

Prayer to Allah during difficult times

BS Foad, MD 2011

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) went to Ta'if seeking help, but he was ridiculed and was attacked by the mobs. He was hurt physically and emotionally and retired to a garden and prayed to Allah this beautiful Du'a:

(O Allah to You I complain about my weakness and lack of resources and my insignificance and humiliation by human beings! You are the most merciful of mercifuls. You are the Lord of the weak and oppressed and You are my Lord There is no god but You. To whom do You abandon me? To someone distant to me that attacks me! Or to an enemy that You gave control over me! If you are not upset with me then I do not care, but Your caring and protection for me is much better and more ample for me. I seek protection in the light in Your face, which illuminates the heavens and the earth and which illuminates the darkness, and through which all the affairs in this life and the Hereafter become right, that Your anger may befall me, or that Your displeasure may fall down on me. I will appeal to You till You are pleased with me. There is no power and there is no way for us except through You)

This Du'a teaches us several important concepts:

- 1-It is proper to complain to Allah and to turn to Him seeking His help, guidance and protection**
- 2-We should start our Du'a by praising Allah and acknowledging that He controls our destiny and our life**
- 3-It is proper to ask questions and to try and understand the rationale of events that affect our lives. This way we can cope with our difficulty and correct our mistakes, or seek patience and perseverance.**
- 4-We must understand that no one can help us in our difficulty except Allah, and we should confirm this understanding by accepting our fate and trying to change it to another fate that Allah wills for us**
- 5-What is important throughout this difficult period is to do what is right and to seek Allah's pleasure and to get close to Him**
- 6-We should never loose hope of Allah's mercy, but feel confident that He will help us and come to our aid as He wishes.**

It is proper to call on Allah, complain to Him, and seek His help, guidance and protection

If we do not turn to Allah, to whom do we turn and to whom do we complain?

The Qur'an teaches us that it is proper to turn to Allah and to explain our weakness and our suffering and to seek His help:

He said: "I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah, and I know from Allah that which ye know not.

Yusuf 12: 86

Prophet Zakaria prayed to Allah and complained that he had no children and no heirs:

Praying: "O my Lord! infirm indeed are my bones, and the hair of my head doth glisten with grey: but never am I unblest, O my Lord, in my prayer to Thee!

Marium 19: 4

"Now I fear (what) my relatives (and colleagues) (will do) after me: but my wife is barren: so give me an heir as from Thyself,

Marium 19: 5

"(One that) will (truly) represent me, and represent the posterity of Jacob; and make him, O my Lord! one with whom Thou art well pleased!"

Marium 19: 6

Allah did respond to the Du'a of Zakareyya

And (remember) Zakariya, when he cried to his Lord: "O my Lord! leave me not without offspring, though Thou art the best of inheritors."

Al-Anbia'a 21: 89

So We listened to him: and We granted him Yahya: We cured his wife's (barrenness) for him. These (three) were ever quick in emulation in good works; they used to call on Us with love and reverence, and humble themselves before Us.

Al-Anbia'a 21: 90

When Yunus was in the belly of the whale he called on his Lord, seeking His forgiveness and His help, and Allah responded to his Du'a:

And remember Zul-nun, when he departed in wrath: he imagined that We had no power over him! But he cried through the depths of darkness, "There is no god but Thou: glory to Thee: I was indeed wrong!"

Al-Anbia'a 21: 87

So We listened to him: and delivered him from distress: and thus do We deliver those who have faith.

Al-Anbia'a 21: 88

The companions of the cave called on Allah seeking His protection as they separated themselves from their people safeguarding their faith:

Behold, the youths betook themselves to the Cave: they said, "Our Lord! bestow on us mercy from Thyself, and dispose of our affair for us in the right way!"

Al-Kahf 18: 10

Allah took care of them and protected them in the cave for 300 years:

"When ye turn away from them and the things they worship other than Allah, betake yourselves to the Cave: your Lord will shower His mercies on you and dispose of your affair towards comfort and ease."

Al-Kahf 18: 16

Thou wouldst have seen the sun, when it rose, declining to the right from their Cave, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they lay in the open space in the midst of the Cave. Such are among the Signs of Allah: he whom Allah guides is rightly guided; but he whom Allah leaves to stray; for him wilt thou find no protector to lead him to the Right Way.

Al-Kahf 18: 17

Thou wouldst have deemed them awake, whilst they were asleep, and We turned them on their right and on their left sides: their dog stretching forth his two fore-legs on the threshold: if thou hadst come up on to them, thou wouldst have certainly turned back from them in flight, and wouldst certainly have been filled with terror of them.

