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Du'a' (supplication) in a Glance

Du'a' is the expression of deprivation to the One.

Du'a' is the pronunciation of poverty to the Eternal Absolute.

Du'a' is seeking assistance of the powerless from the All-Powerful.

Du'a' is the demonstration of humility to the Omnipotent.

Du'a' is loved by the Almighty, and is dear to the mystic and the miserable.

Du'a' in the Holy Qur'an

The Almighty, who is the Revealer of knowledge and wisdom, states in His Qur'an:

Say (O' Muhammad to the disbelievers): My Lord would not concern Himself with you, but for your prayers. (25:77)

Du'a' is a tool for attracting God's attention and blessings. His attention removes calamity from the life of one who prays, and brings about blessings for him/her.

The All-Knowing Lord says in Qur'an:

And when My servant question thee concerning Me, then surely I am close (to them). I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calleth unto Me. (2:186)

No one is as close to the man as his creator, Allah. He is the One who has created man, fashioning him

in the womb, and then transferring him to this world. He bestows His material and spiritual blessings unto man, sent the prophets to guide him, and granted him the Divine Qur'an and the Immaculate Imams (as).

Allah has created water for the thirst of man and food for his hunger. He cures man's diseases and improves his health. He discards man's loneliness with a spouse, children, and friends, and his starkness with various kinds of clothes. Allah makes man cherished by the others, and maintains his dignity before them. Allah solves his problems, however difficult they may seem. Who is so closely and intently aware of man's deepest needs and can provide him with all these blessings, except Allah? He is indeed closer to man than anyone else. Hence He says in Qur'an:

We verily created a man and We know what his soul whispereth to him, and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (50:16)

In spite of being superior to all others in terms of wisdom and insight, aware of the unseen more than others, and knowing the reality as it is, the prophets (as) too were extensively devoted to *du'a'*. They spent part of their time, both at day and night, to attach themselves to this firm and reliable string, and stand humbly before Allah. They considered *du'a'* as the means to strengthen the mind, purify the soul, and solve problems.

The holy prophets (as) knew for sure that no suppliant ends his *du'a'* except that Allah grants his requests to him from His presence. They hence believed in the fulfillment of *du'a'* and humbly asked Allah to grant their supplication. The holy Qur'an states this fact so clearly from Prophet Abraham's enlightened soul and purified speech:

Praise be to Allah who hath given me, in my old age, Ishmael and Isaac! Lo! My Lord is indeed the Hearer of Prayer. (14:39)

Zechariah requested God, with the power of *du'a'*, to grant him a child. God fulfilled his desire and bestowed on him John, though his wife was barren. (19:5–9)

Following his disciples' request, the Christ asked Allah to descend a heavenly table spread with food. The Almighty God accepted his prayer and send down for him and his disciples a table spread with foods from heaven. (5:112–115)

The Powerful has ordered His servants to pray in all situations, either in happiness or sorrow, with a

humble heart and a tearful eye, demanding their needs from Him and be hopeful of the acceptance of their supplication. The Omniscient has also assured to consign to hell those who are too proud to serve Him:

And your Lord hath said: Pray unto me and I will hear your prayer. Lo! Those who scorn My service, they will enter hell, disgraced. (40:60)

Du'a' in Traditions

Allah's benevolence toward His creatures is extended and comprehensive, especially for mankind. Allah's presence is not an abode of hopelessness or stinginess. His generosity and forgiveness is relentless, as is His longing for His servants to pray to Him. Allah addressed Prophet David (as):

"Say to My servants: Why don't you befriend Me, since I deserve friendship? I am a God of no miserliness, there's no ignorance in My Omniscience, no incapacity in My Forbearance, and no alternation in My Attributes or My Speech. My Mercy and Forgiveness is unvarying and constant. I am the friend of him who befriends Me, and I accompany him who invokes on Me in his solitude. O David! He who seeks Me finds Me; and he who finds Me deserves not to lose Me. O David! Blessing is from Me but My servants thank others; I ward off calamity but they seek it from others. Their safe haven is My Presence, but they seek refuge from others, though finally they return to Me."

