

Healing (*Shifa*) Through Devotion: A Comprehensive Study of Daily Supplications from the Quran and Hadith

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Abstract

This research paper explores the profound concept of healing (*shifa*) through devotion as explained in the Quran and Hadith. The central premise revolves around the idea that humans are created to devoutly worship and supplicate Allah, fostering a profound connection that surpasses mere obedience. It examines the integral role of continuous engagement in prayer, emphasising the divine response that ensues from sincere supplication. Drawing from Quranic injunctions and prophetic teachings, the paper elucidates the significance of divine proximity and responsiveness in Islam, highlighting the many forms of acceptance of supplications. Additionally, it outlines the etiquettes of supplication, underscoring the importance of sincerity, humility, and adherence to Islamic principles. Through a comprehensive exploration of these themes, this paper offers insights into the transformative power of devotion and supplication in fostering spiritual healing and guidance.

Keywords: Healing and devotion, *shifa*, supplication, obedience, divine response, acceptance, spiritual healing, connection with Allah

1. Introduction:

Allah has created humans with one main purpose: to devote themselves to Him and engage in worship and prayer as often and as regularly as possible. Islam has given us an excellent way to express our devotion to Allah and that is prayers and supplications. In the Arabic language, obedience is associated with devotion, which signifies the commitment of the worshiper, and worshiper is a term used in connection with Allah. In this context, Allah represents an attribute of the one who is worshipped.

1.1 Obedience

Obedience is a show of great humility, vulnerability, and neediness in front of Allah Almighty. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who held the highest station of obedience, was also gifted with the highest level of humility. In various places in the Holy Quran, the characteristic of obedience to the Prophet ﷺ is described as the most respectable title. As Muslims, we stand by the belief that Allah alone knows what is best for us and we must obey and accept whatever He gives us. As mentioned in the Quran, “It is possible that you dislike something which is good for you, and that you love something which is bad for you. Allah knows, and you do not know.”¹

1.2 Continuous Engagement in Prayer:

Allah expects His creatures to engage in everlasting and unwavering prayer, without any lapse or neglect. The Prophet ﷺ has warned against neglecting supplication in the following words, “Whoever does not call upon Allah, He will be angry with him.”² Hence, in the Holy Quran, Allah instructed believers to seek supplication in the following terms, “Your Lord has proclaimed, ‘Call upon Me, I will respond to you. Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell, fully humbled’.”³

¹ Quran, Al-Baqarah: 211

² Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith No: 3827

³ Al Quran. Ghafir: 60

1.3 Divine Response:

The claim of divine response in Islam stands as a testament to the intimate connection between Allah and His followers. In a Quranic injunction, Allah addresses the Prophet ﷺ, emphasising the proximity and responsiveness that characterise the divine relationship. “When My servants ask you ‘O Prophet’ about Me: I am truly near. I respond to one’s prayer when they call upon Me. So let them respond with obedience to Me and believe in Me, perhaps they will be guided to the Right Way.”⁴ The subsequent assurance intensifies the divine bond, as Allah declares, “I respond to one’s prayer when they call upon Me.” This divine promise encapsulates the profound reality that Allah is not only close but also responsive, attentively answering the supplications of His followers. The injunction concludes with a call to obedience and belief, inviting believers to respond in kind, fostering a connection that may guide them to the righteous path.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as the exemplar of divine teachings, emphasised the declaration of divine response in numerous hadiths. His teachings echoed the Quranic assurance that Allah is near and responsive to the calls of His servants. The Prophet ﷺ, through his words and actions, consistently underscored the accessibility of Allah's mercy and the readiness of the divine to answer the prayers of believers. His teachings encouraged the Ummah to approach Allah with confidence, knowing that their supplications would not go unheard. Prophet ﷺ, in various narrations, highlighted the profound impact of sincere prayer and urged his followers to embrace this intimate connection with the Divine, affirming the divine promise of a responsive and compassionate Creator. Prophet ﷺ said: “Let each of you ask Him for all your needs. Even if salt is needed, they should ask him. And if the strap of someone's shoe breaks, they should also ask him for it.”⁵

2. Literature Review:

This research paper's literature study provides a thorough analysis of recent academic studies on the crucial role that supplications play in Islamic traditions.

