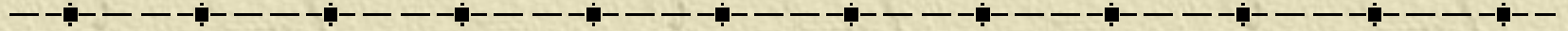


# Worship and Prayers in Islam

Dr. Diana Steigerwald



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

# Two Major Groups

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## Sunnites

- ✦ The Prophet did not explicitly name his Successor.
- ✦ Some Companions of the Prophet elected Abû Bakr as the first Khalîf.

## Shî'ites

- ✦ The Prophet has explicitly named his Successor 'Alî b. Abî Tâlib.
- ✦ 'Alî and his descendants know the inner meaning of the Qur'ân.

# Salât or Namâz (canonical prayers)

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- ✦ 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

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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)

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

# Du‘â’ (Supplication)

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- ✦ 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)

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- ✠ 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

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- ✦ *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

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- ✦ *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

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*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

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- ✦ 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)

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✠ *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)

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- ✦ 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 speaks.

# Epilogue

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## *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

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*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 death. 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.*