي سَفَرِي فَاحْفَظْنِي، وَفِي أَهْلِي وَمَالِي فَاخْلُفْنِي، وَفِي مَا رَزَقْتَنِي فَبَارِكْ لِي، وَفِي نَفْسِي فَذَلِّلْنِي، وَفِي أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ فَعَظِّمْنِي، وَمِنْ شَرِّ الْجِنِّ وَالْأَنْسِ فَسَلِّمْنِي، وَبِذُنُوبِي فَلَا تَفْضَحْنِي، وَبِسَرِيرَتِي فَلَا تُخْزِنِي، وَبِعَمَلِي فَلَا تَبْتَلِنِي، وَنِعْمَكَ فَلَا تَسْلُبْنِي، وَإِلَى غَيْرِكَ فَلَا تَكْلِنِي.

“O Allah, relieve me from whatever I fear, save me from whatever I dread, protect my soul and religion, take care of me in my travels, make me blessed with my family and properties, bless my livelihood, make me low before myself and honored before people, make me safe from the evils of the jinn and people, do not shame me with my sins, do not make me ashamed by disclosing my secrets, do not try me with my living affairs, do not deprive me of Your blessings and do not leave me to other than You!”
Imam as-Sajjad prays God by saying:

وَلَا تَكْلِنِي إِلَى خَلْقِكَ، بَلْ تَفَرِّدْ بِحَاجَتِي، وَتَوَلَّ كِفَايَتِي وَأَنْظُرْ إِلَيَّ وَأَنْظُرْ لِي فِي جَمِيعِ أُمُورِي.

“O my Lord, do not make me rely on Your creatures. Be the only one, Who fulfill my needs! Suffice me with all what I want! Look at me and look after all my affairs!”

One day, Imam as-Sajjad was told in Mecca that his garden in Medina had been confiscated. They told him that al-Waleed Ibn Abdul Melik, the Umayyad caliph, had come from Damascus to Mecca to offer the hajj and he might have asked for his help. Imam as-Sajjad (s) said: “Woe to you, should I ask, for help, other than God in God's House?”

إِنِّي أَنَفُ أَنْ أَسْأَلَ الدُّنْيَا خَالِقَهَا، فَكَيْفَ أَسْأَلُهَا مَخْلُوقاً مِثْلِي؟

“I even avoid asking the Creator of the world for worldly desires, then how shall I ask a creature like me for that?”²

The Second Stage

At this stage, a supplicant knows that the Almighty God likes His servants to practice supplication:

ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ.

“Call upon Me, I will answer you. 40:60”

Thus, a supplicant practices supplication just to carry out God's commands and he is to be always content with his God and he is not to care if his wishes are answered or not. Hafiz, the Iranian poet says:

*“Hafiz, it is your duty to engage in supplication,
You should not worry if it is answered or not.”*

If one's wishes are answered, it shows that God has more favors towards that one. If they are not answered, God sees that they are not appropriate for that one. Thus, an obedient servant of God obeys the command “call upon Me, I will answer you” and wishes not to be among those who are meant by the following verse:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ.

“Surely those, who are too proud for My service, shall soon enter hell abased. 40:60”

Imam As-Sajjad (s) says:

فَأَمَرْتَنَا بِذِكْرِكَ، وَهَا نَحْنُ ذَاكِرُوكَ كَمَا أَمَرْتَنَا.

“You have ordered us to invoke You, and here we invoke You as You have ordered us.”³

And in the supplication of Abu Hamzeh ath-Thumali, we read:⁴

اللَّهُمَّ وَأَنْتَ الْقَائِلُ وَقَوْلُكَ حَقٌّ وَوَعْدُكَ صِدْقٌ: “وَأَسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا”

“O Allah, You have said; –and Your saying and promise are the truth–: (**and ask Allah of His grace; surely Allah knows all things. 4:32**)”

In Kumeyl Supplication, Imam Ali (s) says:

فَإِنَّكَ قَضَيْتَ عَلَى عِبَادِكَ بِعِبَادَتِكَ وَأَمَرْتَهُمْ بِدُعَائِكَ.

“You have imposed on Your servants to worship You and You have ordered them to invoke You.”

Imam Ali (S) says:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي مَرَضَاتُهُ فِي الطَّلَبِ إِلَيْهِ وَالْتِمَاسِ مَا لَدَيْهِ وَسَخَطُهُ فِي تَرْكِ
الإلحاحِ فِي الْمَسْأَلَةِ عَلَيْهِ.

“Praise be to Allah, Whose contentment is in invoking Him and asking for what He has and Whose discontent is in not insisting on invoking Him.”⁵

The Third Stage

This is the status of those who are silent and who exemplify the following expression:

حَسْبِي مِنْ سُؤَالِي عِلْمُهُ بِحَالِي.