Al-Kahf 18: 18

We should start our Du'a by praising Allah and acknowledging that He controls our destiny and our life

Calling on Allah indicates that we understand our utter dependence on Him and that we need him and need His protection, guidance and blessing and that we cannot survive without him. This is the essence of Du'a. That is why Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Du'a (calling on Allah) is Ebada (worship)
Narrated by Ahmad, Ibn Hibban & Hakim

The Qur'an orders Muslims to call on Allah, stating that those who feel too arrogant to call on Allah will enter Hell in humiliation:

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!"

GHafir 40: 60

It is proper to ask questions in order to understand the rationale behind our difficulty, and to correct our mistakes, or to seek patience and perseverance

It is natural to ask questions and to try and understand what is happening and what is affecting our lives. We need to know why we are suffering. Is it a mistake we committed, then we can correct our wrong behavior?

Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many (of them) He grants forgiveness.

Ash-Shura 42: 30

Or is this difficulty good for us and through this process we learn patience and perseverance? Or is it a test from Allah, therefore we must accept it and do our best and not loose hope?

if some good befalls them, they say, "This is from Allah"; but if evil, they say, "This is from thee" (O Prophet). Say: "All things are from Allah." But what hath come to these people that they fail to understand a single fact?

An-Nesa'a 4: 78

Whatever good, (O man!) happens to thee, is from Allah; but whatever evil happens to thee, is from thy (own) soul. And We have sent thee as a Messenger to (instruct) mankind. And enough is Allah for a witness.

An-Nesa'a 4: 79

There is nothing wrong in asking questions in order to understand and increase our faith. The Qur'an tells us that Prophet Ibrahim asked Allah to show him how He gives life to the dead! Allah showed him that he can do that though he did not show him how!

Behold! Abraham said: "My Lord! Show me how Thou givest life to the dead." He said: "Dost thou not then believe?" He said: "Yea! but to satisfy my own understanding." He said: "Take four birds; tame them to turn to thee; put a portion of them on every hill, and call to them; they will come to thee, (flying) with speed. Then know that Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise."

Al-Baqara 2: 260

The Qur'an explains that Allah did not impose restrictions or difficulties in our religion. He told us to learn and understand:

and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion;

Al-Hajj 22: 78

It is important to study, reflect and consider the verses in the Qur'an. Knowledge based on proper understanding and conviction is better than blind obedience rooted in ignorance. Knowledge and proper understanding precedes faith:

And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Qur-an) is the Truth from thy Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it: for verily Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Way.

Al-Hajj 22: 54

No one can help us but Allah

When we are experiencing difficulty and hard time, who do we turn to but Allah? No one can help us and get us out of our difficulty except Allah.

"If Allah touch thee with affliction, none can remove it but He; if He touch thee with happiness, He hath power over all things."

Al-Ana'm 6: 17

"He is the Irresistible, (watching) from above over His worshippers; and He is the Wise, Acquainted with all things.

Al-An'am 6: 18

Allah controls what happens to us. He controls our adversity and is capable of removing our difficulty, and he also controls any good that is supposed to reach us. No one can prevent what Allah has so willed:

If Allah do touch thee with hurt, there is none can remove it but He: if He do design some benefit for thee, there is none can keep back His favour: He causeth it to reach whomsoever of His servants He pleaseth. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Yunus 10: 107

Nothing happens except with God's knowledge and permission: the good and the bad are both allowed by Allah:

No kind of calamity can occur, except by the leave of Allah: and if anyone believes in Allah, (Allah) guides his heart (aright): for Allah knows all things.

At-Taghabun 64: 11

There are steps in how we can cope with adversity and get out of this difficulty:

1-Understand that such difficulty happens with Allah's knowledge and Permission

2-It may be a mistake we made that we need to correct

3-Or it may be a difficulty imposed on us as a test and a trial, therefore we Must cope with patience and perseverance

4-We must take steps to correct this difficult situation. We cannot sit idle And do nothing and expect Allah to come to our help. We must help

Ourselves and start the process of change, then Allah will surely help us: Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls).

Ar-R'ad 13: 11

Throughout these difficult times it is important to do what is right, and get close to Allah and to seek His pleasure

Some people react to difficulty by rejecting faith and complaining that it is not fair and that Allah is not just! They loose faith at the first sign of trouble:

There are among men some who serve Allah, as it were, on the verge: if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content; but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces; they lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for all to see!

