

# *Worship and Prayers in Islam*

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- Prologue
- *Salât* (canonical prayers)
- *Du‘a* (supplication)
- *Dhikr* (remembrance of God)
- Epilogue

# *Salât or Namâz*

## *(canonical prayers)*

- There are five daily congregational prayers.
- Ritual of ablutions (*ghusl*) before prayers
- The muezzin gives the call for prayer.
- The imâm, the leader of the prayer, stands in front and the congregation follows him.
- Each prayer consists of two to four genuflection units (*raka'ât*).

## *Sûrat al-Fâtiha in the Qur'ân*

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful; praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds; the Beneficent, the Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgement; You [alone] we worship and from You [alone] we seek help. Keep us [O Lord] on the right path. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your bounties; not [the path] of those inflicted with Your wrath, nor [of those] who have gone astray. (I: 1-7)

## *Sûra on the Unity (CXII)*

Say : “He is Allah the one. Allah is independent. He does not beget nor is He begotten. There is no one like Him.”

# *Du‘â’ (Supplication)*

- Literal meaning “calling” or “summoning”
- Qur’ân (XXXX: 60): “Call on Me and I will respond to you; those who do not worship Me shall enter Hell in humiliation.”
- There are many supplications prayers in the Qur’ân (II: 286, III: 8, III: 16, III: 147, XVII: 24).
- The Prophet described *du‘â’* as the kernel (*mukhkh*) of worship.

## *Du‘â’ (Supplication)*

According to the Persian Sûfî Abû al-Qâsim al-Qushayrî,  
by making *du‘â’* man acknowledges God as the sole source of help, this being the very essence of monotheism (*tawhîd*).

## *Du‘â’ (Supplication)*

- The Prophet said that any prayer not having a sin as its object will yield one of three results:
  - immediate fulfilment
  - a fulfilment postponed to the hereafter
  - or the averting from the believer of a significant evil of which he may be unaware.

# *Conditions of Du‘â’*

Abû Ismâ‘îl al-Ansârî (d. 1089)

- contrition
- uttering the prayer softly and in privacy
- preceding the *du‘â’* with an act of worship or charity
- persistence
- and making the content of one’s request general, rather than specific, in nature.

# *The Meaning of Du‘â’ according to some Sûfîs*

- *Du‘â’* appeared problematic for some Sûfîs because of its connotations of concern for the self and the contradiction that they perceive between it and
- the virtues of *ridâ* (satisfaction with divine decree),
- *taslîm* (surrender),
- and *tafwîd* (assignation of one’s affairs to God).

## *Al-Qushayrî's perception*

- *Du'â* is desirable because it is an act of worship.
- The silent endurance of need is also meritorious because of the acceptance of God's will that it implies.
- That one prays for one's fellow Muslims and not for oneself
- That one engages in *du'â* only if it results in spiritual expansion (*bast*)

# *Al-Qushayrî's perception*

*Du'â* is a personal prayer and has different forms

- Words with the commonalty
- Deeds with the ascetics
- Inner states with the gnostics

## *Du‘â’ contains its response*

- The true purpose of *du‘â’* is the attainment of guidance Qur‘ân (II: 186).
- A *hadîth* (prophetic tradition) promises the opening of the gates of God’s mercy.
- According to the Sûfi Husayn b. Mansûr al-Hallâj (d. 922) and the Sûfi Jalâl al-dîn Rûmî (d. 1273) every *du‘â’* contains its response within itself.

# *Dhikr (remembrance of God)*

- *Dhikr* was generally favoured over *du‘â* by Sûfîs because of this holy tradition (*hadîth qudsî*) :  
“I give more to the one who is so occupied with invocation/remembrance of Me that he does not ask things of Me than I give the supplicants.”

# *Dhikr (remembrance of God)*

- Formulas of *Dhikr* : *al-Hamdu li'llâh* (Praise belongs to God) and *Subhân Allâh* (Glory be to God)
- *Dhikr* reflects the mystic's concentration upon God's presence within the human soul, to the exclusion of all else.
- *Dhikr* is both an act of speaking and an act of hearing and is experienced as hearing God speak.

## *Al-Tustarî (d. 896) dhikr's theory*

- *Dhirk* as man's daily sustenance (*qût*)
- God reveals Himself in the inmost recesses of the human soul as the Lord of the primordial covenant alluded to in the Qur'ânic phrase *alastu bî rabbikum?* (Am I not your Lord?) (VII: 172).
- Through *dhikr* the mystic rediscovers this moment in preexistence.

## *Three degrees of dhikr*

- *Dhikr* of the tongue (*dhikr al-lisân*) is the mere recital of the *dhikr* formula.
- *Dhikr* of the heart (*dhikr al-qalb*) is total inner concentration on God's name without moving the tongue.
- *Dhikr* of the innermost being (*dhikr al-sirr*) is the experience of total absorption by the reality of the One Who is recollected (*al-Madhkûr*).

# *Epilogue*

## *The Apostles' Creed*

I believe in God *the Father* Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus  
Christ *His only Son, our Lord*, Who was  
conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the  
Virgin Mary, *suffered under Pontius Pilate*,  
*was crucified and buried*, *He descended*  
*into hell*;

# *Epilogue*

*The third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; The Holy Catholic Church; The communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.*