
**Concept of Du'a:
To Allah (swt) or to Ghayrallah (other than Allah (swt))?**

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Prepared by:

Sayyid Ali Haider Abidi Nowganwi
(Sahan)

Email Contact:

al_jinn20@yahoo.com

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In the name of **Allah** (SWT) the Most Merciful to all Mankind

This academic thesis is a result of extensive research work on the subject of Du'a. It was created with the intention of presenting and sharing (with the Momineen), the light that Allah (SWT) has used to guide me to Him - via an Array of media (may Allah (SWT) be pleased with them).

It references guidance foremost from the Holy Book of God, Al-Qur'an, seconded by Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and his Ahlul-Bayt (as), and finally the viewpoints of distinguished scholars who have benefited us by elaborating on the subject matter. Full attempt has been made to discuss the subject matter from an unbiased, rational and intellectual perspective.

Some Question / Answer (Q/A) Lists have been appended at the end, in order to address those issues that are most frequently brought up in discussions.

Conforming to typical research methodology, in the spirit of academic sincerity, I invite positive criticism and feedback. This research is a work-in-progress and future versions will be released on the basis of significant incorporation of pertinent feedback. (This is the fourth version thus far)

Inshallah the plan is to promote dialogue and academic discourse based on sincere intention in searching for the Truth. Ameen.

Version Details

Version #	Create Date	Components	Comments
1	08/18/2003	<i>Introduction and Background</i> <i>What is Du'a?</i> <i>Du'a in the Holy Scripture</i> <i>Du'a as a tool of Da'wa (Proselytizing)</i> <i>Concept of Wasilah</i> <i>Forbiddance of Du'a to Intermediaries</i> <i>Taught Du'as as not a symbolic tradition</i> <i>Divisions on Du'a have taken an extreme</i> <i>Appendix A – Dua-e-Talab-e-Hawaij</i>	New New New New New New New New
2	10/03/2003	<i>Du'a as an Extra Support</i> <i>Concepts of Wasilah and Shafa'ah</i> <i>Appendix B - FAQ</i> <i>Appendix C – Amusing Naiveties</i>	New Updated New New
3	02/15/2004	<i>What is Dua? – Definition</i> <i>Wasilah in Du'a</i> <i>Shafa'ah (Intercession)</i> <i>Verdicts of the Ulema –</i> <i>Ayatullah Shaheed Beheshti</i>	Updated Updated Updated New
4	03/26/2004	<i>What is Dua? – Definition</i> <i>Nature and Limits of Humanity</i> <i>Dua in Pre-Islamic Religions</i> <i>Dua in Relation to Worship</i> <i>Du'a as an Extra Support</i> <i>Concepts of Wasilah and Shafa'ah</i> <i>Forbiddance of Du'a to Intermediaries - Is</i> <i>calling upon others equivalent to calling</i> <i>upon Allah (SWT)?</i> <i>Forbiddance of Du'a to Intermediaries - Is</i> <i>there then any need for Intermediaries?</i>	Updated New New New Updated Updated Updated Updated Updated

Introduction and Background

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

And I have not created jinn and the men except that they should worship/ serve Me¹

It is agreed that Mankind is charged with only one single and sole responsibility in this World – Ibaadat-e-Ilahi (Worship of the Almighty). There are many different prescribed ways of Worship. The prophet of Islam has mentioned that even fending for the family or earning one’s own living is an act of Worship.

Nay, in fact implementing any prescribed rule of the Mighty Lord is an act of Worship. However, traditional Puritan worship of the Lord is that whereby Man strikes a focused connection with his Creator. Such connections are expressed in the likes of Salaah (canonical prayer), Tasbeeh (repetitive glorification), Hamd (praise of God), Wird (litany) and Du’a (supplication).

As pertains to Du’a, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) is related to have said, “**Afdhalu ibaadati Du’aa**” (Du’a is the best form of Worshipping)². Also, we know that Du’a was the first form of Worship on the Earth (When Hazrat Adam (as) was sent to this earth, he connected with his Lord via Du’a for the purpose of repentance).

This best form of Worship, which goes as far back as the beginning of Human life on Earth, is the crux of discussion of this thesis. It is unfortunate that this form of worship has been neglected and has not been accorded its rightful place in the Life of Man.

In one extreme, it has been misused, deprived of its objective to directly connect mankind with the Creator. And on the other extreme, it has been made a scapegoat for some groups of the Ummah to justify heinous bloody violence against others based on the differing views regarding Du’a. It is hence a subject of dire consequences, and this alone is justification enough for such a prime issue to not be neglected and rather to be given its full share of reflection.