Qadhi, in his book *Du'a: The Weapon of the Believer*, discussed the significance and power of *du'a* (prayer) according to Islamic practices. He explains how *du'a* serves as a powerful tool for Muslims, allowing them to connect with Allah, seek their guidance, and express their needs and desires. The book also discusses various aspects of *du'a* such as the etiquette, perfect conditions for acceptance, and the impact it can have on an individual's life. It emphasises the importance of sincere and heartfelt invocation, trust in Allah's mercy, and persistence in prayer, presenting *du'a* as a fundamental aspect of faith and a means to strengthen one's relationship with the Divine. “When a person makes *du'a*, he demonstrates his own humility and meekness to the Creator and frees himself from arrogance.”⁶

Imam Baqir highlights the significance of supplication, stating it is the most superior form of worship. Ultimately, supplication offers solace and relief, as God responds swiftly to the calls of the distressed, illustrating the immediacy of divine intervention. “Supplication or prayer is the bridge that connects man to his Creator. By calling God, we can have the help of the Creator of the universe in our life.”⁷

Hayati Aydin details two significant facets of Islamic devotion in his article *Supplication, Prayer and the Inner Peace They Afford*. It primarily emphasises on two distinct meanings of prayer: *salat* (prayer) and *du'a* (supplication). In

⁴ Al Quran. Baqarah 186

⁵ Sunan-e-Tirmidhi 3604

⁶ Qadhi, Yasir. *Du'a: The Weapon of the Believer*. Al-Hidaayah Publishing & Distribution, 2001.

⁷ Maktabdar, Ali Reza. "Supplication: An Islamic Viewpoint."

Islamic faith, supplication is offering God one's entire being and bringing Him one's material and spiritual demands. Salat, or intercession, is correspondence between the spiritual and temporal realms.⁸

Maria Yaseen's book *Concept of Dua in Islam* offers a thorough examination of the Islamic idea of dua, or supplication, including its workings, suitable petitions to Allah, situations in which it can be used, and the right ways to make dua. It explores the meaning of dua in connection to Allah's divine plan and the Islamic notion of destiny, as well as the variables that affect whether or not dua is answered. This book seeks to clarify the meaning, intent, and importance of dua as a channel for communication with Allah by utilising stories from the Quran about good people whose lives demonstrate the effectiveness and force of prayer.⁹

Fazail-e-Dua by Maulana Naqi Ali focuses on the significance, virtues, and benefits of making dua (supplication) in Islam. It explores various aspects related to dua, such as its importance in seeking Allah's help, its effectiveness in achieving spiritual and worldly goals, and its role in strengthening the bond between the believer and their Creator. It discusses different types of dua, including general prayers, specific supplications for various situations, and the etiquettes and manners of making dua.¹⁰

Adb ud-Dua explores a number of dua-related topics, such as when and how one should pray, proper dua etiquette, and the frame of mind and demeanour one should have when speaking with Allah. The book highlights the value of prayer as a way to develop a strong relationship with the Creator and stresses the significance of sincerity, humility, and confidence in the acceptance of dua.¹¹

The Power of Dua explores the profound meaning of prayer in Islam. It starts out by talking about how sins negatively impact people's life and stresses how important it is to make dua to Allah. The forbids ignoring dua since doing so angers Allah. Invoking the promises of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad's assurances, the book emphasises the importance of dua in Islam and its effectiveness in requesting divine assistance. It also illustrates how to invoke Allah by name and traits, showing how dua establishes a deep spiritual relationship.¹²

3. Meaning of Acceptance:

Allah has made the promise that when someone prays to Allah, keeping in mind the proper conditions and manners as prescribed by Islam, their supplication is accepted in one of three forms.

3.1 Forms of Acceptance:

There are three forms of acceptance of *dua*. The first is that the person receives exactly what they asked for, or something even better, from Allah's unlimited compassion. The second form is that Allah may prevent a calamity or hardship destined for the person. The third form of acceptance is that the *dua* is transformed into blessings and goodness in a person's deeds. Therefore, the acceptance of a supplication does not necessarily mean that the

⁸ Aydin, Hayati. "Supplication, Prayer and the Inner Peace They Afford." *The Journal of Rotterdam Islamic and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2013): 46.