A surplus of such meaningful texts in Islamic books, along with Qur'anic verses, give good tidings to the servants to be hopeful of God's Mercy. The servants should, therefore, pray and ask their prerequisites from God. That's why the traditions narrated by the Ahl Al–Bayt (as) have all stressed the importance of *du'a'*. It is narrated from the holy Prophet of Islam (S):

Du'a' is indeed a worship. 1

Du'a' is the core of worship. 2

Imam al-Baqir (as) stated:

.أفْضَلُ العِبَادَةِ الدُّعَاءُ

The most preferable of worships is du'a. '3

The Imam (as) also narrates:

Nothing is more dear to Allah than asking Him for His blessings. And no one is more destitute before Allah than one who is arrogant of supplicating in His Presence.4

The following is narrated from Amir al-Mu'minin (as):

"The most desirable deed on all the earth is supplication to Allah."5

Du'a' is the key to success. The best du'a' is the one uttered from a purified soul and heart. The means to salvation is sincerity in du'a'. When the problems cause restlessness, the solution is seeking refuge in God's Presence.6

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

When Allah descends a calamity, come in Allah's presence with du'a' and lamentation.7

Du'a' is necessity for you, since it is the solution to every problem.8

The Value of Du'a' in a Congregation

When the believers supplicate to Allah in a congregation and ask their exigency in one voice, as one, their *du'a'* is more likely to be answered, for in a group of people, there would surely be, a poor, a bereaved, or an ascetic whose prayer may attract God's Mercy and Forgiveness. Based on what appears in Islamic teachings, Allah may accept the prayer of others too, for the sake of that person, forgive their sins and grant them their exigency. Many traditions have been narrated from the Prophet (S) and Ahl al–Bayt (as) in this regard, some of which are stated here:

Imam Sadiq (as) stated:

No four people congregate to pray for a single issue, unless their exigency is granted when they leave each other.9

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

No forty men gather together to pray for a single issue, unless the Almighty God accepts their prayer; to the extent that if they pray against a mountain, it will collapse. 10

The great Islamic scholar, Ibn Fahd Al-Hilli, narrates from "Wasa'il al-Shi'a" in his book "'Uddat al-Da'i":

Allah told Jesus through revelation:

O Jesus! Join the believers and order them to pray with you before My Presence! 11

Imam Sadiq (as) states:

My father always acted this way; whenever something made him sorrowful, he gathered women and children, then he prayed and they said Amen! 12

Despair; the state of the disbeliever

The supplicant should be aware that it is Almighty God who has invited him to pray and has guaranteed the acceptance of the supplication. Accepting the prayer and granting the supplicant's exigency is easy for Allah, since each and every world's creature is under His Absolute Power, and He provides the grounds for the fulfillment of His servant's exigency with a single order.

It is, therefore, not right to become hopeless in the Presence of God, whose Insight, Mercy and Forgiveness is infinite, especially when praying. Despair, as specified in the Holy Qur'an, is the attribute of the disbelievers:

Go, O my sons! And ascertain concerning Joseph and his brother, and despair not of the Spirit of Allah. Lo! None despaireth of the Spirit of Allah save disbelieving folk. (12:87)

The Holy Qur'an strongly recommends against being hopeless of God's Mercy:

Despair not of the Mercy of Allah! (39:53)

The Prophet of Islam (S) states:

Allah's Mercy is nearer to a hopeful sinner than to a hopeless worshipper. 13

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

The cold of despair from God's Mercy is colder than intense cold. 14

Despair from Allah's Mercy is considered as a major sin in accordance to Islamic teachings and traditions, and the hopeless is promised chastisement. The supplicant should not despair, in case his/her supplication is not answered. Perhaps the acceptance of supplication has not been in accord with God's expediency, the precise setting of acceptance may not have come, or God wants the supplicant to

continue supplicating for his/her demand.

