

Concepts of Du'aa

Guidance from the Qur'an, the Hadith and the Imams A.S.

Objectives: Dua is an important part of our faith and belief. It is a higher form of worship that Allah loves. It is a means of keeping in touch with the Creator, and draws the supplicant closer to the Almighty. It causes increase in bounties and helps remove pain and suffering. There are many ways that people make Dua. This article presents information from the Qur'an, the Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&p), and from the teachings and Duas of the infallible Imams. It is hoped that the reader will find the material helpful in communicating with the Lord, the Exalted, the most High.

What is Dua? Literally, the word Dua means, "to call upon." In Islam Dua or supplication means to address Allah swt with praise, thanksgiving, hope, and to mention one's needs. In English, it is also referred to as "Prayer."

Importance of making Dua. In Islam Dua has a very special place. Allah swt has commanded in Qur'an that we make Dua to Him. Those who are too proud to make Dua, Allah swt says that they will be punished.

It has been related from the sources of the Imams that Dua can change fate. One should not say, "This can not happen." Nothing is beyond the reach and the power of Allah swt. He is most generous and full of mercy.

Forms of Dua: Dua in one's own words, depending upon need or situation. It may be very spontaneous or may be well thought over. It may be based upon verses of Qur'an. Qur'an has many Duas. Some Dua formulas are from Allah swt to humankind addressed directly, and others are the Duas taught to the prophets of the old. It may have come to us from the Prophet Muhammad pbuh & his progeny or from the Imams.

Psychological and spiritual benefits of making Dua.

- It increases the faith of the supplicant, who acknowledges the fact that Allah swt is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and He is the ultimate recourse.
- It gives hope and the strength to the distressed soul, and saves from despair.
- It brings the supplicant closer to the Creator, strengthening the bond between them.
- It increases humility, which in turn increases piety.
- It curbs ego and vanity.

Etiquette for making Dua. Just like when we speak to a dignitary, or head of a state, we use certain language; follow the protocol to get proper attention and response. Similarly, there are formulas and language taught by the Qur'an, the Prophet Pbu & his progeny, and the Imams to make Dua.

Guidance from the Qur'an: Allah swt says in the Qur'an:

"Thee alone we worship and Thee alone we ask for help."
(S.1)

"And your Lord says: Call on Me; I will answer your (prayer). But those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell-in humiliation."
(S. 40: 6)

“Say; O My servants who have transgressed against their souls; despair not of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins; for He is oft Forgiving, most Merciful.”

(S.39: 53)

Say: “Call upon Allah, or call upon Rahman: By whatever name you call upon Him, (it is well): For to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names”.

(S.17: 110)

“And when My servants ask Thee (O’ Prophet) about Me, then verily I am near, I answer the prayer (Dua) of the supplicant when he beseeches unto Me. So let them hear My call, and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright.”

(S. 2: 186)

“Call on your Lord with humility and in private; for Allah loves not those who trespass beyond bounds, and

those whom you call upon other than Him are not able to help you, nor can they help themselves.”

(S. 7:197)

Say: “Call on those, besides Him, whom you fancy. They neither have the power to remove your troubles nor to change them. Those whom they call upon (besides Allah) desire (themselves) means of access to their Lord; Even those who are nearest:”

(S 17: 56, 57)

“Call you not (any one) besides Allah, that neither profits you nor harms you...”

(S. 10: 106)

“For Him (alone) is prayer in truth: Any others that they call upon besides Him hear them no more than if they were to stretch forth their hands for water to reach their mouths, but it reaches them not:”

(S. 13: 14)

Guidance from Hadith and Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny)

Supplication is the essence of worship. (Tirmidhi)

When one of you supplicates, he should not say, “O’ Allah, forgive me if You will,” but be firm in asking and make the desire great, for what Allah gives is nothing great for Him. (Muslim)

Each of you should ask your Lord for all your needs; You should even ask Him for “the thong of the Sandal” when it breaks.

