Du’ā

A way to connect God

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Abstract: *the researcher of the present study draw readers’ attentions to the meanings of du’ā offered by some scholars, like Ayatullah Mahdi Isfahani and Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Baqir Maleki Miyaniji. Further, he touches upon the importance of du’ā which is a way to get closer to God and to remember the innate powerlessness of human beings in front of God, from Qurānic and traditions point of view. The impact of prayer at the time of hardship and Badā which is one of the most significant issues regarding the Unity of God “Tu i d” mentioned in Quran and traditions has been also dealt with.*

Keywords*: du’ā, Unity of God (Tu id), Human beings, innate powerlessness, hardship, Bada , Isfahani, MirzaMahdi, Maleki Miyaneji*

Du’ā and its meanings

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In Arabic it means calling for. For example, in this sentence

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Du’ā “□□□ ” means “he called someone”, i.e. the word called can be replaced by the word “du’ā” in Arabic. Therefore when someone calls God or perform du’ā means he is hopeful in God’s favor.

There are various motivations and causes for du’ā. To show these differences, in Arabic, there are some special prepositions. For example, when it is said, □□□ □□□□□ “He performed du’ā for someone”, it means “He asked God’s help for him” and “
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”
means
“he performed du’ā against him” or “he asked God’s anger for him”.
[ii]

The meaning of du’ā from Mirza Mahdi Isfahani point of view

Mirza Isfahani paying attention to the usages of the words “du’ā” and “Salāt” did not believe them to be synonyms; he claimed, it is obvious that wherever the word “du’ā” has been used, it needs an object. But regarding the word “
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alāt” no object is needed. It declares that they are not synonyms. The truth is du’ā does not mean “call for something” but this calling for is one aspect of du’ā. Du’ā refers to paying attention to someone to attract him/her to himself. As it is recorded in our supplications in religious texts, du’ā is something which will be realized by praising and worshipping God, asking for His forgiveness and pleading for His help. [i.e. to draw His attention to himself] But
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alāt means paying attention to others regardless of drawing his attention to himself.
[iii]

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The same meaning has been cited by one of his students, late Maleki Miyaniji like this: apparently du’ā means paying attention to the other one in order to draw his/her attention to himself; unlike Salāt which means paying attention to another one regardless of drawing his attention to himself. [iv]

The significance of du’ā

Du’ā is a connecting link between absolute needy human beings and the Omnipotent Wise God; the One who always behaves kindly and forgivingly with those needy ones who are extending their empty hands towards Him. The One who is famous for His kindness and Mercy. Du’ā means turning our face to His Majesty; to the One who is the far much closest one , the Wisest One and the Kindest One to human beings.

Du’ā is a way of reminding God, as he said,

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“*So remember me, I will remember you*” (the holy Quran, 2:152)

What is more valued for human being than that God has reminded him and aimed at giving His blessings to him? The blessing which will be pour upon him by his attention.

Du’ā is a confession of being-servant-of-God, a way of showing unimportance and humility in front of His Greatness.

Du’ā is a means to reach the highest grades of understanding and wisdom.

Du’ā and □Ibādat

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 Ibādat means humbleness. Du’ā is one of the obvious examples of this humbleness in front of God. In fact, a servant of God, who is worshipping God and taking refuge in God from the hardship of life, seeks calmness there, confesses to His mastership, and declares his humbleness and need. As God says,

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“Your lord has said: 'call on me and I will answer you. Those who are too proud to worship me shall enter Hell utterly abject.” (the holy Quran, 60:40)

Imam Sādiq in his explanation concerning the above verse said,

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“It refers to du’ā and du’ā is the best way to worship God.” [v]

Also he added,

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“Perform du’ā and do not say God put in our destiny whatever is going to happen. Truly, du’ā is a way to worship God. God the Almighty says, “Those who are too proud to worship me shall enter Hell utterly abject.” [vi]

Ayatullah Miyaneji wrote in its explanation: a poor-person-supplication and his refugee in the

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court of the absolute Wealth are the examples of Ibādat and humbleness; though this should be done by the clear confession to His Majesty, one should be aware that he is in need and could not benefit or removes harm from himself without His Will.

Du’ā by observing these conditions is against any tyranny and arrogance. For this reason when someone ignores du’ā, in fact denies his powerlessness. He believes in his dignity, so he does not feel any need to Him. [vii]

Therefore, in du’ā and by du’ā, human beings express their desperate need and confess to Richness of God. The true worship and the heart of worship should be this.”

Du’ā a means of getting closer to God

Remembering God “Dhikr” is one of the most important duties of each human being that no one should dismiss it. Remembering God calms hearts, obviates depression and doubts. God orders His servants to Zikr like this,

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“*O, believers, remember Allah frequently” “exalt him at dawn and in the evening*.” (33; 41/42)

In another verse, salvation has been regarded as one of its results and says,

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" and, remember Allah often, so that you prosper.” (62:10)

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Ignoring remembrance of God will result in hardness of hearts as God says in a heavenly tradition:

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Ignoring my remembrance will cause hardness of hearts [viii] .

