

How to Supplicate to Allah

Before addressing the issue of how to supplicate to Allah, we need to tackle the subject of how are we to worship Him.

After Allah, the Glorified and the Exalted One, had created us, after we admitted His Oneness and Might, and after He had taken from us a covenant and made us bear witness against our own selves that He is our Creator, He returned us to the loins of Adam, made us in the loins of humans, each in the loins of his forefathers, then He brought us into this world whenever He willed, defining His reason for creating us, which is: to worship Him, and only Him.

After having sent us prophets and messengers during various ages to warn us against worshipping anyone but Him and chosen the best of His messengers for us, namely our master Muhammad, the best of creeds, namely Islam, and the best of divine books, namely the Holy Qur'an..., after all of that, it becomes incumbent upon us to answer questions such as: How are we to adore Allah? What are the best means to achieve this end?

The answers to these questions are provided by the best of creation, messengers and prophets, our master Muhammad . Having been asked once what adoration was, he answered, "Supplication is adoration," then he recited the Qur'anic verse saying,

"And your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you; surely those who are too proud to worship Me shall soon enter hell abased" (Qur'an, 40:60).

In order to emphasize the fact that supplication is the zenith of adoration as the Holy Qur'an states, we would like to present some Qur'anic verses that highlight this fact and underscore the significance of supplication:

Say: My Lord would not care for you were it not for your du'' (supplication). (25:77)

And who speaks better than he who calls to Allah while he himself does good [deeds] and says: I am surely of those who submit (to Allah in Islam)? (41:33)

Those to whom they call upon, they themselves seek the means of access to their Lord – whoever of them is nearest – and they hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement. (17:57)

And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill. (18:28)

Their sides draw away from their beds; they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope. (32:16)

They used to hasten, one with another, in deeds of goodness and to call upon Us, hoping and fearing. (21:90)

To this then go on inviting, and go on steadfastly on the right way as you are commanded, and do not follow their low desires. (42:15)

And I will call upon my Lord; maybe I shall not remain unblessed in calling upon my Lord. (19:48)

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

Praise to Allah Who has given me despite old age Ishmael and Isc; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer. (14:39)

And when My servants ask you concerning Me, surely I am very near; I answer the prayer (supplication) of the suppliant when he calls on Me. (2:186)

These are only samples of what the Holy Qur'an contains of verses stressing the importance of supplication for the creation, clarifying for them the status supplication enjoys with their Creator.

A Supplication Containing Allah's Greatest Name

Imam al-Husain ibn `Ali ibn Abu Talib is quoted narrating the following incident:

"We were making our tawaf around the Ka`ba when we heard someone reciting these verses of poetry:

O You Who answers the distressed and those who in the depth of the darkness utter their supplication,
O You Who removes the causes of the trials, the pain, together with the tribulation, Around Your Sacred House are Your guests who have come from everywhere, Supplicating while the eyes of Allah never sleep, always aware, I plead to You to grant me Your Forgiveness for the sins I have committed, by Your Grace, Your creation knows You, Lord, to be Most Gracious, so I plead to You by the Light of Your Face! If Your pardon never reaches a sinner nor bless, Who is to be gracious unto those who transgress?

"My father `Ali ibn Abu Talib," the Imam continues, "said, `O Husain! Don't you hear someone grieving about his sin, complaining to his Lord? Go and bring him here.' So I hurried till I was able to reach him. I

found him to be a handsome man, his body looked free of deformity, his clothes seemed to be very clean, and I could smell the fragrance he was wearing. I also noticed that his right side was paralyzed. I approached him and ordered him to present himself before the Commander of the Faithful. He came and the Commander of the Faithful asked him, 'Who are you, and what is your story?' The man said, 'O Commander of the Faithful! What is the case of a man who opted to do what is punishable while not performing what he is enjoined to perform?'