“I dispense with invoking Allah for it suffices me that He is aware of my state.”⁶⁵²

A supplicant sees that this is his guideline. Imam Husayn (s) says:

أُغْتَنِي بِتَدْبِيرِكَ لِي عَنْ تَدْبِيرِي وَبِاخْتِيَارِكَ عَنْ اخْتِيَارِي.

“O my Lord, Your managing my affairs suffices me rather than my management and Your choice to me is better than mine to myself.”⁷⁵³

Such a person will have no request at all and he will be content with what Allah is content with. This is the same as “the status of being content”, which is the characteristic of God's true believers. These people have excelled in servitude and have tasted being God's genuine servants and they will not compare any pleasure with being at the service of Allah. In such a status, we come across many supplications narrated from our infallible imams (s), who have given people the best kind of education. We read in the Sha'baniyyah supplication:

فَقَدْ هَرَبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَوَقَفْتُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْكَ مُسْتَكِينًا لَكَ.

“I have escaped to You. I have stopped before You submitting to You.”

Imam as-Sajjad (s) says:

إِلَهِي أَنْتَ الْفَاعِلُ لِمَا تَشَاءُ، تُعَذِّبُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ كَيْفَ تَشَاءُ وَتَرْحَمُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِمَا تَشَاءُ
كَيْفَ تَشَاءُ، لَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ فَعْلِكَ.

“O my Lord, You do whatever You like. You torture whomever You like and however You like and have mercy upon whomever You like, with whatever You like and however You like. You are not asked about whatever You do.”⁸

Imam Husayn (s) says:

إِنَّ اخْتِلَافَ تَدْبِيرِكَ وَسُرْعَةَ طَوَائِ مَقَادِيرِكَ مَنَعَا عِبَادَكَ الْعَارِفِينَ بِكَ عَنْ
السُّكُوتِ إِلَى عَطَاءٍ وَالْيَأْسِ مِنْكَ فِي بَلَاءٍ.

“The diversity of Your managements and the hastiness of Your determinations make Your knowing servants not refrain from asking for Your gift and not despair from Your mercy when afflicted with calamities.”

He also says:

كَيْفَ أَشْكُو إِلَيْكَ حَالِي وَهُوَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَيْكَ، أَمْ كَيْفَ أَتَرْحَمُ بِمَقَالِي وَهُوَ مِنْكَ، بَرَزَ
إِلَيْكَ إِلَى حُكْمِكَ النَّافِذِ وَمَشِيئَتِكَ الْقَاهِرَةِ، لَمْ يَتْرُكْ لِي مَقَالَ مَقَالًا وَلَا لِي حَالَ
حَالًا.

“How do I complain my state to You whereas it is well-known to You or how do I beseech Your mercy with my words whereas they are from You, To You and to Your inevitable verdict and mighty will. Your rule and will have left to no sayer a saying nor to a powerful one a power.”⁹

Imam Zayn al-Abidin (s) says:

وَأَلْهَمْتَنَا الْإِنْقِيَادَ لِمَا أَوْرَدْتَ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ مَشِيئَتِكَ حَتَّى لَا نُحِبَّ تَأْخِيرَ مَا عَجَّلْتَ وَلَا

تَعْجِيلَ مَا أَخَّرْتَ وَلَا نَكَرَهُ مَا أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَا نَتَّخِرَ مَا كَرِهْتَ.

“You have inspired us to submit to what You have determined by Your Will so that we do not like delaying what You have hastened or hastening what You have delayed and we do not hate what You like and we do not prefer what You hate.”¹⁰

Also, he says:

وَطَيِّبْ بِقَضَائِكَ نَفْسِي وَوَسِّعْ بِمَوَاقِعِ حُكْمِكَ صَدْرِي وَهَبْ إِلَيَّ الثِّقَّةَ لِأُقَرَّ مَعَهَا
بَأَنَّ قَضَاءَكَ لَمْ يَجْرِ إِلَّا بِالْخَيْرَةِ.

“O my Lord, delight my soul with Your judgment, please my heart with Your determination and grant me confidence in order to confess that Your judgment does not decide save what is good.”¹¹

Imam Ali (s) says: “The stage of satisfaction is the result of the stage of the true belief.” He introduces the following concept: satisfaction is the source of obedience.¹² In Sabah Supplication Imam Ali (s) says:

إِلَهِي هَذِهِ أَرْمَةٌ نَفْسِي عَقَلْتُهَا بِعِقَالِ مَشِيئَتِكَ.