Moreover Allah may want to postpone granting the supplicant's exigency to the Day of Judgment, in order to make the yielding eternal. Therefore, losing hope of Allah's Compassion is in no way acceptable from a believer. Many significant traditions have been narrated in Islamic books, considering *du'a'* and its acceptance. A few instances come here:

Imam Sadiq (as) narrates:

Surely, a servant prays and Allah says to two angels: 'I accepted his supplication, but don't grant his demand so that he continues praying, because I desire to hear his voice.' And another servant prays, so Allah says: 'Give him his demand promptly; I hate his voice.' 15

Mansur Sayqal says: I asked Imam Sadiq (as): Perhaps someone prays, and his supplication is accepted but not granted at once. Imam confirmed it. I asked: What is the reason? Is it for him to pray more? Imam confirmed it again. 16

Conditions of Du'a'

If the supplicant wants his *du'a'* to be accepted, she/he should meet certain conditions, which are enumerated by Ahl al-Bayt (as) in valid books such as "Usul Al-Kafi", "Mahajjat al-Bayza' ", "Wasa'il al-Shi'a", "Jami' al-Ahadith al-Shi'a", etc.

Here's a list of such conditions:

Islamic purity like wudhu' (ablution), ghusl (ritual washing) and tayammum (ablution with soil), fulfilling the rights of the people (haqqunnas), sincerity, precise pronunciation of the *du'a'*, rightfully earned income, observing and strengthening kinship ties (silatur–rahim), charity (sadaqah) before *du'a'*, obedience to Allah, abstinence from sins, rectification of deeds, *du'a'* at dawn, *du'a'* in watr (name of a salat), *du'a'* at the true dawn, *du'a'* at sunrise, *du'a'* between noon and evening prayer on Wednesday, and finally praising the Prophet (S) and his progeny (salawat) before *du'a'*.17

Thursday Night

Thursday night is considered among the best times for *du'a'* in the traditions of Ahl al–Bayt (as), to that extent that it is almost equal to the Qadr night in value. The insightful and pious theologians proclaim: Spend Thursday night with praying, worshipping, and invoking Allah until morning, if you can, because the Compassionate sends the angels to the first heaven to increase the virtues of the believers and

abolish their sins.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) in a valid tradition:

إِنَّ لِلجُمُعَةِ حقّاً فَإِيَّاكَ أَنْ تُضَيِّعَ حُرْمَتَهُ أَوْ تُقَصِّرَ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ اللهِ وَالتَّقَرُّبِ إِلَيْهِ بِالعَمَلِ الصَّالِحِ وَتَرْكِ الْمُحَارِمَ كُلِّهَا فَإِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى يُضَاعِفُ فِيهِ الْحَسَنَاتِ وَيَمْحُو السَّيَّنَاتِ وَيَرْفَعُ فِيهِ الدَّرَجَاتِ، وَيَوْمُهُ مِثْلُ لَيْلَتِهِ فَإِن اللهَ تَعَالَى يُرْسِلُ فِيهَا الْمَلائِكَةَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا لِتُضَاعَفَ فِيهَا اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تُحْيِيَهَا بِالدُّعَاءِ وَالصَّلاَةِ فَافْعَلْ فَإِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى يُرْسِلُ فِيهَا الْمَلائِكَةَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا لِتُضَاعَفَ فِيهَا اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تُحْيِيَهَا بِالدُّعَاءِ وَالصَّلاَةِ فَافْعَلْ فَإِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى يُرْسِلُ فِيهَا الْمَلائِكَةَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَإِنَّ اللهَ وَاسِعٌ كَرِيمِ الْحَسَنَاتُ وَتُمْحَى فِيهَا السَّيَثَاتُ وَإِنَّ اللهَ وَاسِعٌ كَرِيم

Verily, Fridays enjoy rights (incumbent upon people). Therefore, beware of violating Fridays' sanctity through showing shortcoming in acts of worship and instead seek nearness to Almighty Allah by means of righteous deeds and abandonment of all forbidden acts. Certainly, on Fridays Almighty Allah doubles up the rewards (of good deeds), erases forgivingly punishments (for evildoings), and raises the ranks (of faith).

