



1. The content of this presentation is not profound. Many of us are familiar with the importance of Dua ( which means to call or summon) in Islam. However, I thought it might be nice to examine a few different books of Dua and compile a presentation that motivates us to re-invest in this form of worship. The content is also not comprehensive. My goal in selecting information about Dua was to encourage us to focus on the ways in which our daily practice of dua could be improved. For this reason, the reader may find that there isn't emphasis on acceptance of prayer at the places of the Hajj. Additionally, the selection of duas in the handout are not in order of most common duas. I chose a sampling of duas I found beautiful.
2. The reader may find it helpful to see this presentation as an action item list to gauge what one is actually doing and where one can improve.
3. The power of Dua is often underestimated. My friend, Sherin Ashkar Nayfeh, put it best when she said "One frequently commits to the latest health guidelines and fad diets but doesn't invest the same level of commitment in making dua for one's health and spiritual well being." I find I am most guilty of this type of neglectfulness. I usually am weak in the area of doing duas and in being creative about them.
4. According to the Washington Post, "...prayer is the most common complement to mainstream medicine, far outpacing acupuncture, herbs, vitamins and other alternative remedies." from "*Researchers Look at Prayer and Healing*" March 2006.
5. Other religions like Christianity also see the importance of prayer in daily life. Pope John Paul II described prayer eloquently in a sermon at the Vatican when he said "We have to learn to pray; as if we were learning this art ever anew."
6. So, as you examine this presentation, 'take time to smell the roses' of our deen; The Quran, Hadith and the oft neglected act of making Dua.

## Overview

- Quran & Hadith About Dua
- Etiquettes of Dua
- Prayer Sandwich
- How are Dua's Accepted
- Significance of Dua
- Benefits of Dua
- What to Pray For
- Who to Pray For
- When Duas are Especially Accepted

## Quran & Hadith About Dua

- ▶ Allah says “Make Dua to Me, I will accept it... .” [Surah Ghafir 40:60]
- ▶ Hadith: *The greatest act of worship is dua.*
- ▶ Hadith: *The doors of acceptance have been opened for the person who has been blessed with the opportunity of making dua.*

## Quran & Hadith About Dua (Cont'd)

- ▶ Hadith: *The most beloved thing which can be asked of Allah is to ask for peace & prosperity.*
- ▶ Hadith: *Dua is the weapon of a believer, the pillar of Deen ( religion) and the Noor (light) of the heavens and earth.*

Question to ask yourself: How is Dua the “pillar of religion” and the “light of the heavens and earth”?

Possible answer(s): Dua upholds the other acts of worship we do by drawing us closer to Allah. Dua brings us hope that improves our life on earth and in heaven. Etc.

## The Etiquettes of Dua

- ▶ Abstain from the Haram & Don't ask for the Haram
- ▶ Be sincere & humble in your intention
- ▶ Believe in the power of it being answered
- ▶ Do a good deed before making dua
- ▶ Do it all the time; prosperity & misfortune
- ▶ Ask for Allah's Mercy not for difficult tests
  - Examples of prayers gone wrong.
- ▶ Ask Allah knowing that Allah has the power to grant you everything. So demand it of your Lord respectfully. Don't be shy.

1. For example, don't ask for the severing of relationship as this is strongly discouraged in Islam.

2. Re: **"Be sincere & humble in your intention"** Sincerity of intention in Dua. Tangent. Shaykh Husain Abdul Sattar says in one of his general talks on [www.sacredlearning.org](http://www.sacredlearning.org) that there is a concept in the Sharia that actions have effects. In the Quran, it is stated that Salat brings one peace. So that if your Salat doesn't bring you peace there is a problem in how you perform your salat. Fix it and pray it with more Khusho to experience the effects of peace. So taking this analogy further (I think that), If your duas don't get accepted perhaps you need to re-evaluate your intentions and work on being more sincere.

3. re: **Examples of Prayers gone wrong:** A Sahabi was very sick and the Prophet questioned him about what he had done. He revealed that he had prayed for patience. To which the Prophet said that this was the wrong thing to pray for because Patience comes through Calamity.

Another Sahabi was reprimanded by the Prophet for asking on earth for all the punishment that had been set aside for him in the hereafter.