“O my Lord, this is the rein of my soul. I have tied it with the hobble of Your will.”¹³

When Abraham (s) was being thrown into the fire, Gabriel asked him: “Do want me to do you anything?” He replied: “As from you, no. Allah is sufficient for me and He is the Protector.” Then Michael came and said: “If you want, I can put out the fire. The sources of waters and rains are in my hand.” But Abraham (s) replied: “No, I do not want that.” Then the Angel of the wind came and said to him: “If you like, I will fly the fire.” Abraham (s) said: “No, I do not.” Then Gabriel said to Abraham (s): “Invoke Allah.” Abraham (s) said: “It suffices me that He knows about my state.”

The Fourth Stage

This is the position of an individual who has no want or desire because he knows the secrets of the creation, the divine determination and the past and the present. This, in fact, is the position of the prophets (s) and the infallible imams (s). These sincere servants of God are so obedient to God that they can know the poison in the water they drink and realize that the dates in al-Ma'amun's court are contaminated with poison. This is because they believe in the divine destiny. They know that this destiny is not changeable; therefore, for them, the only way available is obeying God. Before his departure from

Mecca towards Karbala, Imam Husayn (s) said:

وَكَأَنِّي بِأَوْصَالِي تُقَطِّعُهَا عَسَلَانُ الْفَلَوَاتِ بَيْنَ النَّوَاوِيسِ وَكَرْبَلَاءِ.

“As if I see that the beasts of the deserts (the armies of Kuffa), in the land between Nawawis and Karbala, will cut my limbs apart.”¹⁴

Not only Imam Husayn (s), but his beloved and honorable father, Imam Ali (s), too has referred to this matter:

Nasr bin Hazim mentioned in Kitab Siffeen a tradition narrated by al-Hasan bin Katheer that his father had said: “Once Imam Ali (s) came to Kerbala and stopped there. It was said to him: “O Ameerul Mo'mineen, this is Kerbala”. He said: “It is of anguish and affliction”. Then he pointed with his hand at a place and said: “Here will be the place of their camping”¹⁵.

He pointed at another place and said: “Here their bloods will be shed”. Then he went on towards Sabat.”¹⁶

Nasr bin Hazim also mentioned in his book a tradition narrated by Harthama bin Saleem saying: “We went with Ali bin Abu Talib to fight in the battle of Siffeen. When we arrived at Kerbala, he led us in offering the prayer and when he finished the prayer, he took some soil and smelt it and then he said:

وَاهَا لَكَ أَيُّهَا التَّرْبَةُ، لِيُحْشَرَنَّ مِنْكَ قَوْمٌ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

“Ah! O you soil! Some people of you (of Karbala) will be resurrected (on the Day of Resurrection) and will enter into Paradise without being inquired.”

For this reason, even at the last stage, looking at the sky, Imam Husayn (s) said:

صَبْرًا عَلَى قَضَائِكَ يَا رَبِّ، لَا إِلَهَ سِوَاكَ يَا غِيَاثَ الْمُسْتَغِيثِينَ.

“We are patient before the fate You have determined O our Lord! There is no god save You, O You, the relief of the yearners!”¹⁷

The Fifth Stage

This is the stage in which a believer asks God due to faith only. Fatima az-Zahra (s) invokes Allah just before the last moments of her pure life by saying: “O my Lord, I have no one save You to relieve my heart, comfort my soul, delight my eyes, gladden my face, brighten my features and to ease all my self.” In the Arafah Supplication, we read as well:

مِنْكَ أَطْلُبُ الْوُصُولَ إِلَيْكَ.

“I ask You to let me get to You!”
We also observe the expression:

أَنْتَ غَايَةُ مَطْلُوبِي وَمُنَايَ.

“You are the end of my hopes and wishes.”
Imam Ali (s) invokes Allah by saying:

إِلَهِي مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي ذَاقَ حَلَاوَةَ مَحَبَّتِكَ فَرَامَ مِنْكَ بَدَلًا! وَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي أَنْسَ بِقُرْبِكَ
فَابْتَغَى عَنْكَ حَوْلًا!

“O my Lord, would he, who tasted the sweet of Your love, think to resort to other than You? And would he, who became pleased near You, ever try to turn away from You?”
Also he said:

إِلَهِي فَاسْأَلْ بِنَا سُبُلَ الْوُصُولِ إِلَيْكَ وَسَيِّرْنَا فِي أَقْرَبِ الطَّرِيقِ لِلْوُفُودِ عَلَيْكَ.

“O my Lord, guide us to the paths that get us to You and make us walk in the nearest ways that take us to you.”

وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنْ صَفْوَتِكَ الَّذِينَ أَقْرَرْتَ أَعْيُنَهُمْ بِالنَّظَرِ إِلَيْكَ يَوْمَ لِقَائِكَ.

