

14. To Repeat the *Du'ā* Three Times

This is a recommended action while making a *du'ā*, for it shows a sense of urgency in obtaining what is asked for. The act of repeating a *du'ā* thrice is narrated in many *ahadith* from the Prophet (ﷺ), as, for example, the one reported by Ibn Mas'ūd, who said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) finished his prayer, he (ﷺ) raised his voice, and prayed against them (the leaders of the Quraysh who had persecuted him). And whenever he made a *du'ā*, he would repeat it thrice, and whenever he asked (from Allāh), he would do so thrice. So he (ﷺ) then said:

"O Allāh! Upon you is (the retaliation) of the Quraysh!

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Anas ibn Mālik also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Whoever asks for Paradise three times, Paradise says: 'O Allāh! Enter him into Paradise!' And whoever seeks refuge from the Hellfire three times, the Hellfire says: 'O Allāh! Save him from the Hellfire!'"¹⁵⁸

15. To Pray with Concise *Du'ās*

'Concise' *du'ās* are those which are brief, yet contain many meanings, and ask for general benefits, and seek refuge in general evils. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray frequently with concise *du'ās*, and he was the one who had been given the most eloquent and concise of words. It was as if he (ﷺ) were asking for all the good possible of both worlds, and seeking refuge in all evils, in the briefest and most eloquent of phrases, so that the people who heard him (ﷺ) could memorise his *du'ās* easily, and understand what he said.

¹⁵⁷ Reported by, among others, al-Bukhārī (420), Muslim (1794) (and the wording is his), from Ibn Mas'ūd.

¹⁵⁸ Authentic, narrated by al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasā'i and al-Hākim, from Anas, and authenticated in *Sahih al-Jāmi'* # 6275.

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to avoid prolonged, useless speech, for 'Ā'ishah narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ) "...used to love concise *du'ās*, and he would leave all (*du'ās*) besides those".¹⁵⁹

Al-Khaṭṭābī states: "So let him (i.e. the worshipper) choose for his *du'ā* the appropriate words, and let him praise his Lord using the best praises, and the noblest of them, and the most comprehensive in meaning. For (*du'ā*) is a secret conversation between the slave and the Master of all masters, whom no one resembles, nor does He have an equal!"¹⁶⁰

Many such *du'ās* have been preserved for us in the books of ḥadīth. For example, Farwah ibn Nawfal reported that he asked 'Ā'ishah for a *du'ā* that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray with. She answered: "He (ﷺ) used to say:

"O Allāh! I seek refuge in you from the evil of what I have done, and the evil that I have not done!"¹⁶¹

This *du'ā* is a general, comprehensive one which seeks refuge in Allāh from all evil, whether a person has done that evil or not.

Another comprehensive *du'ā* that the Prophet (ﷺ) used is:

"O Allāh! Forgive my sins and my ignorance, and my transgressions in my affairs, and all that You know of me. O Allāh! Forgive me my sins done seriously or jokingly, purposely or unintentionally, and all else that is with me! O Allāh, forgive me what I have done, and what I have yet to do, and what I have done in secret, and what I have done openly, and all that you know of me. You are the First, and you are the Last, and You are capable of all things!"¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Authentic, narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Ahmad, Ibn Ḥibbān and others, from 'Ā'ishah, and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmī'* # 4949

¹⁶⁰ *Sha'n al-Du'ā*, p. 15.

¹⁶¹ Narrated by Muslim from Abū Dharr, and Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasā'i from 'Ā'ishah, as mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmī'* # 1293.

¹⁶² Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, from Abū Mūsa al-Ash'ari', as mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmī'* # 1264.

And from such concise prayers is the *du'ā* of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“O Allāh, Our Lord! Grant us the good in this world, and the good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of Hell!”¹⁶³

Therefore, remember the value of your time, and do not cease to make *du'ā* to Allāh on all occasions and as often as you can. And how many are the words that spring forth from our mouths, that will not benefit us at all, or even be used against us on the Day of Judgement (we seek refuge in Allāh from that!). Yet, how easy these simple *du'ās* are, and how concise and brief, and how full of blessings and mercy! For is it not possible that a person says one of these concise *du'ās*, thinking it a small and trivial request, and yet the angels of Mercy take it, and the doors of Heaven are opened for it, and the Lord of Mercy responds to it, so that on the Day of Judgement, the Scales weigh heavy because of it?