Friday daytimes are similar to Friday nights; therefore, you may, when possible, stay up supplicating and offering prayers to Almighty Allah who, at that night, orders the angels to descend to the lower heavens in order to double the rewards and erase the transgressions. Most surely, Allah is Ample–giving and All–generous. 19

The believer may pray for an exigency and Allah postpones answering him to grant him his demand on Thursday night. 20

When Prophet Josef's brothers asked their father, Prophet Jacob, to seek forgiveness for them from Allah, Jacob said: 'I will seek forgiveness for you soon.' And he delayed seeking forgiveness for them until Friday dawn so that his exigency will be answered.21

Imam al-Baqir (as) says:

إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى لَيَامُرُ مَلَكاً فَيُنَادِي كُلَّ لَيْلَةِ جُمُعَةٍ مِنْ فَوْقِ عَرْشِهِ مِنْ أُوَّلِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَى آخِرِهِ: أَلاَ عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ يَدعُونِي لآخِرَتِهِ وَدُنْياهُ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الفَجْرِ فَأُجِيبُهُ؟ أَلاَ عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ يَتُوبُ إِلَيَّ مِنْ ذُنُوبِهِ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الفَجْرِ فَأَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ؟ أَلاَ عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ سَقِيمٌ فَيَسْأَلُنِي أَنْ قَتَّرْتُ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَسْأَلُنِي الزِّيَادَةَ فِي رِزْقِهِ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الْفَجْرِ فَأَزِيدُهُ وَأُوسِعُ عَلَيْهِ؟ أَلاَ عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ سَقِيمٌ فَيَسْأَلُنِي أَنْ أَشْفِيَهُ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الفَجْرِ فَأَعَافِيهِ؟ أَلاَ عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مَعْمُومٌ مَحْبُوسٌ يَسْأَلُنِي أَنْ أُطْلِقَهُ مِنْ حَبْسِهِ وَأَفْرِجُ عَنْهُ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الفَجْرِ فَأُطْلِقُهُ وَأُخَلِّي سَبِيلَهُ؟ أَلاَ عَبْدٌ مُؤَمِنٌ مَظْلُومٌ يَسْأَلُنِي أَنْ آخُذَ لَهُ بِظُلامَتِهِ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الفَجْرِ فَأَنْتَصِرُ لَهُ وَآخُذُ بظُلامَتِهِ؟ قال: فَلا يَزالُ يُنادي حَتَّى يَطْلُعَ الفَجْرُ.

During every Thursday night, Allah orders an angel to call on behalf of the Almighty: Is there any believer who calls Me for this world and the Hereafter so that I may grant his exigency? Is there any believer who repents for his sins before the sunrise, so that I may forgive him? Is there any believer who asks for the abundance of his sustenance, which I have made sparse, before the sunrise, so that I may increase it?

Is there any sick believer who asks Me to heal him before the sunrise, so that I make him well? Is there any imprisoned believer who asks me to free him before the sunrise, so that I grant him his freedom? Is there any oppressed believer who asks Me to avenge the oppressor, so that I restore his rights? He will keep saying so until dawn.22

