

Du'a – Its Excellence, Benefits and Etiquettes

Allah (SWT) describes the very purpose of our existence in the Quran as 'uboodiyyah: 51-Adh-Dhariat

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (٥٦)

I have only created jinn and men that they may worship me.

The term 'ibadah is very encompassing and there are many different forms of 'ibadah. One of the many forms of 'ibadah that we often do not appreciate to the extent that we should is *Dua*. Now when we talk about dua, there are many questions that come to one's mind. What is dua? What are its blessings and its excellence? What is the proper etiquette that one must follow while making dua? Why is the dua of some people responded to and not that of the others? How can one increase the chances of getting one's dua accepted? Also, if everything is already predestined, then what is the purpose of making dua?

1. Dua – An Act of worship

Linguistically dua means to call out. The Quran uses this linguistic meaning and other related meanings as well, to request, to implore, to seek aid. Now dua is a form of worship in itself. Allah says:

Ghafir (The Forgiver) - 40:60

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ (40:60)

And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer): but those who are too arrogant to worship Me will surely find themselves in Hell – in humiliation!"

Allah first tells us to make dua, then says those who are too arrogant to worship me, thus implying that dua is the essence or the crux of worship. That is why the Prophet (SAW) said:

إِنَّ الدَّعَاءَ هُوَ الْعِبَادَةُ *Dua is the worship*

Therefore it is the essence of worship since it places us as creation at the proper level and it places Allah as our Creator at His proper level.

2. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein

Many times we feel that our hearts are far away and distant from Allah (SWT) but if we go to the Quran, we see that Allah (SWT), He uses the word Ya, which is the *harfu nida or vocative particle*. Harfu nida would be translated to something like O, e.g. Ya Abdallah, Ya Junaid, Ya binti and so forth. This is usually used as a sign of respect and is used to call someone when they are far away from you. So if I need to call someone who is like thirty feet away from me, I would say Ya Ahmed, even if they are 5 to 6 feet away from me, Ya Ahmed. But if someone is standing right next to me, I don't need to use Ya because he is so close to me so I just say Ahmed.

Now if we look in the Quran brothers and sisters, we will not find a single dua in the Quran which is preceded by Ya. Because Allah (SWT) wants to show us that I'm so close to you by My Knowledge, I'm so close to you by My absolute Hearing and Seeing, if you want to call on Me O My servant, don't say Ya, just say Rabbi and I will respond to you. And we find that Allah alludes to this in other verses of the Quran as well:

Al-Baqara (The Cow) - 2:186 [read in context]



وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ (2:186)

□ AND IF My servants ask thee about Me - behold, I am near; I respond to the call of him who calls, whenever he calls unto Me: let them, then, respond unto Me, and believe in Me, so that they might follow the right way. - 2:186

3. Dua – Sign of One’s Faith

Dua is a clear sign of one’s iman. When we make dua to Allah whether by whispering or making the dua in our heart, we automatically affirm that Allah can hear us. We are affirming His perfect nature. We are also affirming that He loves and cares about us. We also affirm that He has the qudrah, the power to respond to our dua. When we call out to Allah, we automatically give him certain names and certain attributes that He is deserving of; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing, the Ever-Caring, the All-Powerful.

Al-A'raf (The Heights) - 7:180 [read in context]

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (7:180)

- Hussari - Basit

□ AND GOD'S [alone] are the attributes of perfection; ^[145] invoke Him, then, by these, and stand aloof from all who distort the meaning of His attributes: ^[146] they shall be requited for all that they were wont to do! - 7:180 (Asad) -

Al-Isra (The Journey by Night) - 17:110

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتُ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا (17:110) -

- Say: "Invoke God, or invoke the Most Gracious: by whichever name you invoke Him, [He is always the One-for] His are all the attributes of perfection. ^[132] And [pray unto Him; yet] be not too loud in thy prayer nor speak it in too low a voice, but follow a way in-between; - 17:110 (Asad) -

4. Manifestation of Our Dua

Every single dua will be responded to by Allah though it may not be manifested in the way we wanted it to be.

It was narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) said: "There is no Muslim who calls upon Allah with words in which there is no sin or severing of family ties but Allah will give him one of three things: either He will answer his prayer soon, or He will store it up for him in the Hereafter, or He will remove something bad from him that is equivalent to what he is asking for." They said, "Then we should make a great amount of dua'a'." He said, "Allah is greater." [Al-Tirmidhi, 3573; classed as saheeh by al-Tirmidhi and others]

Another characteristics of dua is that it is the only act that can change predestination, i.e. the Qadr. The Prophet (SAW) said:

لا يردُّ القدرَ إلا الدعاءُ

Nothing can repeal or change Qadr except dua

The Prophet (SAW) said: Caution will not be of any benefit against qadar. No matter how cautious you are, if something has

been willed for you it will happen. But dua benefits matters that have occurred and will occur.