1. This is a graphic I've named "The Prayer Sandwich." It was designed by my 9 year old son, Yusuf, and my husband, Yassir Elley. It is a Sandwich because Allah states in the . Quran that [paraphrase] I and the angels recite Durood Shareef on the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and so should you [believers]. This emphasizes how pleasing the Durood Shareef is to Allah. It is thus recommended that one should sandwich one's personal dua between it. Allah in His infinite mercy can choose to accept what is in the middle of the two Durood Shareefs. So one can recite the verses from Sura Saffat at the end which praise all prophets or recite the Durood Shareef at the end. This particular order was recommended by my teacher Sr. Tahira Bhatti.

2. Al-Fatiha is there because this Sura is a perfect Dua in and of itself.

3. The order of the Personal Dua is based on a Hadith found in Fiqh us-Sunnah, vol iv, p.113: "The Qur'an says that the believers pray, "Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren in faith who have preceded us in faith." Ubayy b. Ka'b reported, "When someone requested the Prophet (p.b.u.h) to pray for him, he used to begin by supplicating for his ownself." *Reported by Tirmidhi, with a sound chain of authorities.*

## Sura Saffat (37:180–182)

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ  
وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ  
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

- ▶ Subhāna Rabbika Rabbi Al-`Izzati `Ammā Yaşifūna
- ▶ Wa Salāmun `Alá Al-Mursalīna
- ▶ Wa Al-Ĥamdu Lillahi Rabbi Al-`Ālamīna
- ▶ Glorified be thy Lord, the Lord of Majesty, from that which they attribute (unto Him) (180) And peace be unto those sent (to warn). (181) And praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds! (182)

## How are Dua's Accepted?

1. It is answered completely and in the way it was asked.
2. It wards off a calamity:  
*Hadith: The Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) has said that no amount of tact and prudence can help avert qadhaa and qadar (Allah's decree). But of course, making Dua to Allah helps avert any calamity that has already come and any that is yet to come. Truly, at times a calamity is imminent and a person's dua intercepts it. The result is that the two become locked in battle and remain so till the Day of Judgement (Allamah Muhammad Al-Jazri ,p.6)."*
3. The Dua gets stored for the future to be granted later or turned into sawab.

Imam Hamza Yusuf tells a story- A person complains that they have been making dua and their dua doesn't get answered. To which the scholar responds...."Wasn't it gift enough that Allah kept you at His doorstep praying to Him?"



## Significance of Dua

- ▶ Dua is the only method stipulated equally for worldly and religious success (Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi p. 1–2)
- ▶ A way of life:
  - Hadith: *It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said: The similitude of one that mentions His Lord in remembrance and the one that does not mention His Lord in remembrance, is like that of a living creature compared to a dead one. [Waleed Al-Essa p. 5]*

1. Maulana Thanwi states in his book, Munajat-e-Magbul: A Collection of Accepted Supplications, that “Allah provided various means and opened numerous doors for goodness and success in both the worlds. This He did, so that those who are in need may seek assistance via these avenues and gain salvation from difficulties. The effects of all means apart from dua are very restricted. The aim of the natural means such as [agriculture, trade, medicine] is worldly success,...the Shar’i means [such as fasting, salah, and hajj], their actual purpose is religious success....dua is the only method which has been stipulated equally for worldly and dini [religious] success at the same time. (p.i-ii).”
2. The Hadith on Remembrance is a good reminder that Dhikr is also an essential part of one’s relationship with Allah. And that Dua is a form of Dhikr.

## Significance of Dua (*Cont'd*)

- ▶ A form of ibadah to Allah:
  - Four Meanings of the word 'ilah
    - 1) *The One worshipped* (Sura Fussilat 41:37)
    - 2) *A refuge to turn to* ( Sura Israt 17:67)
    - 3) *One truly beloved and glorified* (Sura Baqarah 2:165)
    - 4) *One beyond our realization* (Sura Az- Zumar 39:67)

Taken From : Waleed K.S. Zaidi, Authentic Supplications Of the Prophet (Florida: The Daar of Islamic Heritage, 1993) 4