Against it, remembering God can calm hearts and eradicate cruelty. The one whose heart is full of God’s remembrance, will not be left alone in pains and hardship as in his hard time, he will call for God’s help. Du’ā as it has been said is paying attention to the other one to attract his attention to fulfill what is in one’s mind. Human being is in need in his nature and desperate need covers his whole life. He needs his master.

This Dhikr and remembrance will cause closeness to God, and will elevate people’s positions. When a human being takes one step towards God, God will take more steps towards him. The prophet told Abudhar,

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Remind God so God will remind you. Remind Him to see Him in front of yourself. Remember God in relief and joy until God reminds you in your hardship and pain. [ix]

A servant of God should always remember God in hardship and it is proper he remembers God even in hardship MORE to be surrounded by His attention in all situations.

The one who ignores God at the time of joy and health, should not expect his Lord takes care of him in hardship; though God is a kind Lord and easily can forgive and ignore people’s sins, not only does He accept their repentance and return, but also He loves them.

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Du’ā is a special relationship with God. Human being while praying and by praying can find God besides himself, his heart warms up by Him, he believes He is the only One in solving His problems, answering his requests and helping him having a good life. Du’ā can connect human beings and God; human beings should observe the dignity of their Lord and the Lord will face His servants kindly and get them closer to Him.

Imam Sādiq said,

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I advise you to pray. Truly there isn’t anything similar to that which can get you closer to God. Do not hesitate asking for small things from God because of their smallness; as the owner and fulfiller of small requests is the same God that answer big requests. [x]

Therefore du’ā is one of the conduits of getting closer to God. Imam Ali counted du’ā as the best deed of human beings and said,

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The most favorite deeds in front of God on the whole earth is du’ā. [xi] God also depends human beings honor to their supplication and says,

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“*say: 'my lord cares little for you if it was not for your supplication*,”(25/77)

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Therefore, du’ā should be accompanied by attention and gnosis of God otherwise it will not be fulfilled. Imam Sadiq explained the reason of why some prayers are not answered like this,

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“Because you are calling for some body’s help that you don’t know.” [xii]

Du’ā , hardships and disasters

Poverty, physical disabilities, illnesses, hardship of life,… can be regarded of the most significant causes of begging. On the other hand, needlessness, wealth, health, welfare, peace and security are of the most important factors of ignorance and tyranny. Prejudice and arrogance. Poverty has different stages, the more severe, the less patience; the more need. In these hard times, God will manifest Himself to human beings and an aware person will face Him whole heartedly.

It is clear that in hard situations sometimes hopelessness overcomes human beings. The only solution is the hope in God which will find its way in all hearts; no matter Muslims, disbelievers or dualists. In that situation, something is in the heart of all people that promises the end of this hardship, a feeling towards a Power who can save him. Imam □asan □Askari in the explanation of the verse □□□
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“
in the name of God”
, said,

□□□□ (Allah) is whom that anyone will cut his hope from other ones than Him at the time of hardship … and takes refuge in Him….

A man told Imam Sadiq, oh the son of the messenger of God! Guide me to God, as disclaimers wondered me by their disputes. Imam answered, oh, the servant of God! Have you ever sailed on a ship? He said, yes. Imam continued, did it happen that the ship broke down and there was

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no other ship around to save you, while you do not know swimming to be able to save yourself?

He said, yes.

Imam said, in that very moment was there any ray of hope in your heart that you would be saved?

He said, yes, imam told, that one (you were hoping to) was God who is above all savers. He is the One whom helps out when there is no helper…. [xiii]

God in various verses pointed out to this fact and says,

رَّبُّكُمُ الَّذِى يُزْجِى لَكمُ الْفُلْك فى الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوا مِن فَضلِهِ
إِنَّهُ كانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيماً وَ إِذَا مَسكُمُ الضرُّ فى الْبَحْرِ ضلَّ مَن
تَدْعُونَ إِلا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا نجَّاكُمْ إِلى الْبرِّ أَعْرَضتُمْ وَ كانَ الانسنُ
كفورا

“*It is your lord who drives your ships at sea so that you may seek his bounty. He is indeed the most merciful towards you. When misfortune befalls you at sea, all except he of those to whom you supplicate forsake you; yet when he delivers you safely to the land, you turn away. The human is unthankful.”* (17:66/67)

It is evident that human beings should not have any hope in anyone except God [as no one deserves it], or those whom God endorses them. Imam Sādiq said,

اذا اراد احدكم ان لا يسال الله شيئا الا اعطاه فليياس من الناس كلهم و لا يكون له رجا

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الا من الله عزوجل، فانه اذا علم الله تعالی ذلک من قلبه لم یسال الله شیئا الا اعطاه .