⁹ Yaseen, Maria. *Concept of Dua in Islam*. Amazon Digital Services LLC - Kdp, 2020.

¹⁰ Ali, Naqi. *Fazail-e-Dua*. Muktabal Madina, Karachi. 2009.

¹¹ Amin, Muhammad Mufti. *Adb ud-Dua*. Maktaba Subah Noor.

¹² *The Power of Dua (to Allah): An Essential Guide to Increase the Effectiveness of Making Dua to Allah*. United States: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012.

person receives exactly what they asked for. Rather, it signifies that the supplicant's plea is not rejected. In a hadith, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated:

“Your Lord is munificent and generous, and is ashamed to turn away empty the hands of His servant when he raises them to Him.”¹³

4. Etiquette of Supplication:

Allah has provided guidance in the Holy Quran regarding the manner and etiquette of prayer and supplication.

4.1 Humility and Secrecy:

In this regard, Allah has instructed:

“Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. Indeed, He does not like the aggressors.”¹⁴

In this verse, two etiquettes of supplication are mentioned: humility and being in secret. Humility means that one should humble oneself during supplication, avoiding arrogance, pride, or a sense of self-sufficiency. Being in secret relates to maintaining a low voice and not making the supplication loud and apparent.

4.2 Fear and Aspiration:

At another place in the Quran, two additional etiquettes of supplication are mentioned:

“And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.”¹⁵

This verse indicates that, during supplication, the heart of the person should be in a state of fear that their supplication might not be accepted due to their sins, and at the same time, there should be hope that their supplication can indeed be accepted through the vast mercy of Allah. Therefore, supplication is accepted when a person maintains a balance between these two states.

Some scholars suggest that during times of good health and well-being, one should emphasise fear to prevent carelessness in obedience, and as the time of death approaches, one should emphasise hope to avoid despair. This approach ensures steadfastness in obedience to Allah and maintaining hope in His mercy.¹⁶

To sum up, the real purpose of life and well-being is to remain steadfast on the path of true religion, adhering to the obedience of Allah. The Quran and the practices of the prophets and righteous individuals reveal that they combined fear and hope while supplicating. According to the Quran, “Their sides (at night) are separated from their beds. They are calling upon their Lord with fear and (mixed feelings of) hope. And what We have provided them with is this. I spend (in good deeds).”¹⁷ In another place, Allah says about his prophets, “Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear. And they were to Us humbly submissive.”¹⁸

4.2 Etiquettes of supplication in Light of Hadiths:

Just as the manners of seeking supplication are taught in the Holy Quran, in the hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ taught his Ummah the etiquettes of supplication. The more we observe these etiquettes while supplicating, the faster they will be accepted. It is evident from the study of hadiths that it is essential to consider these etiquettes before supplicating and while supplicating:

¹³ Abu Dawood, Hadith 1488.

¹⁴ (Al-A'raf 7:55)

¹⁵ (Al-A'raf 7:56)

¹⁶ Abu Hiyan al-Andalusi, Muhammad ibn Yusuf, Al-Bahr al-Mahayt fi al-Tafseer, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, vol. 5, p. 71

¹⁷ Al Quran. Al Sajidah 32:16

¹⁸ Al-Anbiya 21:90

The supplication should be made with certainty in its acceptance. "Invoke Allah with certainty of being answered, and know that Allah does not accept the supplication from an absent heart, one that is not attentive."¹⁹ Another hadith narrates the same concept with these words: "Let not any of you say, 'O Allah, forgive me if You wish, have mercy on me if You wish, provide for me if You wish,' but he should be firm in his request, for indeed Allah does what He wills and no one can force Him."²⁰

The second etiquette of the acceptance is that one should ensure the provision of lawful sustenance, for Prophet Muhammad ﷺ conditioned the success and acceptance of good deeds with lawful provision. "A man whose journey is long, his hair dishevelled, and covered with dust, stretches his hands towards the sky, saying, 'O Lord, O Lord!' But his food is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, his clothing is unlawful, and he has been nourished with unlawful things. So how can his supplication be answered?"²¹