And how true the Arabic proverb: the best speech is that which is concise yet clear in meaning.

16. To Start *Du'ā* with One's Self

It is desirable that the person making the *du'ā* should first ask of it for himself. This is so for a number of reasons. Firstly, a person should desire all good for himself, so it does not make sense to pray for others and forget one's self. Secondly, the fact that a person prays for himself shows that what he is praying for is an important goal and objective. In other words, this ensures that he desires for his brothers what he desires for himself. Thirdly, it increases him in his sincerity in this *du'ā*, for verily mankind is weak, so when he makes *du'ā* only for his brother, it is possible that it will not be as sincere as when he makes a *du'ā* for himself *and* his brother.

This principle is demonstrated in a number of Qur'ānic verses, such as:

¹⁶³ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, as mentioned in *Sahih al-Jāmi'* # 1306.

رَبَّنَا أَغْفِرْنَا وَلِإِخْرَوْنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ

“O Allāh! Forgive us, and our brothers (in faith) who have preceded us!”¹⁶⁴

قَالَ رَبِّي أَغْفِرْ لِي وَلِأَخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ

“And he (Mūsa) prayed: O my Lord! Forgive me and my brother, and enter us into your Mercy!”¹⁶⁵

رَبَّنَا أَغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

“O Our Lord! Forgive me, and my parents, and all of the believers the Day that the Account will be taken!”¹⁶⁶

وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنِبِي وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

“And Seek forgiveness (O Muḥammad) for your sins, and for the believing men and women.”¹⁶⁷

Likewise, this principle is affirmed by the practice of the Prophet ﷺ. Ubayy ibn Ka'b reports that whenever the Prophet ﷺ remembered someone and prayed for him, he would begin with himself.¹⁶⁸

However, this was not the constant habit of the Prophet ﷺ, for there are other narrations to show that sometimes he ﷺ would pray for another person without praying for himself. For example, when he was speaking about Hājar, Ismā'il's mother , he ﷺ said:

“May Allāh have mercy on the mother of Ismā'il. Had she left Zam Zam (to flow, and not stopped it with some sand) it would have been a clear lake”.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Sūrah *al-Hashr*, 10.

¹⁶⁵ Sūrah *al-A'rāf*, 151.

¹⁶⁶ Sūrah *Ibrāhīm*, 41.

¹⁶⁷ Sūrah *Muhammad*, 19.

¹⁶⁸ Authentic, narrated by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'i and others, from Ubayy ibn Ka'b, and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* # 4723.

¹⁶⁹ Reported by al-Bukhārī, from Anas ibn Mālik, as reported in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* # 8079.

He also said regarding Ḥassān ibn Thābit,

“O Allāh! Help him with the Holy Spirit (the Angel Jibril)!”,¹⁷⁰

and for Ibn ‘Abbās,

“O Allāh! Grant him an understanding of the religion!”¹⁷¹

These, and other examples besides these, show the permissibility of making a *du’ā* without mentioning one’s self, but in general it is recommended to do so.

17. To Pray for All Muslims

Part of the completeness of one’s *imān* is that a person loves for his brother what he loves for himself. Therefore, just as he desires that he be guided to the truth, and be forgiven for his sins, so too should he desire the same for his fellow Muslims.

The Prophet (ﷺ) is commanded in the Qur’ān to:

وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنِيْكَ وَلِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

...seek forgiveness (from Allāh) for your sins, and the sins of the believing men and women.¹⁷²

Likewise, the Prophet Nūḥ prayed to Allāh:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَ وَلِمَن دَخَلَ بَيْتِي
مُؤْمِنًا وَلِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

“O My Lord! Forgive me, and my parents, and whoever entered my house as a believer, and all the believing men and women”.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Reported by al-Bukhārī (453), Muslim (2485) and others, from Abū Hurayrah.

¹⁷¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī (143), Muslim (2477) and others, from Ibn ‘Abbās.

¹⁷² Sūrah *Muhammad*, 19.

¹⁷³ Sūrah *Nūḥ*, 28.