“Make me among Your choice, whom You will delight their eyes by letting them look at You on the day of the meeting with You.”

Imam Husayn (s) invokes Allah by saying:

أَطْلُبُنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ حَتَّى أَصِلَ إِلَيْكَ.

“O my Lord, grant me Your mercy so that I can get to You.”

Imam Ali (s) prays Allah by saying:

وَأَسْتَشْفَعُ بِكَ إِلَى نَفْسِكَ... وَهَبْ لِي الْجِدَّ فِي خَشْيَتِكَ وَالِدَوَامَ فِي الْإِتِّصَالِ
بِخِدْمَتِكَ... وَأَدْنُو مِنْكَ دُنُو الْمُخْلِصِينَ وَأَجْتَمِعَ فِي جِوَارِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

“I intercede with You by You O my Lord, grant me to be serious in fearing You and in keeping on serving You... to be close to You as the closeness of the sincere ones and to be near You with the believers.”

The Sixth Stage

This is the position of an individual whose request “I invoke You to let me get to You” has been accepted and has reached such a state in which “no body thinks to ask for such a position.” In *Al-Ziyarah Al-Jami'ah*, we read:

فَبَلَّغَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ أَشْرَفَ مَحَلِّ الْمُكْرَمِينَ وَأَعْلَى مَنَازِلِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ وَأَرْفَعَ دَرَجَاتِ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ حَيْثُ لَا يَلْحَقُهُ لَاحِقٌ وَلَا يَفُوقُهُ فَائِقٌ وَلَا يَسْبِقُهُ سَابِقٌ وَلَا يَطْمَعُ فِي
إِدْرَاكِهِ طَامِعٌ حَتَّى لَا يَبْقَى مَلَكٌ مُقَرَّبٌ وَلَا نَبِيٌّ مُرْسَلٌ وَلَا صِدِّيقٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَلَا
عَالِمٌ وَلَا جَاهِلٌ إِلَّا عَرَفَهُمْ جَلَالَةَ أَمْرِكُمْ.

“Allah has granted you with the most honored position, the highest rank of the closest ones (to Allah) and the highest positions of the prophets that no one reaches, exceeds, precedes or ever thinks to get. There is no angel, prophet, truthful one, martyr, learned or unlearned man unless Allah has made them know your loftiness.”

And this is special to the infallible imams (s). Allamah Tabatabai has a significant and delicate elegy which begins with the following line:

*From the day I was born,
I have been bereaved and enamored.*

In this elegy, he depicts the midnight at a garden in such a way that the human soul soars high in the skies. He has seen candles and butterflies intimate with flowers and nightingales and he has written:

*The butterfly's world was all secrets,
The nightingale's world was all songs;
The morning bird put forth all its secrets,
In its songs like a raptured reed.*

At this juncture, the nightingale makes a protest against the silent butterfly saying:

*Indeed you are an ecstasized lover,
Why on earth are you so perplexed?
You should either forget the beloved ones,
Or you should forget your soul and heart;
You should either forget the treasure,
Or forget the pains you suffered.*

And finally the butterfly reaches a point where:

*When the butterfly heard this advice,
It became so enchanted as to forget its very being;
It entered the fire and was silent,
It passed away, being forgotten for ever.*

A Point To Be Noticed

The delicate point to be observed in the supplications of the infallible imams (s) is that they have left for the believers an ocean of knowledge from which each individual takes according to his capability. These beloved ones have instructed us to take our wants and desires, either small or big, from our God. The secret behind this issue is that these honorable ones have established a school, which instructs everybody. These scholars have opened up the doors of prosperity to every body. Thus, in supplication a special aptitude is not required.

The educational school of supplication is different from other schools that everybody can take in it freely and everybody can benefit from it in accordance with his specific taste. In other words, the inclusive nature of the knowledge of the infallible imams (s) makes their knowledge so pervasive that everybody can enjoy it anywhere in the world and is not specific for a location; it is in accordance with:

يَا مَنْ دَنَا فِي عُلُوِّهِ وَيَا مَنْ عَلَا فِي دُنُوِّهِ.

“O You, Who are near although You are so high and high even in Your nearness.”

And this delicate issue can be found only in the school of supplication, and not in other educational schools. In those schools it is compulsory to know that philosophy is prior to Gnostics, to know that logic is prior to the study of philosophy and to know that sciences are prior to the study of philosophy. In the educational schools of supplication such requirements are not needed. Everybody is sitting around the table of the divine assets to get his share.