5. Dua & Causality

As human beings, we tend to seek out means and resources that could help us satisfy our needs. And we develop a ع understanding of our environment based on our observations. So if we feel cold, we use something like fire that could help keep us warm. If we experience thirst, we use water to quench our thirst. But part of our belief as Muslims is that this very characteristic of fire to keep us warm and water to satisfy our thirst has been granted by Allah (SWT). So it is not the fire that keeps us warm or it is not the water that quenches our thirst but in reality it is the mercy of the Creator of fire and water due to which we are able to derive certain benefits from them. Now by saying this, in no way are we trying to deny the role of the means but instead of placing our trust in the means, we place our trust in the provider of those means. So while the Messenger of Allah instructed the sick to seek medical treatment, he (SAW) reminded them of the fact that it is Allah who has provided a cure for every illness. And that is why we read the beautiful dua of the prophet:

O Allah remove the hardship, O Lord of mankind, grant cure for You are the Healer. There is no cure but from You.

6. Etiquettes of Making Dua

In terms of the etiquettes of making dua, there are many of them such as beginning by praising Allah and His Messenger (SAW), facing the qiblah, being in a state of ritual purity, and so forth. We'll insha Allah look into some of these:

6.1. Using Tawassul to Make Dua

Tawassul refers to seeking means to draw nearer to Allah. There are two forms of tawassul that scholars unanimously agree upon,

the first of these is tawassul via Allah's names and attributes as Allah (SWT) says:

Wa lillahil asmaa ulhusna fad'uhu biha

And to Allah belong the most beautiful of names so call on Him by them.

The other is tawassul through our good deeds that we have performed sincerely for the sake of Allah. This has been mentioned in a hadith narrated by Ibn 'Umar (RA) in which the Messenger of Allah is narrated to have said:

“While three persons were traveling, they were overtaken by rain and they took shelter in a cave in a mountain. A big rock fell from the mountain over the mouth of the cave and blocked it. They said to each other. ‘Think of such good deeds which, you did for Allah's sake only, and invoke Allah by giving reference to those deeds so that Allah may relieve you from your difficulty.

One of these men related the incident in which he had given precedence to his parents over his children on a certain occasion and he beseeched Allah saying that ‘if you considered that I had done that only for seeking Your pleasure, then please let there be an opening through which we can see the sky.’ So Allah made for them an opening through which they could see the sky.

Then the, second person related an incident in which he came very close to fornicate with one of his cousins whom he greatly admired when she reminded him to have fear of Allah and he abstained from it. He then said that ‘O Allah! If you considered that I had done that only for seeking Your pleasure then please let the rock move a little to have a (wider) opening.’ So Allah shifted that rock to make the opening wider for them.

And the last person related his good deed in which he had invested the wages that he owed to one of his laborers. The investment multiplied by many folds. Later when this laborer came

back to collect his wages, this person gave him not just the original wages but the entire profit earned out of it. So he said, O Allah! If You considered that I had done that for seeking Your pleasure, then please remove the remaining part of the rock.’ And so Allah released them (from their difficulty).”

And there are other means which are debated by scholars and which are beyond our scope today.

6.2. Persistence and Patience

The Prophet (SAW) said, the dua of any worshipper will be responded to as long as he is not hasty and impatient. The companions asked Ya Rasulallah how can a person be impatient? Rasulallah said impatient means that a person says that I have made dua but I see that Allah has not responded to me so he leaves the dua because he has not seen the effects of dua.

Zakariya (AS) made dua for decades, decades until he became an old man but he kept on making dua o Allah don't leave me without a heir, give me a son. He became so old that when the angel finally came, he was the first one to ask “how can I have a son, I'm too old and my wife is barren.” So Allah responds, *kazalik*, We have already decreed this, you're going to have a son and you're going to call him Yahya. This is the kind of persistence that's required my dear brothers and sisters.

6.3. Have an Attentive Heart and Soul

The Prophet (SAW) is narrated to have said:

Make dua to Allah while you're in a state of yaqeen and know that Allah does not respond to the dua from an inattentive heart.

You know the duas that we memorized since childhood and we continue to recite them without thinking about them, these are the type of duas that may fall under this category because they have

a body but they lack a soul. Just like the salah that the Prophet (SAW) said “A person may not be rewarded at all for his prayer or he may be rewarded only one tenth, one ninth and so on and so forth.” Because of the lack of khushu’ in the salah.