The Hadith that have come through the sources of Imams: (Reported by William Chittick in the introduction to Sahifa-e-Sajjadia).

It has been reported that the prophet (pbuh&p) related that Allah swt says:

“O My servants, all of you are misguided except him whom I guide, so ask Me for guidance, and I will guide you. All of you are poor except whom I enrich, so ask Me for riches, and I will provide for you. All of you are sinners except him whom I release, so ask Me to forgive you, and I will forgive you.”

The prophet (pbuh & his progeny) said:

“Supplication is the weapon of the man of faith, the centre-pole (essence) of the religion, and the light of the heavens and the earth.”

Guidance from the Imams:

Ali A.S. in the Book “Nahjul-Balagha”: Excerpts from Hadrath Ali’s advice to his son Hasan A.S. in the form of Will: (Letter No. 31 in Nahjul Balagha).

“Trust in Allah and let your mind seek His protection in every calamity and suffering; because you will thus entrust yourself and your affairs to the Best Trustee and the Mightiest Guardian.

Do not seek help and protection from any body except from Allah. Reserve your prayers, your requests, your solicitations, your supplications and your entreaties to Him and Him alone. "Therefore the best thing for you to do is to seek guidance of the one who has created you, Who maintains and nourishes you, Who has given you a balanced mind and normally working body.

Your prayers should be reserved for Him only, your requests and solicitations should be to Him alone. You should be afraid of Him and no body else. You beg of Him to grant you your heart's desires; you lay before him the secrets of your heart; you tell him about all the calamities that have befallen you and misfortunes that face you, and beseech His help to overcome them.

Think over it that by simply granting you the privilege of praying for His favors and Mercies, He has handed over the keys of His Treasures to you. Whenever you are in need, you pray and He confers His favors and Blessings."

"He has not required you to get a mediator for you to Him and if you err, He has not prevented you from repentance."

"Therefore, whenever you wish, open the doors of His favor with prayer (Dua) and let the abundant rains of His mercy fall upon you."

"A little received directly from Allah the Glorified is more dignified than more that is received through (the obligation of) His creatures, although (really) all is from Allah"

Dua al Kumayl: Here Hadrath Ali teaches us how to beseech Allah swt. Excerpts are given below:

"Oh Allah, I ask Thee by Thy mercy ..." "I seek intercession from Thee with Thyself "My Allah and my Lord! Have I any but Thee from whom to ask for removal of my affliction and regard for my affairs?"

"And towards Thee my Lord, I have extended my hand..." "Bless Muhammad and Muhammad's household, and do with me what is worthy of Thee!"

"My Allah, do You see that I have come to You from the direction of hopes ..." "I have knocked upon the door of Your mercy with hand of my hope." "O the best of those who is called to remove affliction and object of hope in every difficulty and ease!" "Bless Muhammad and his household, the God-fearing, answer my supplication, hear my call..." "By Thy Mercy, O most Merciful of the Merciful! And Allah, bless the best of His creatures, Muhammad and his household."

Dua Al Mashloul:

"Oh He Who answers all supplications! Oh, He Who bestows requests! Oh, He Who fulfills all entreaties! Oh He Who provides all needs!" "I ask Thee with every asking ..." "I ask Thee with every name with which Thou has named Thyself ..." "And I ask Thee by the Names most beautiful that Thou hast described in Thy Book, ..." "And I ask Thee my God, I call Thee my Lord, I have hope in Thee my Master, ..." "For I have called Thee just as Thou has commanded me."

Duas of Imam Zainul Abedin AS. (Sahifa-e-Sajjadia) This Imam is most notable for his beautiful worded supplications, which were collected by his disciple in his very presence and are available in book form titled "Sahifa-e-Sajjadia, also known as Sahifa-e-Kamilah."