The Third Constituent: God, Whom we ask for a favor

Knowledge

Knowing God has effects on the believers, who take part in supplication. This knowledge influences the hastiness of the acceptance of supplication by Allah. This knowledge also has effects on the quality and quantity of supplication, on selecting the wording and their annunciation. Concerning this subject, Imam al-Kadhim (s) said when some people had asked him that why they invoked Allah but He did not respond to them: “Because you invoke the One, whom you do not know.”¹⁸

Some people said to Imam as-Sadiq (s): “We invoke God, but our supplication is not responded to. Imam as-Sadiq (s) said:

لَأَنَّكُمْ تَدْعُونَ مَنْ لَا تَعْرِفُونَهُ.

“You invoke One, whom you do not recognize.”

Knowing God makes a supplicant so enchanted that he forgets his wish and gets absorbed in the supplication itself. Here the attention towards supplication becomes the focal point. The love towards God draws us to supplication. The supplicant under these circumstances does not wish for disconnection with God. The Prophet (s) has said concerning this matter:

أَفْضَلُ النَّاسِ مَنْ عَشِقَ الْعِبَادَةَ فَعَانَقَهَا بِنَفْسِهِ وَيَاشَرَهَا بِجَسَدِهِ وَتَضَرَّعَ لَهَا فَهُوَ لَا يُبَالِي عَلَى مَا أَصْبَحَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَيَّ عُسْرًا أَوْ يُسْرًا.

“The best of people is he, who loves worship and embraced it and undertakes it wholeheartedly and does not care whether his life is easy or troubled.”¹⁹

Ma'ath ibn Jabal narrated that the Prophet (s) had said:

لَوْ عَرَفْتُمْ اللَّهَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِهِ لَزَالَتْ لِذُعَائِكُمُ الْجِبَالُ.

“If you know Allah as He is, you will move the mountains with your supplication.”

Under this tradition, Allamah Tabataba'i says:

The secret of this problem lies in the fact that the ignorance of God's kingdom gradually brings about this illusion that the means are effective and that each effect is based on a predetermined cause. Sometimes man believes that these causes are definite and nothing can replace them. For instance, we see that movement and speed take us to our destination. But if our knowledge in monotheism develops, we will lose this belief and will consider movement, not as an independent factor; rather we will consider Allah as the effective Mover and movement as intermediary.

As a summary, we believe that the effects follow their means and stimuli closely even if the stimuli do not act independently. The genuine effects are caused by the Great Causer and the means and stimuli are intermediary. We should reach such a degree of recognition that we could put the events in their real positions. As a result man should observe the Qur'anic etiquette; i.e. he should never assume that the effects are independent; he should know that all the creatures are created. He should not forget the intermediary status of the superficial means and stimuli. He should, as well, be aware that Allah had created the world on the principle of cause and effect.

Here we will present some evidences from the verses of the Qur'an and from some supplications on monotheism. In the Holy Qur'an, we read:

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ.

“And say: All praise is due to Allah, Who has not taken a son and Who has no partner in the kingdom. 17:111”

ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ.

“That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything. 40:62”

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا لَهَا مِنْ فُرُوجٍ. وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ . تَبْصِرَةٌ وَذِكْرَى لِكُلِّ

عَبْدٌ مُنِيبٌ. وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ.
وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ. رِزْقًا لِلْعِبَادِ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتًا كَذَلِكَ الْخُرُوجُ.

Do they not then look up to the Heaven above them now We have made it and adorned it and it has no gaps? And the earth, we have made it plain and cast in it mountains and we have made to grow therein of all beautiful kinds; to give sight and as a reminder to every servant who turns frequently to Allah; and we send down from the cloud water abounding in good, then we cause to grow thereby gardens and the grain that is reaped; And the tall palm-trees having spadices closely set one above another; a sustenance for the servants, and we give life thereby to a dead land; thus is the rising. 50:6-11”

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ.

And you do not please except that Allah pleases. 76:30”

Monotheism is the most observable issue in the supplications of the infallible imams (s). Imam Ali (s) says:

وَبِأَسْمَائِكَ الَّتِي مَلَأْتَ أَرْكَانَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ.

“I beg you with Your attributes that have occupied everything.”

Imam as-Sajjad (s) says:

بِيَدِكَ لَا بِيَدِ غَيْرِكَ زِيَادَتِي وَنَقْصِي وَنَفْعِي وَضَرِّي.

“It is in Your hands, and not in the hands of anyone else, every abundance, every defect, every benefit and every harm of mine.”