The third etiquette is that if there is a delay in the acceptance of supplication, one should persist in praying with hope from Allah or, otherwise, be equal in asking from Allah. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), "The supplication of every one of you will be granted if he does not get impatient and say (for example): 'I supplicated my *rab* (Allah) but my prayer has not been granted."²²

One etiquette of supplication is that when Allah's blessings are abundant, one should make supplication a habit, as Allah accepts supplications when one is in difficulty and distress. Abu Huraira narrates that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever desires that Allah answers him in times of hardship and suffering, then let him increase his supplication in times of ease."²³

5. Benefits and Rewards of Supplications:

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also informed about the virtues and benefits of supplication. A hadith states, "Nothing is more honourable to Allah, the Exalted, than supplication."²⁴ Highlighting the benefits of supplication, the Prophet ﷺ stated, "For whoever among you the door of supplication is opened, the doors of mercy are opened for him. Whatever is asked of Allah, it is more beloved to Him that he asks for well-being."²⁵ In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ emphasised the wide-ranging benefits of supplication, stating, "Verily, supplication benefits from what has descended and what has not yet descended. So, O servants of Allah, persist in supplication!"²⁶ Furthermore, supplication has been described as a potent weapon for believers: "Shall I not tell you about something that will help you guard against your enemies and will earn you sustenance from your Lord? You should invoke Allah morning and evening, for supplication is the weapon of the believer."²⁷ In conclusion, the Prophet ﷺ urged believers to incorporate supplication into their daily lives, recognising its power not only to seek protection from enemies but also to attain sustenance from Allah.

¹⁹ Musnad Bazzar: 10061

²⁰ Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. "Book of Monotheism and Refutation of the Deniers of Allah's Unity." In Sahih al-Bukhari. Chapter on Divine Will and Determination. Hadith number 7477.

²¹ Al-Qushayri. Sahih Muslim. Book of Zakat. Chapter on Acceptance of Charity from Good Earnings and its Proper Upbringing. Hadith Number: 2346.

²² Bukhari, M. I. Sahih al-Bukhari. Book of Invocations. Chapter on a Servant Being Answered As Long As He Does Not Hasten. Hadith Number: 6340.

²³ Tirmidhi, M. I. Sunan al-Tirmidhi. Chapters on Supplications from the Messenger of Allah. Chapter on What Has Been Narrated That the Supplication of a Muslim Is Answered. Hadith Number: 3382.

²⁴ Sunan Tirmidhi: 3370

²⁵ Sunan Tirmidhi: 3548

²⁶ Sunan Tirmidhi: 2813

²⁷ Musnad Abu Ya'la: 1812

5.1 The Blessed Supplications and Their Benefits:

In the Quran, Allah has provided us with the teachings of seeking through various supplications of the prophets and righteous individuals. Upon studying the noble biography of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, we come to know that among his attributes, a predominant one was his constant engagement in supplication. It is mentioned in a comprehensible hadith that when he raised his hands in the divine court, his blessed palms emitted a radiant light of humility. The *sunnah* supplications taught by the Prophet ﷺ on various occasions, are a reservoir of knowledge and wisdom, illuminating the Ummah with miraculous guidance. They also offer a profound connection with Allah. When we remember and recite these words while seeking Allah's mercy, we invoke the prayers of the beloved Prophet ﷺ, who beseeched his Creator and Sustainer with these very words.

By contemplating on the virtues and blessings associated with these supplications, we realise their immense value. These supplications serve as a manifestation of the Prophet's ﷺ connection with Allah. If we sincerely pray using the words that the beloved Prophet ﷺ used to invoke Allah, our supplications will undoubtedly be accepted. Allah will respond to our prayers made in the same words through which the beloved Prophet ﷺ sought closeness to the Creator.

5.2 Selected Supplications and Their Benefits:

As an example, a few Sunnah supplications and their benefits are presented here.

5.2.1 Significance of *Tasmia* and *Tauz*

Tasmia بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ is commonly recited by Muslims before beginning any task or activity. The verse translates to "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." It's the opening phrase of many chapters of the Quran and is recited by Muslims before starting any significant task, such as eating, entering a house, or beginning a journey.