Another aspect is the concept of depression, anxiety and being completely negative in one’s outlook. Many people feel that they’ve done this and that and they’ve got a lot of dirt...Oh I’m an evil person, how will Allah forgive me? Allah will not answer my dua. If you go to the Quran and see the supplication that Iblees made after he had refused to bow down to Adam (AS). He said:

Rabbi andhirnee ilaa yawmi yub’athun

My Lord, give me respite until the day when they are resurrected

To this, Allah (SWT) responded:

Innaka minal munzireen

You are among those who are given respite.

And our scholars have said that if Allah answered the dua of the worst of creation Iblees, then as we commit sins we should never be disappointed with the mercy of Allah and we should never give up on ourselves because He will indeed listen to us if we sincerely call upon Him. Indeed Allah will answer the dua of those who sincerely seek Him and want to come back to Him and develop a relationship.

6.4. Acknowledging One’s Sins

Part of the etiquette of dua is to acknowledge one’s shortcomings and sins in front of one’s creator.

Imam Ahmed was once traveling and needed to stay somewhere overnight. When he went to the masjid, the guard (not recognizing Imam Ahmed) denied him entrance. Imam Ahmed tried numerous times, but the guard did not accept his requests. Frustrated, Imam Ahmed resolved to spend the night in the yard of the masjid. The

guard became furious and dragged him away, despite the old age of Imam Ahmed. A baker, whose shop was nearby, watched this scene and took pity on Imam Ahmed. He invited the Imam to stay with him for the night.

While there, Imam Ahmed noticed that the baker continually made *Istighfar* (asking for Allah's forgiveness) while working, and in the morning, the Imam eagerly asked his host about his continual seeking of forgiveness. The baker said it had become like second nature for him. Imam Ahmed then asked whether the man had experienced any reward from this practice. The baker answered, By Allah! No dua I made except that it was answered but one. And what is that dua, asked Imam Ahmed. To be able to see the famed Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal. Imam Ahmed interjected, I am Ahmed ibn Hanbal! He went on to add: By Allah! I was dragged to your place so that you can have your dua come true.

6.5. One's Earnings be Halal

One of the primary factors for dua not being accepted is that one eats or drinks or earns haram and the opposite is true as well. When one eats and drinks halal, this is one of the strongest ways that he could be verified and assured that his dua is accepted.

The Prophet (SAW) said "Allah is ***At-Tayyib*** and Allah only accepts that which is Tayyib. Then further down in the hadith, the Prophet (SAW) mentioned a traveler on a long journey, who is disheveled and dusty, his appearance is bad. He stretches forth his hands and he says Ya rabb, ya rabb. In other words the Prophet (SAW) is giving an example of a person who is traveling and is cut off from his family and friends, alone in the desert, calling out to Allah. In general, this is the perfect situation to get your dua accepted when you are sincere. Additionally, he is all alone. Additionally he is dusty and disheveled; this would get

sympathy from Allah or get sympathy from us. On top of that he raises his hands forth and this is one of the etiquettes we learn, then he calls Allah by his attributes, ya rabbi, which is one of the strongest ways to get your dua accepted. He prays to be saved yet the Prophet (SAW) says:


This person, he has eaten from haram, he has drunk from haram, he has bought his clothes from haram, he has been nourished by haram, how does he expect to be responded by Allah.

He has no hope for a response from Allah even though he has combined many of the factors which otherwise should earn a response.

We should make dua at all times, not only during times of distress. The Prophet (SAW) said:

“Whosoever desires that Allah answers his duas in unfavorable and difficult conditions, he should make plentiful dua in days of ease and comfort.”

Fussilat (Explained in Detail) - 41:51 [read in context]

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَدُوَّ عَرِيضٍ (41:51) 

□ And, too, when We bestow Our blessings upon man, he tends to turn aside and keep aloof [from remembering Us]; but as soon as evil fortune touches him, he is full of wordy prayers! **[47]** - 41:51 (Asad) -

Whose Dua'a is accepted almost instantaneously??

There are certain people whose dua'a is answered by Allah very

soon. The Prophet (PBUH) has mentioned about such people in his Hadiths (quoted below)

Abu Hurairah (RAA) narrates from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), "Three dua'as are such in which there is no doubt of their acceptance: 1) Father's dua'a 2) Traveler's dua'a 3) Dua'a of the oppressed". [Timizi, Ibne Majah]

Abu Hurairah (RAA) narrates from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), "Three types of people's dua'as are not rejected: 1) At the time of iftar the person who has fasted 2) Adil ruler's dua'a 3) The dua'a of the oppressed. Allah raises the dua'a of the oppressed on the clouds and the doors of heaven are opened for it and Allah says, "Oath of MY Majesty and Honour! I will help and aid you. Even though if the help is after few days." [Tirmizi]

1 – Laylat al-Qadar.