Thus, the etiquette in worshipping, especially at the time of the involvement in supplication, forces us to turn and to rely on God only and to forget anything except God. This principle is of utmost importance because if we rely only on God and think about nothing else, then we will worship with all our bodies and souls. The Prophet (s) has said:

يَقُولُ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ: أَنَا خَيْرُ شَرِيكَ. مَنْ أَشْرَكَ مَعِيَ شَرِيكًا مِنْ عَمَلِهِ فَهُوَ لِشَرِيكِي
دُونِي لِأَنِّي لَا أَقْبَلُ إِلَّا مَا أُخْلِصَ لِي.

“The Almighty God says: I am the best partner. He, who offers some of his doings to a partner other than Me, I will leave him to My partner because I do not accept save what is offered sincerely to Me.”2066

The Almighty God does not like His servants to recognize any partner with Him. He considers this act as a great defect. The following holy verse refers to this kind of association:

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ.

“And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others with Him. 12: 106”

The following holy verse teaches us to set aside the concept of any partnership with God so that our sincere supplications may save us from great calamities:

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ.

“He is the Living, there is no god but He, therefore call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience. 40:65”

It is reported that among the issues which Allah has revealed to Jesus Christ (s) is the following:

يَا عِيسَى، ادْعُنِي دُعَاءَ الْغَرِيقِ الْحَزِينِ الَّذِي لَيْسَ لَهُ مُغِيثٌ. أَذِلَّ لِي قَلْبَكَ وَأَكْثِرْ
ذِكْرِي فِي الْخَلَوَاتِ.

“O Jesus! Call on Me like a depressed drowning person who has no rescuer. Make your heart yield to Me and remember me in privacy.”21

The Almighty God mentions in the Qur'an the story of Prophet Yonus (Jonah) and his sincere prayer at the time of depression:

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ. فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

“And Yunus, when he went away in wrath, so he thought that we would not straiten him, so he called out among darkness: There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee; surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss. So We responded to him and delivered him from the grief, and thus do We deliver the believers. 21:87-88”

This verse describes the horrible event that has happened to Prophet Yonus (s) who was in the darkness, inside the whale's stomach, deep in the sea. He was prisoned there and he was hopeless. He knew that God was the only One, who could rescue him. He invoked Allah by saying: “There is no god but You.” He begged Allah after confessing his defect.

Allah replied:

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ. لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ.

“But had it not been that he was of those who glorify us; He would certainly have tarried in its belly to the day when they are resurrected. 37: 143-144”

It is indeed correct to say that the sincerely-uttered supplication saves man from dangerous afflictions. This means where wealth, power, intellect and wisdom are important, a mid-night worship gets us free of all calamities on condition that we recognize our beloved God, love Him and ascribe all powers to Him.

Sincerity of Supplication

In *Uddat al-Da'ee* there is a tradition narrated by Muhammad bin Ajlan from Muhammad bin Ubaydillah bin Ali bin al-Husayn from his cousin from Imam as-Sadiq (s) from his fathers that the Prophet (s) had said: Allah the Almighty, revealed to one of His prophets concerning his guardians:

وَعِزَّتِي وَجَلَالِي لِأَقْطَعَنَّ أَمَلَ كُلِّ أَمَلٍ غَيْرِي بِالْيَأْسِ وَالْأَكْسُوْنَةِ ثَوْبَ الذَّلَّةِ فِي النَّاسِ وَالْأُبْعَدَنَّهُ مِنْ فَرْجِي وَفَضْلِي؛ أَيَأْمَلُ عَبْدِي فِي الشَّدَائِدِ غَيْرِي وَالشَّدَائِدُ بِيَدِي؟ وَيَرْجُو سِوَايَ وَأَنَا الْغَنِيُّ الْجَوَادُ بِيَدِي مَفَاتِيحُ الْأَبْوَابِ وَهِيَ مُغْلَقَةٌ وَبَابِي مَفْتُوحٌ لِمَنْ دَعَانِي.

I swear by My magnanimity and Honor that I will cut the desire and wish of anyone, who relies on other than Me and will dress him in the dress of ignominy among people and I will deprive him of My favors. Does my servant rely on other than Me during afflictions whereas the afflictions are in My hands? Does he expect other than Me while I am the Self-sufficient, the Praised? I have the keys of the gates, which are closed, whereas My gate is open to everyone, who calls upon Me.

The Prophet (s) said that Allah the Almighty says:

مَا مِنْ مَخْلُوقٍ يَعْتَصِمُ بِمَخْلُوقٍ دُونِي إِلَّا قَطَعْتُ أَسْبَابَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَأَسْبَابَ
الْأَرْضِ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي لَمْ أُعْطِهِ وَإِنْ دَعَانِي لَمْ أُجِبْهُ، وَمَا مِنْ مَخْلُوقٍ
يَعْتَصِمُ بِي دُونَ خَلْقِي إِلَّا ضَمِنْتُ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ رِزْقَهُ، فَإِنْ دَعَانِي أُجِبْتُهُ
وَإِنْ سَأَلَنِي أُعْطِيْتُهُ وَإِنْ اسْتَعْفَرَنِي غَفَرْتُ لَهُ.