2.A refuge to turn to: When distress seizes you at sea, those that you call upon leave you in the lurch; except, Him! But when He brings you back safely to land, you turn away and man was ungrateful ( Sura Israt 17:67)

One truly beloved and glorified: “ And there are among people [those] who take, besides Allah, equals. They love them as they love Allah; but those of faith have greater love for Allah...” (Sura Baqarah 2:165)

One beyond our realization: “They have not realized Allah, a realization due ....” (Sura Az-Zumar 39:67)

## Benefits of Dua

- ▶ Develops closer relationship with Allah (taqwa)
- ▶ Peace of mind, heart and soul knowing that Allah will handle it all.
- ▶ Changes destiny
- ▶ Praising and thanking Allah acknowledges His Greatness and is also personally beneficial.

1. Abdur Razzaq reported from Al-Hasan that the Companions asked the Prophet (p.b.u.h) Where is our Lord? And it was in response to this question that the following verse of the Quran was revealed.

“When My servants ask you (O’ Muhammad) concerning Me, I am indeed close to them. I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls upon Me.” Sura Baqarah 2:186

Imagine that! Allah told us that if we were to look for him we would find The Almighty close to them and listening to our Duas. What better reason do we need to make dua regularly other than seeking closeness to Allah!?!

2. The peace of mind that comes from letting go is really essential for the quintessential control freak that wants to know what they can do to change a particular circumstance. Here, dua helps us “Do Something” and at the same time recognize that the result or final outcome is in Allah’s court.

3. The changing of destiny....this is really powerful and yet not an easy topic to understand. Imagine that duas can change our particular destinies even if Allah has written them out. It might be helpful to think of our written destiny as an intricate flowchart that has many if then, then this clauses. So While, Allah knows all that we do, our duas with Allah’s infinite Mercy can change the course of events. Asking a knowledgeable scholar would be helpful here for more clarity on this complicated concept.

4. Interestingly, every so often one comes across what I like to call “gratitude research”. Popular Magazines like “Whole Living” often cite the importance of turning your bad day into a good one by simply listing 10 things you are grateful for. Similarly, Martin Seligman, former President of the American Psychological Association has written a recent book called Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being. In this book, he says that writing a diary of “what went well today and why” for one week can lower depression levels in some people for up to six months. (*Economist, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011, p.106*). So clearly, Islam outlines and prescribed dua 1400 years ago knowing the benefits. Some of which are just being discovered now.

## What to Pray For

- ▶ Asking for protection
  - From illness, calamities, temptation, sin, etc
  
- ▶ Asking for help
  - Cure from specific calamities or difficulties
  
  - Cure for anxiety, helplessness and hopelessness
    - Example: terminally ill
    - Traffic cop analogy
  
  - Linking prayers to an action others are praying for

**Re: Cure for anxiety, helplessness and hopelessness:** If you are a worrywart like me, much of your anxiety comes from circumstances that you can't change. Let's say you have a terminally ill person that you care about. You can't cure their illness, but knowing you can pray for them can bring you much solace. Or let's say...someone you love often ruins the opportunities they have in life because of their bad temperament. Sometimes, know that you can make dua that they change or see the errors of their way can be comforting.

**2. Re: Traffic Cop Analogy:** Shaykh Husain Abdul Sattar in one of his general talks on [www.sacredlearning.org](http://www.sacredlearning.org) says that Shaykh Nuh Keller once told him that we need to control our mind like a traffic cop. We should let certain thoughts that are bad for our iman just pass through our minds quickly without dwelling on them. This is not to say one shouldn't think and understand the religion. Instead, the analogy is stating that even when one knows and believes strongly in the religion, one may have thoughts enter the mind that undermine one's belief and create doubts in one's mind. I thought the the traffic cop analogy could also be used to deal with thoughts that create worry, doubt and hopelessness. If one let's those thoughts pass by quickly without paying heed to them one can refocus one's attention and pray for a better outcome.

**3. re: Linking prayers:** Shaykh Husain Abdul Sattar explains this concept in one of his talks. Here is how I understood it. For example, If someone you love is terminally ill. Pray that Allah grants them total Shifa ( healing). Then make the commitment that if Allah answers your prayer you will build a school in a Pakistani village. Now, there may be villagers, who are more pious than you, praying for a school to be built for their children. Allah in His Mercy might make you the person to build that school and in doing so, grant your dua of healing the sick person.