2 – Dua'a' in the depths of the night, the time before dawn, the time when Allah descends to bestow His bounty upon His slaves, to meet their needs and to relieve their distress.

3 – Following the prescribed prayers.

4 – Between the adhaan and the iqamah.

5 – When the call for the prescribed prayers is given and when the ranks are drawn up for battle.

6 – When rain falls.

7 – A certain time on Friday.

8 – When drinking Zamzam water.

9 – When prostrating.

11 – When hearing the crowing of a rooster.

12 – When saying the dua'a', "Laa ilaaha illa anta, subhaanaka, inni kuntu min al-zaalimeen

13 – The prayer of people after the soul of the deceased has been taken.

14 – Dua'a' for one who is sick.

15 – The prayer of the one who has been wronged.

16 – The dua'a' of a father for his child – i.e., for his benefit – and the dua'a' of a fasting person during the day of his fast, and the prayer of the traveller.

17 – The prayer of a father against his child – i.e., to harm him.

18 – The dua'a' of a righteous person for his parents.

19 – Dua'a' after the sun has passed its zenith and before Zuhr.

20 – Dua'a' when going to bed at night, and saying the du'aa' that was narrated for that time.

Ibrahim (Abraham) - 14:39 [read in context]



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ
الدُّعَاءِ (14:39)

- Hussari - Basit

□ "All praise is due to God, who has bestowed upon me, in my old age, Ishmael and Isaac! Behold, my Sustainer hears indeed all prayer: - 14:39 (Asad) -

Ibrahim (Abraham) - 14:40 [read in context]

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ (14:40)

Minshawi - Hussari - Basit

□ [hence,] O my Sustainer, cause me and [some] of my offspring to remain constant in prayer! [54] "And, O our Sustainer, accept this my prayer: - 14:40 (Asad) -

Al-Isra (The Journey by Night) - 17:11 [read in context]

وَيَدْعُ الْإِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَاءَهُ بِالْخَيْرِ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَجُولًا (17:11)

- Minshawi - Hussari - Basit

□ As it is, [11] man [often] prays for things that are bad as if he were praying for something that is good: [12] for man is prone to be hasty [in his judgments]. - 17:11 (Asad) -

As-Sajdah (The Prostration) - 32:16 [read in context]

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
يُنْفِقُونَ (32:16)

- [and] who are impelled to rise ^[14] from their beds [at night] to call out to their Sustainer in fear and hope; and who spend on others out of what We provide for them as sustenance. - 32:16 (Asad) -

Az-Zumar (The Groups) - 39:8 [read in context]

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهُ مُنِيبًا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا حَوَّلَهُ نِعْمَةً مِّنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُو
إِلَيْهِ مِن قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ
النَّارِ (39:8)

- Minshawi - Hussari - Basit

- NOW [thus it is:] when affliction befalls man, he is likely to cry out to his Sustainer, turning unto Him [for help]; ^[13] but as soon as He has bestowed upon him a boon by His grace, he forgets Him whom he invoked before, and claims that there are other powers that could rival God ^[14] - and thus leads [others] astray from His path. Say [unto him who sins in this way]: “Enjoy thyself for a while in this thy denial of the truth; [yet,] verily, thou art of those who are destined for the fire! - 39:8 (Asad) -

Az-Zumar (The Groups) - 39:49 [read in context]

فَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ بَلْ هِيَ
فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (39:49)

□ NOW [thus it is:] when affliction befalls man, he cries out unto Us for help; but when We bestow upon him a boon by Our grace, he says [to himself], “I have been given [all] this by virtue of [my own] wisdom!” ^[55] Nay, this [bestowal of grace] is a trial: but most of them understand it not! - 39:49 (Asad) -

We ask Allah (SWT) to accept our supplications, our duas. We ask Allah to purify our hearts from any ills which may cause our dua not to be heard or responded to by Allah (SWT).

I complain to you my lack of strength, my lack of resources and how insignificant I am to other people. O most Merciful of those who show mercy. You are the Lord of those who have no power and You are my Lord. Who are you going to leave me to? To some distant person who would be like the fire for me? Or to some enemy that you give him power over me? If you have no anger toward me [that you are not doing this out of your wrath], I have no objection but to give me ‘aafiya, its easier for me.