The Imam asked him again, 'What is your name?' The man answered, 'Munzzil son of Lahiq.' He asked him, 'What is your story?' He said, 'I used to be quite famous among the Arabs for merry-making and sinning in my youth, without waking from my slumber. Now if I repent, my repentance will not be accepted from me, and if I try to amend my steps, I will not be able to do that either. So I prolong my transgression during the [sacred] months of Rajab and Sha'ban. My father used to be quite affectionate and compassionate towards me.

He used to warn me against the outcome of my ignorance and the terrible end awaiting the transgressors. He used to say, 'O son! Allah sometimes manifests His might when He expresses His Wrath; so, do not tread the avenues of those who will be penalized with the Fire, for how often people have complained about you, and so have the sacred angels, and the sacred months, the nights, and the days?' Yet whenever he persisted in admonishing and reprimanding me, I persisted in beating him.

One day, when my conduct pressured him too much, he said, 'By Allah I am going to fast and will not break my fast, and I shall offer prayers and will not sleep...' He fasted for one week, then he rode a lean camel and went to Mecca for the pilgrimage and said, 'I shall go to the House of Allah, and I shall plead to Allah to side with me against you.' He reached Mecca on the day of the Great Pilgrimage, took hold of the curtains of the Ka'ba and invoked Allah against me saying,

O One to Whom pilgrims come from far and wide, Those who come walking, and those who ride, Hoping to win the Grace of the One, the Dignified, The One who Sustains, from Whom none can hide, This Munazil never seems to cease, though I chide, So effect retribution; Your Judgment none can override, And do inflict pain on him and do paralyze his side, You were never born, nor bears, but is always sanctified!

"I swear by the One Who raised the heavens and caused the water to form springs, he hardly finished his statement when my right side was completely paralyzed, and I remained like a piece of wood lying somewhere in the precincts of the Sacred House. People used to come and go and say about me, 'This is a man the plea of whose father Allah has answered.'"

Imam 'Ali asked him, "What did your father do?" He said, "O Commander of the Faithful! I requested him to invoke Allah on my behalf in the same way he invoked Him against me, now since he reconciled and was pleased with me. I placed him on a she-camel and we rushed till we reached the valley of Arak when a bird suddenly flew from a tree and scared the she-camel.

My father fell and died on the way.' `Ali said, "Shall I teach you certain invocations which I have learned from the Messenger of Allah and about which he said that nobody recites them without Allah Almighty removing his distress from him?" He said, "Yes, please do!" Imam al-Husain stood up and taught him the invocation. He recited it and was healed from his ailment and his complete health returned to him. I asked the man, "What did you do?"

He said, 'When all the eyes calmed down, I recited it, then repeated it a second time, then a third, whereupon I heard someone saying, `Suffices you Allah, for you have invoked Him by His Greatest Name which, if anyone implores Him by it, He will answer him, and if anyone requests him for something, He will grant it!' So I slept and I saw the Messenger of Allah in my vision, and he said to me, `Truly `Ali, my cousin, has told you the truth: it does contain Allah's Greatest Attribute which, if one pleads to Him by it, He will oblige, and if one asks Him for something, He will grant it.' Then I saw him a second time in a vision, so I said to him, `O Messenger of Allah! I love to hear you reciting that invocation!' He said,

Lord! I plead to You, O One Who knows what is hidden! O One by Whose Might the heavens is erected, and the earth is spread out, and the sun and the moon through the Light of Whose Greatness illuminate and shine! O One Who approaches every believing and pure soul! O One Who removes the fear of those who are in awe of Him, those who are righteous!

O One Who takes care of all the needs of His creation, Who has saved Yousuf from the bondage of slavery, Who has no doorman to be approached, nor does He have a supporter to be defeated, nor does He have a vizier to be bribed, nor is there any other god besides Him so he would be called upon, nor does He increase, despite His giving, except in giving and in open-handedness..., and surely Allah has blessed Muhammad and his progeny! Whereupon I implore You, Lord, to grant me my quest, for You can do anything at all.

"So I woke up and I was healed." `Ali said, "Uphold this supplication, for it is one of the treasures of Paradise."

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