## What to Pray For *(Cont'd)*

- ▶ Asking for Guidance & Spiritual wealth
  - Hidayah
  - Spiritual barometer
  
- ▶ Asking for forgiveness
  
- ▶ Asking for pious spouse and children

1. **re:Hidayah:** According to my teacher Sr. Tahira Bhatti, In the Quran, Allah says people will get material wealth and health without asking but one will only be granted hidayah or guidance by praying for it.
2. **re: spiritual barometer:** Talk to Allah- share your faults, shortcomings, frustrations with Allah in Dua. Ask Allah to reveal your faults to you in this world so you can fix them.
3. Shaykh Kamaluddin Ahmed said in his talk on "tazkiyah" you know you are getting closer to Allah when you begin to see your own faults. In my opinion, one can use dua as a spiritual barometer by asking Allah to reveal your faults to you so that you can work on it.
4. **Re: Asking for forgiveness:** Shaykh Husain Abdul Sattar says that his Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad told him that if one commits a sin and sincerely repents his/her sins are forgiven. Here is my understanding of what he said. Imagine a spiritual ladder numbered from 0 to 10. As we do good deeds we go up the steps of the ladder aiming towards step number 10. Once we commit a sin, seek repentance and it gets accepted. We do not restart at step 0. Instead, Allah's infinite Mercy is that we keep climbing from where we were before we committed the sin. How Beautiful!!
5. **Re: Asking for pious spouse and children:** I once read a beautiful article on raising pious children. The author's name is not something I can find. She lists 10 ways to raise pious children and the number one strategy she has is making dua for them. The premise of her article was that she asked Muslims how they had raised their kids well and this was the number one strategy listed.

## Who to Pray For

- ▶ Oneself
- ▶ Family
  - Past, present, and future generations
  - Example: Peace and Forgiveness
- ▶ Ummah
- ▶ Enemies
  - Example: backbiting

**Re: Enemies:** Living in the world can be hard sometimes because one can get hurt by someone else's unfair or unjust actions. Often the person wronged responds by backbiting or getting angry. Making Dua for one's enemies is really essential for avoiding backbiting and getting angry.

1. My Friend Sherin Ashkar Nayfeh told me about a lecture she attended on "Backbiting" by Br. Gaith in Worcester, Ma. He reminded people that many people engaged in backbiting even if they sought to avoid major sins like fornication, drinking alcohol. He suggested praying for the person who wronged one instead. Paraphrasing the Hadith that when a Muslim prays for another Muslim, Allah appoints an angel to stand behind him/her and grant him/her the same thing [Abu Dawud and Muslim]. Another paraphrased hadith: A Man on the Day of judgement has good deeds the size of a mountain. Standing across from him in a line are all the people he wronged getting his good deeds. When he runs out, their bad deeds get heaped on him. Sr. Uzma Baig a wonderful talk on "Anger Management" in Westborough, Ma on 5/18/11 in which she mentioned this hadith and asked "Do we have it in us to spend time in hell for someone else's bad deeds?" She then went on to advise that if one gets angry they should "hit the pause button like on a remote control and take 2 minutes to calm down and collect one's thoughts before speaking. After which point, it would serve one well to make a dua for the person who has wronged you. In my opinion, all of these great bits of information are important because one wants to respond or do something when one is wronged by another. Doing dua is an action that responds to the hurt and deals with it positively.

## When Duas are Especially Accepted

- ▶ During Azan
  - Also between Azan and Iqamah
  
- ▶ During Salat
  - In Sajdah in Salat (only dua's from Quran & Hadith)
  - After the imam completes Sura Fatiha
  
- ▶ After Fard Salat
  
- ▶ After Reading Quran

## When Duas are Especially Accepted *(Cont'd)*

- ▶ During the first and last third of the night
- ▶ When there is a Muslim gathering (religious, social, etc)
- ▶ On the day of Jumu'ah
  - Also during the Moment of Acceptance
- ▶ During Ramadan & Hajj
- ▶ During travel and times of sickness



## Bibliography

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