Its significance lies in acknowledging that all actions should be initiated with the name of Allah, seeking His blessings and guidance. It serves as a reminder of the importance of Allah's sovereignty over all aspects of life. According to Islamic teachings, reciting "Bismillah" before actions is not only a means of seeking Allah's blessings but also a way to ward off evil and ensure that one's endeavours.

Tauz (أَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِیْمِ), also known as *Auzu billah*, is a phrase recited by Muslims seeking protection from the influence of Satan and evil forces. It means, "I seek refuge in Allah from *shaitan*, the accursed." Its significance stems from the belief in the existence of Satan (*shaitan*) as an adversary to humans, constantly striving to lead them astray from the path of righteousness.

By seeking refuge in Allah from *shaitan*, Muslims acknowledge their dependence on Allah's protection and their vulnerability to Satanic temptations. This phrase is often recited before engaging in acts of worship, such as reciting the Quran, performing prayers, or embarking on any significant task, as a means of fortifying oneself against evil influences.

Both '*Bismillah*' and '*Auzu billah*' hold significant importance in the life of a Muslim, as they serve as expressions of reliance on Allah's guidance and protection in all endeavours, while also acknowledging the presence of spiritual adversaries and seeking refuge from their influence.

5.2.1 Other prescribed supplications :

Supplications, or *du'as*, hold a significant place in the practice of Islam, serving as a means for believers to connect with Allah, seek His guidance, and invoke His blessings and protection in various aspects of life. Among these are supplications for healing, repayment of debts, and seeking refuge in Allah's protection.

Seeking refuge in Allah to grant healing is a powerful supplication recommended by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for individuals facing critical illnesses.

أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ، رَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ أَنْ يَشْفِيكَ²⁸

Reciting this prayer seven times, as guided by the Prophet, may lead to healing before the appointed time of death. Additionally, it is advised for those personally ill or with sick relatives. This supplication exemplifies the profound connection with Allah, invoking His mercy and healing.

For the **repayment of loans**, a supplication seeking Allah's lawful provision and protection from forbidden sources is highly beneficial.

اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِي بِحَلَالِكَ عَنْ حَرَامِكَ وَأَغْنِنِي بِفَضْلِكَ عَمَّنْ سِوَاكَ²⁹

This supplication, taught by the Prophet to Hazrat Ali, ensures divine assistance in paying off debts, regardless of their magnitude.

Reciting the following supplication during times of adversity or fear from enemies is highly beneficial and proven.

اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِنَا وَآمِنْ رُؤُوسَنَا³⁰

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to frequently recite this supplication during the Battle of the Trench when the disbelievers and polytheists launched a massive attack on the Muslims in Medina. At that time, in a state of extreme fear and distress, the Prophet ﷺ instructed the companions to supplicate with these words to Allah. It is narrated that when they recited this supplication, Allah caused a severe storm to scatter the faces of the enemies and humiliated them.

6. Summary:

It is emphasised that we should always pray to our generous Allah, and even if we do not see immediate effects of our prayers, we should not lose hope. Sometimes, our requests to the Lord may not be beneficial for us in reality, but our generous Provider, in His grace and kindness, grants us something better in return and protects us from its shortcomings. This is because He, the Creator and Master, knows us better than ourselves, as indicated in the divine guidance. At times, Allah, in response to His servant's prayer, decides to reward them with blessings in the hereafter instead of immediate worldly gains. A hadith illustrates that a person's prayer is never in vain; it either leads to the forgiveness of sins, brings worldly benefits, or accumulates goodness for them in the afterlife. Praying for halal (lawful) provision is crucial, as sustenance from unlawful sources can hinder the acceptance of prayers.

The conclusion encourages believers, with utmost faith and trust, to continue praying to their Allah and seek halal sustenance, and also to present their humble requests in the refuge of His benevolence. May Allah grant us the ability to adhere to these principles and bless us with the benefits and fruits of these recommended supplications.

²⁸ Al-Sijistani, Sulayman ibn Ash'ath, Sunan Abu Dawood, *Book of Funerals*, Chapter on Supplication for the Sick During Visitation, Number: 3106

²⁹ Tirmidhi, Muhammad ibn Isa, Sunan Tirmidhi, *Book of Supplications Made by the Messenger of Allah*, Number: 3563

³⁰ Musnad Ahmad, Number: 10996