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

إِجْتَنِبوا المَعاصِيَ لَيْلَةَ الجُمُّعَةِ فَإِنَّ السَّيِّةَ مُضَاعَفَةٌ وَالحَسَنَةَ مُضَاعَفَةٌ. وَمَنْ تَرَكَ مَعْصِيَةَ اللهِ لَيْلَةَ الجُمُّعَةِ غَفَرَ اللهُ لَكُلِّ مَا عَمِلَ فِي عُمُرِهِ وَضَاعَفَ عَلَيْهِ العَذَابَ بِهَذِهِ لَهُ كُلَّ مَا سَلَفَ، وَمَنْ بَارَزَ اللهَ لَيْلَةَ الجُمُّعَةِ بِمَعْصِيةٍ أَخَذَهُ اللهُ بِكُلِّ مَا عَمِلَ فِي عُمُرِهِ وَضَاعَفَ عَلَيْهِ العَذَابَ بِهَذِهِ لَهُ كُلُّ مَا سَلَفَ، وَمَنْ بَارَزَ اللهَ لَيْلَةَ الجُمُعَةِ بِمَعْصِيةٍ أَخَذَهُ اللهُ بِكُلِّ مَا عَمِلَ فِي عُمُرِهِ وَضَاعَفَ عَلَيْهِ العَذَابَ بِهَذِهِ المَعْصِية

Avoid committing sins on Thursday nights, since the punishment is double then, just as the recompense for virtues is multifold. Whoever avoids sins on Thursday night, Allah will forgive his previous sins. And whoever openly commits sins on Thursday night, Allah will chastise him for his lifetime of sins and will multiply the punishment of his Thursday night sins, particularly due to the violation of the sanctity of Thursday night. 23

Many prayers and supplications have been mentioned for Thursday night, among which *du'a'* Kumayl has a special position.

- 1. Mahajjat Al-Bayza': 2/282, Kitab Al-Azkar wa Al-Da'awat, Chapter 2.
- 2. Ibid.
- 3. Mahajjat Al-Bayza': 2/283, Kitab Al-Azkar wa Al-Da'awat, Chapter 2.
- 4. Al-Kafi: 2/466, The chapter on fazl Al-Do'a..., Tradition 2.
- 5. Al-Kafi: 2/467, The chapter on fazl Al-Do'a..., Tradition 8.
- 6. Al-Kafi: 2/468, Chapter Inna al-do'a silah al-mu'min, tradition 2; Mahajja al-bayza': 2/284, Bab al-thani fi adab al-do'a...
- 7. Al-Kafi: 2/471, Bab Ilham al-do'a, tradition 2; Mahajja al-Bayza': 2/284, Bab al-thani fi adab al-do'a...
- 8. Al-Kafi: 2/470, bab Inna al-do'a shifa' min kolli da', tradition 1; mahajja al-bayza': 2/285, bab al-thani fi adab al-do'a...
- 9. Al-Kafi: 2/487, Bab I-ljtima' fi al-do'a, tradition 2; Jami' ahadith shi'a: 19/354.
- 10. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il: 5/239, bab 36, tradition 5772; jami' ahadith al-shi'a: 19/354.
- 11. Wasa'il al-Shi'a: 7/104, bab 38, tradition 8856.
- 12. Wasa'il al-Shi'a: 7/105, bab 39, tradition 8860.
- 13. Kanz Al-Ummal: 5869; Mizan al-Hikmah: 10/5046; Al-Ghanut, tradition 17109.

- 14. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il: 12/59, chapter 64, tradition 13507.
- 15. Al-Kafi: 2/ 489, chapter min abta'at alayhi al-ijaba, traditions 2 and 3.
- 16. Al-Kafi: 2/489.
- 17. Al-Kafi: 2/466 in different chapters; Mahajjat al-Bayza': 268-349.
- 18. The 27th night of Ramadan; the night when the Quran was revealed.
- 19. Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 13.
- 20. Da'awat Rawandi:35, tradition 83; Bihar al-Anwar: 86/273, chapter 2, tradition 17.
- 21. Al-Muqna'a: 155; Bihar al-Anwar: 86/271, chapter 2, tradition 13 & 19.
- 22. Bihar al-Anwar: 86/282, chapter 2, tradition 27.
- 23. Bihar al-Anwar: 86/283, chapter 2, tradition 28.

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