If a creature resorts to another creature instead of Me, I will deprive him of the means of the heavens and the earth. If he asks Me for something, I will not give him and if he invokes Me, I will not respond to him. But if a creature resorts to Me rather than any of My creatures, the heavens and earth will insure his livelihood. If he calls upon Me, I will respond to him, if he asks Me for anything I will give him and if he asks Me to forgive him, I will forgive him.”²²

In *Tafseer Al-Mizan*, after mentioning the following two traditions, which talk about depriving one, who resorts to any other creature rather than Allah, of all means of prosperity, we read:

What we understand from these two traditions is that supplication should be uttered sincerely and should not negate the Great Cause behind all causes. This is because everybody knows that there are causes and effects in this world but the Great Cause is behind the all. These causes are not independent of the Great Cause, however.

To explain the above issue, we should add that man, through his inner nature, knows that for his wants there is a Giver, whose actions are under His control, and is aware, as well, that the superficial stimuli and means to which he resorts are not absolute.

Therefore, man recognizes that the origin, in which all the control rests and the pillar, on which he depends to satisfy his desires, are something different from these superficial means. It is compulsory for man not to depend entirely on these means and not to forget the existence of the Absolute Cause.

Man, with the slightest attention, will comprehend this issue. Now if he asks for something and his needs are satisfied, he will find out that his asking is really addressed to God. Here the Cause is God. Now suppose he asked the same thing from some other cause, he should know that this cause can not satisfy his needs. In this case a wrong assumption has made him assume the wrong giver as the real Giver. In this case we see that man's inner nature is different from his apparent one.

A good example on this case is when a person loves something and tries hard to get it. But then he realizes that what he has got is a hindrance on the way of his other benefits which are more significant and dearer to him. Now he has to put it aside and goes to the dearer one. The opposite is also true. He might abhor something and escapes it to secure his other benefits but accidentally he comes across it and finds out that it is even more profitable than the other things.

A sick child refuses to have the bitter medicine although he wants to recover his health soon. This child, through his intelligence, asks for his health, using his nature tongue, despite the fact that he asks for its opposite through his mouth's tongue and his actions.

Thus man has two systems: one is his innate nature and his innate intelligence, the other system is his imagination. His innate nature guards him against errors. But his imagination and assumption puts him in the wrong way. It very often happens that man asks for something on the basis of imagination, but he does not understand that, through this asking, he indeed is asking for the opposite thing.

The author of *Uddat al-Da'ee* reports from the Prophet (s) his saying:

إِدْعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَنْتُمْ مُوقِنُونَ بِالْإِجَابَةِ.

“Invoke Allah while being sure of His response.”

In this expression, this scholar refers to one of the secrets of God. He explains:

- Sincerity in supplication should be observed: we should be aware that the Absolute Cause is God. Therefore we should not associate Him with anyone else.
- Sincerity is the absolute attention to the Real Cause: therefore, associating anybody with Allah is something impermissible. If we see that our want is satisfied, we should know that we have resorted to God. Then, the meaning of that heavenly tradition becomes clear. It declares: “If one resorts to somebody other than Me, My favors would not reach him.” Therefore, in those situations when the causes have satisfied one's needs, it is due to God. Sometimes a man does not superficially recognize God, but his inner nature is familiar with God.

But sometimes this drowsy nature is awakened through man's knowing inner-being. A good proof is the holy verse:

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ.

“So when they ride in the ships they call upon Allah, being sincerely obedient to Him, but when He brings them safe to the land, they associate others (with Him). 29:65”

The strange thing is that man has not previously believed in God, but now he sincerely calls upon Him.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتَكُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ.

“Say: Tell me if the chastisement of Allah should overtake you or the hour should come upon you, will you call on others besides Allah? 6:40”

قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَئِنْ أَنْجَانَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ قُلْ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ.

“Say: Who is that delivers you from the dangers of the land and the sea when you call upon Him openly humiliating yourselves, and in secret: If He delivers us from this, we should certainly be of the grateful ones. Say: It is Allah that delivereth you from these and all (other) distresses: and yet ye worship false gods! 6:63-64”

- With a little attention we would come to the conclusion that we should not pay whole attention to these destructible means and we should be aware that the Great Cause is somewhere else.
- Cause and effectiveness of the creatures are not deniable, but the thing we should be aware of is the fact that none of the creatures are independent of this effectiveness; rather, they are intermediary means, which are established by God, between He Himself and other creatures and their effect over one another is in accordance with the system of the creation.
- We should recognize that most of the strength of the effective factors are neuter by nature and we should not depend on their results. This is because there are numerous unrecognized agents. Sometimes these agents have acted inversely. For instance, some factors were previously reckoned as good but turned out to be pernicious. Imam Ali (s) says:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ؛ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ لَاقٍ مَا يَفِرُّ مِنْهُ فِي فَرَارِهِ. الْأَجَلُ مُسَاقُ النَّفْسِ وَالْهَرَبُ مِنْهُ مُوَافَاتُهُ.