Al-Hajj 22: 11

Others understand that tests and trials is part of our life and that such test and trials are good for us. It shows if we are true in faith or not, and it gives us an opportunity to show patience, perseverance and work hard:

We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false.

Al-Ankabut 29: 3

And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience; and We shall try your reported (mettle).

Muhammad 47: 31

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) teaches us in his Du'a to Allah that in difficult times what is important to turn to Allah and never question His judgment, but to work hard and to get close to Him and to seek His pleasure. The Prophet (PBUH) never stopped inviting his people to Allah despite their rejection and the abuse that he was subjected to. He did not curse them or seek revenge from them. When the Angel came telling him that he was ordered by Allah to fulfill his wish, that he could destroy Macca and Taif, the Prophet (PBUH) did not ask for punishment, rather he forgave those who abused him and said that he hoped that their descendants would be guided to the truth. We too should do the right thing and not behave wrongly because we were under duress or facing great difficulty. Part of our struggle and Jihad is to do the right thing and not commit sin or return an injury with injury:

The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah: for (Allah) loveth not those who do wrong.

Ash-Shura 42: 40

And:

Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!

Fusselat 41: 34

Repel evil with that which is best: We are well-acquainted with the things they say.

Al-Mumenoun 23: 96

Never loose hope of Allah's mercy

Part of faith is to never loose faith of Allah's mercy. The Qur'an explains this concept on the tongue of Prophet's Abraham and Israel:

He said: "And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, but such as go astray?"

Al-Hijr 15: 56

And

"O my sons! go ye and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's soothing Mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith."

Yusuf 12: 87

To despair of Allah's mercy means:

-We are misguided from the truth and we do not understand who controls Our fate and who is in control

-And to despair means that we have no real faith in Allah, and that we

Only know Him and appreciate His blessings only in good times.

Prayer to Allah during difficult times

BS Foad, MD 2012

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on returning from Ta'if, having faced rejection and abuse prayed to Allah:

(O Allah to You I complain of my weakness and lack of resources, and my insignificance and humiliation by human beings. You are the Most merciful of mercifuls. You are the Lord of the weak and oppressed and You are my Lord. There is no god but You. To whom do You abandon me? To someone distant that attacks me! Or to an enemy that You gave control over me? If you are not upset with me then I do not care, but Your caring and protection is much better for me and more ample. I seek protection in the light of Your face, which illuminates the heavens and the earth and which illuminates the darkness, and through which all the affairs in this life and the hereafter become right, that Your anger may befall me, or that Your displeasure may fall down on me. I will appeal to You till You are pleased with me. There is no power and there is no way for us except through You)

We learn several concepts from the Prophet's Du'a:

1-It is proper to complain to Allah, and to turn to Him seeking His help, guidance and protection

"He said: "I only complain of my distraction and anguish to Allah" Yusuf 12: 86

"And remember Zul-nun when he departed in anger, he imagined that We had no power over him! But he Cried in the darkness: "There is no god but You, glory to You, I was indeed wrong" Al-Anbia'a 21:87

2-We should start our Du'a by praising Allah and acknowledging that He controls our destiny

"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 humiliated" Ghafir 40: 60

3-It is proper to ask questions in order to understand the rationale behind our difficulty, and to correct our mistakes, or to seek patience and perseverance

"Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things you have done, and Allah forgives many Mistakes" Ash-Shura 42: 30

"No kind of calamity can occur except by Allah's leave; and if anyone believes in Allah, Allah guides his heart, for Allah knows all things" At-Taghabun 64: 11

"We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are False" Al-Ankabut 29: 3

"And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience, and We shall try your mettle" Muhammad 47: 31

4-No one can help us but Allah

"If Allah touch you with difficulty, none can remove it but He; if He wants some benefit for you, there is none that can keep back His favor" Yunus 10: 107

5-We should help ourselves then Allah will help us

"Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change it themselves" Ar'Ra'd 13: 11

6-During these difficult times it is important to do what is right, and to get close to Allah and to seek His pleasure

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not seek revenge or exact punishment from those who rejected him or abused him, rather he prayed to Allah to guide their descendants.

"The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto; but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation his reward is due from Allah" Ash-Shura 42: 40

"Repel evil with that which is best, We are well-acquainted with what they say" Al-Mumenoun 23: 96

7-Never loose hope of Allah's mercy

"(Abraham) said: "And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord but such as go astray?" Al-Hijr 15: 56

"(Israel)l said: "And never despair of Allah's soothing mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's soothing mercy except those who have no faith" Yusuf 12: 87