In his Dua for Wednesday, the Imam A.S. says:

"Therefore bless Muhammad, the last prophet, and the members of his house, the pure, the holy, and let me have the intercession of Muhammad, (may thy favor be on him and his progeny), and do not deprive me of his company; verily, verily Thou art the most Merciful."

In the "Thursday Dua" the Imam prays:

“O Lord! Bless Muhammad and his Aal (progeny), and let my adherence to him be an effectual intercession on the Day of judgment. Verily Thou art the most Merciful.”

In “Dua Makaram al Akhlaq”, the Imam A.S. prays:

“O Allah, make me leap to Thee in times of distress, ask from Thee in needs, and plead to Thee in misery! Tempt me not to seek help from other than Thee when I am distressed, to humble myself in asking from someone else when I am poor, or to plead with someone less than Thee when I fear; For then I would deserve Thy abandonment, Thy withholding”

Imam Al Baqir A.S.

It is been related through Imam Al Baqir A.S. that Dua itself is one of the best forms of devotion to Allah, and no devotion will be left without reward. He said that there is nothing more loved by Allah than a person's asking and beseeching Him for His bounties, and there is nothing which is more disliked by Allah than if one refrains from such devotion and does not beseech for His bounties. (Commentary by S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali in “The Holy Qur’an.”)

Imam Al Mahdi AS.

Dua Al-Iftitah. This Dua is recited during Ramadan. It is ascribed to our twelfth Imam. AS. The Dua ends in this manner:

“O Allah, we complain to You Of the absence of our Prophet, Your blessings be on him and his family, and the concealment of our Leader. Help us overcome (adversities) by granting us immediate victory, by Your mercy O’ most Merciful.”

Two important benefits of making Dua:

1. Fulfillment of the immediate needs and removal of distress.
2. It is a higher (*Afzal*) form of worship.

The latter may not get due attention or may be overlooked altogether. It is more important, because it brings the supplicant closer to Allah. It strengthens the bond between the supplicant and the Beneficent Lord. The benefits go way beyond the fulfillment of the immediate worldly need. The benefits will be realized not only in this life, but one may realize everlasting benefits in the life in the Hereafter.

If the approach is correct then, one may receive both the benefits by addressing Allah swt in the proper manner.

Dua and invoking intercession (Waseelah) of Ahlal Bayt:

Intercession does not necessarily mean addressing any one other than Allah swt. Below are some suggestions on making Dua to Allah swt and seeking intercession of the fourteen infallibles:

- “O Allah, grant my need for the sake of Muhammad and his Aal (Ahlal Bayt, Imams, Masumeen, Imam Al-Asr, i.e. Mahdi A.S.)”
- “O Allah, grant my need for the rights that Muhammad and Aale Muhammad have on You.”
- “O Allah, grant my need for the love You have for Muhammad and his Aal.”
- “O Allah, grant my need for the love that Muhammad and his Aal have for You.”
- “O Allah, grant my need for the love I have for Muhammad and his Aal.”

In Conclusion: The guidance from the Qur’an, the Prophet and the Imams (peace be upon them all) about making Dua can be summarized as follows:

- Address Allah swt directly and mention your needs, difficulties and distresses.
- Praise and glorify Allah before making the Dua. Seek His nearness and good pleasure and remember that making Dua is also an act of worship.
- Before and after making Dua, send peace and blessings on the Prophet and his pure progeny (the 14 masumeen and Al Mahdi A.S., the Imam of our time) peace be upon them all.

References: 1. Al Qur'an (Allama Yusuf Ali's translation) 2. The Holy Qur'an by S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali. 3. Nahjul Balagha, Syed Askari Jafery's translation 4. Sahifa-e-Sajjadia (William Chittick's translation) 5. Sahifa-e-Kamilah (Mufti Jafar Hussain's commentary in Urdu) 6. The Prayer's Almanac (Mafaatih'Al Jinaan)

(The End)

Syed Hasan Akhtar. Austin, Texas
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