“O people, every one will meet what he escapes from. The fate (death) is the destination of the soul.

Escaping from it will lead to it.”²³

Thus each organism will go on the path, which the creation system has predetermined for. But our understanding of the general system of cause and effect is in fact in accordance with our mental capability. This is confirmed in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا.

“And you are not given aught of knowledge but a little. 17:85”

Imam Ali (s) once was asked: “How have you recognized your god?” He answered:

بِفَسْخِ الْعَزَائِمِ وَنَقْضِ الْهَمَمِ، لَمَّا هَمَمْتُ فَحِيلَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ هَمِّي وَعَزَمْتُ فَخَالَفَ
الْقَضَاءُ عَزْمِي عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ الْمُدَبِّرَ غَيْرِي.

“I recognized God through revoking the determinations and breaking the intentions. When I determined and I was prevented from achieving my determination and I intended and the fate contradicted my intention, I realized that the administrator was other than me.”²⁴

Although everybody tries to explain the relation between the “cause and effect” and frantically attempts to bring the events to fruiting, it will not be easy to recognize these relations entirely. The poet says:

*“When the cloud becomes dry after pouring all its water,
Then you can not call it as water-giver;
The nature which is not given life,
How can it be a life-giver?”*

Of course, it should be noted that Allah has put the world of causes in contrast with the world of effects, in such a way that each one modifies the other. Thus, we read in the Qur'an:

وَالسَّابِحَاتِ سَبْحًا. فَالسَّابِقَاتِ سَبْقًا. فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا.

“[I swear] by those who float in space, then those who are foremost going ahead, then those who regulate the affair. 79:3-5”

This is interpreted to mean that those angels, who speed up and excel the others, are the true managers and they will dominate the others.²⁵

- It is frequently observed that there is an indestructible, imperishable and absolute cause at work, which if being asked will answer our needs. This Absolute Cause does not falter and its effect is inevitable.
- The human nature has recognized this Absolute Cause and has known that it is always at work. The common sense, too, will accept this. But sometimes our imaginations force us to adopt the pseudo-cause for the real-cause and we like our wishes to come true through these unrealistic means. Such cases are usually void of common sense and the innate intelligence has rejected them.

Here the imaginative factors have led the way. It often happens that our inner being asks God for something, but our imagination asks for something else. This is like the sick person, whose inner being (his nature) asks for health and wishes for medicine, but his imaginative system forces him to escape taking the medicine. It also happens that an individual asks for the negative side of something and escapes the positive side of it; but when it becomes clear to him that what he has been escaping from has been more profitable than what he has wished to keep.

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1. Al-Balad al-Amin, p. 313, Imam Ali's Private Prayer.
 2. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 46, p. 64.
 3. The 15 Munajat; Munajat al-Dhakirin.
 4. Al-Balad Al-Amin, p. 205.
 5. Al-Balad al-Amin, p. 127; Al-Sahifah al-Alawiyah, p. 634.
 6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 155.
 7. Al-Munajat al-Sha'baniyyah.
 8. Supplication of Abu Hamzeh ath-Thmali.
 9. Arafah Supplication by Imam Husayn.
 10. Al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah, Supplication 33.
 11. Al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah, supplication 35.
 12. Ghurar al-Hikam.
 13. Imam Ali's supplication of Sabah.
 14. Al-Lahuf, p. 53.
 15. He means Imam Husayn and his companions on the day of Aashura.
 16. Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 3, p. 171.
 17. Maqatal Al-Husayn, p. 283.
 18. Al-Tawhid by Shaykh Saduq, p. 288.
 19. Varram collection, vol. 2, p. 36.
 20. Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 304.
 21. Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 304.
 22. Uddat al-Da'ee, p. 136.
 23. Nahj al-Balaghah, Sobhi Saleh, Sermon 149.
 24. Shaykh Saduq: Al-Tawhid, p. 288, Faydh: Ilm al-Yaqin, vol. 1, p. 23, Faydh al-Islam: Nahj al-Balaghah, Maxim No. 242, p. 1196.
 25. For further explanation, refer to Al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 182.

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