Anyone who likes that God bestows him whatever he wants should have no hope in anyone but God. And God when finds this in the heart of His servant will give him whatever he wants. [xiv]

Therefore, human beings should be pure and honest while praying, no matter he is in hardship or welfare. Imam Ali said,

ما المبتلی الذی قد اشتد به البلا باحوج الی الدعا من المعافی الذی لا یامن البلا

The One who is terribly in hardship is as needy one for praying as the one who is not but he is expecting it [hardship] at any moment. [xv]

Du’ā and Badā

Jews believe that God mapped all affairs of the world and fixed them. According to them, all events of the world are going through according to that pre-determined plan, nothing can be added or decreased and God does not change it. God replies them,

وَ قَالَتِ الْيهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ لُعِنُواْ
بمَا قَالُواْ بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَ لَيزِيدَنَّ
كَثِيرًا مِّنهُم مَّا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَ كُفْرًا

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“*The Jews say: 'the hand of Allah is chained. ' their own hands are chained! and they are cursed for what they said! rather, his hands are both outstretched, he spends as he will* .” (5:64)

Regarding this verse, imam Sādiq said,

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They do not mean God’s hands are tied up similar to human beings’ but they mean God accomplished the process of creation. He neither will add anything to it nor reduce anything. [xvii]

It is obvious that based on this theory, du’ā and atonement are meaningless and whatever God decided at first will happen. But God refutes this claim and asserts that,

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“Allah blots out, and he establishes what he will. With him is the essence of the book. Allah blots out, and he establishes what he will. With him is the essence of the book.”

Imam Sādiq in its explanation said,

Could anything be faded unless it used to be written and be written what does not exist? [xviii]

For this reason, Imam said,

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Call for God and do not say God has finished planning for the people’s affairs. [xix]

Therefore God is the Owner and Omnipotent, free and Wise God. He accomplishes all of His plans based on His kindness, Generosity and Wisdom. He will eradicate whatever He wants and creates whatever He wants. Imam Ali said,

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Praise is for God whom never dies and His actions of wonder will never finish. Because He creates a new thing which does not exist before.

It is clear that creating new thing does not mean God makes a new thing every day about this verse

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He increases the creation as he wills. Allah has power over all things.(35:1)

“Increasing the creation” is against putting an end to the planning for the world. There are various traditions saying visiting relatives or giving alms can increase the life time of a person, so these traditions emphasize on the Will of God Who can make a new decision whenever He wants. Definitely this phenomenon can give meanings to du’ā, hope and training. Due to this, God has accepted the atonement of Yunus tribe and abolished that promised torture which was going to cast on them,

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“*Why, was there never a village that believed and its belief benefited them? Except Jonah’s nation, when they believed, we spared them from a degrading punishment in this life and we gave them enjoyment for awhile* .”(10:98)

The late Ayatullah Maleki Miyaniji explained this verse: this verse directly asserts that the Yunus tribe was going to be tortured because of their Kufr and disobedience, Yunus (a.s.) asked for God’s Rage to be cast upon them. God accepted and sent it to them. At the very moment of torture, when they saw they were surrounded by that great torture, they became regretful, helpless and depressed. They faced God, supplicated and implored God to forgive them. Then God accepted their repentance and changed that torture to blessings. So God does not desist changing and creating but every day something new is going to happen. It means every day something which does not pre-exist will come into existence and an old existed thing will be erased. [xxi]

Though Quran declares that it is not always the case. It means upon seeing torture, rememberi ng God and imploring Him cannot work all times.

Imam Sādiq said in this regard,

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Du’ā can change a fixed predetermined destiny.

Imam Musā ibn Jafar said, truly du’ā can change determined and predetermined destiny.

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The narrator said, I told, I be sacrificed for you! We learned about changing the determined destiny. What about undetermined event?

He said, du’ā can stop it from entering [the list of] the determined plans. [xxiii]

Therefore, the impact of du’ā in changing destiny is not questionable. So it is meaningless to hesitate performing du’ā or not extend our hands to God for our wishes.

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[vii] Manāhij al-Bayān,vol.2,p.127

[viii] *Kāfi*, vol.2,p.497; *Bihar al-Anwār*, vol. 13, p. 342

[ix] *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 93, p. 339

[x] Kāfi, vol.2,p.467

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[xii] Saduq, *Tu□id*, p.289

[xiii] *Tu□id, p.230*

[xiv] *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 93, p. 355

[xv] *Nahj al-Balāghah*, short sayings, no. 302.

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[xvi] Saduq, Tu□id,p.167

[xvii] Tu□id

[xviii] *Tafsir □ Ayāshi*, vol.2,p.215

[xix] Kāfi, vol.2,p.467

[xx] Kāfi, vol.1,p.141

[xxi] *Tu□id al-Imamiyah*, p.454

[xxii] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 93, p. 299

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