This thesis will attempt to comprehensively address the varied, important and consequential issues related to Du’a, Inshallah. This research is an objective work-in-progress and I would appreciate comments and feedback that I could incorporate into future versions. I am open to constructive criticism since dialogue in sincerity is the best methodology for achieving Haq (truth). A proper and full understanding of this subject is certain to bring one closer to the Lord Almighty. Inshallah!

¹ Surah Adh-Dhaariyat: 51:56

² Oddatul-Da’ee: Chapter 1: by Sheikh Ahmad Ibn-e-Fahd Hilli

What is Du'a?

Definition

The literal Arabic meaning of Du'a is "to call upon". Irrespective of whatever specialized meaning this term is given per context, it would none-the-less definitely fall into one of two distinct yet accurate groupings: One is *Communication*, and the other, *Supplication*. When 'calling upon' is used for purposes such as announcement, invitation, talking, etc. this is all communication. And when it is done as invocations, prayer, etc. this is all classified as Supplication. Instances of both categories are found in the Holy Qur'an. There is a quite subtle difference between the two, but it is generally well understood.

Allamah Hilli in his treatise on Dua³ defines it (in Islamic Terminology) to be "*a humble prayer by a modest person to a superior*". Allamah Tabataba'i resonates this definition whereby he says⁴ Dua is "*equivalent to 'personal prayer', or simply to what the Christian often understands by the term 'prayer' as such*". Both ways we observe that it equates to supplicating an entity that one deems superior, a being perceived to have the ability to hear pleas of supplicants and ability to take action in response to these pleas, i.e. one who can therefore exercise administrative capability in terms of tending to affairs of supplicants.

Whereas supplication thus carries a heavy significance in Islamic theology, communication is no more than a general vocabulary term. This thesis does not deal with the word 'Du'a' in form of communication (such as in Ayaah: 2:221, 3:23 and many others), but rather with the Islamic theological aspect of Du'a as supplication.

It would be void of Intellect to consider Du'a as only communication or only supplication /invocation. For there are verses that highlight the significance of supplication/ invocation, such as it being exclusively for Allah (SWT), whereas there are other verses (2:221, 3:23 etc.) where Du'a is used as general terminology for people calling upon (communication/ talking) with each other. Applying a singular meaning to all the verses with the word Du'a would introduce contradictions. For example, we will later in this thesis quote verses forbidding supplication to other than Allah (SWT). Can this mean that Allah (SWT) does not want us to even communicate/ talk to each other? Hence the need for distinguishing the verses that refer to Du'a as communication from the verses that refer to Du'a as supplication /invocation.

In fact many a time, the Qur'an uses a number of words bearing dual meanings. It also at times combines different senses within a same verse context (such as Ayaat-e-Tatheer). It would be logical and sensible to believe the purpose of this to be a sign that Allah (SWT) intends to guide Mankind in reference to the distinction between the two meanings. Otherwise Allah (SWT) did not have a lack of words to use in the Holy Scripture. Dual use in differing contexts could only have the purpose of dislodging the

³ Oddatul-Da'ee: by Sheikh Ahmad Ibn-e-Fahd Hilli

⁴ A Shi'ite Anthology: by Allamah Tabataba'i

contradiction of forcing a singular meaning to a generic word with potentially multiple meanings.

As noted earlier, this thesis does not deal with the ‘communication’ definition of Du’a, which is just a standard Arabic vocabulary term. Rather, it deals with the immensely important canon of Islam, i.e. Du’a as ‘Supplication’.

Muslims in general understand the notion of Du’a as supplication and like Allamah Tabataba’i clarifies, it is no more than the Christian equivalent of the word ‘Prayer’. Whereas Christians pray to Mary and the ‘Son’ besides the ‘Father’, Muslims are admonished to pray only to the One God, Allah (SWT). We will delve on this and other related subject matter further on in the discussion.

In order to have a clear understanding of Du’a in its theological aspect, we must investigate it from a variety of perspectives. From the conclusion of the research, we can then derive a befitting definition that summarizes the gist of it (Du’a) in a short form.

Based on my research (expounded upon later in this thesis), I would propose the theological/ Qur’anic definition of Du’a (as supplication/ invocation) to be:

“The connection prescribed by the Creator for Mankind to call upon Him directly”.

But how did we come to this conclusion? This we will delve into later as we examine Du’a in Islamic theology according to the Holy Scripture (Qur’an) and the Ahle-Bait (as) [Prophet (sawa) and the purified ones amongst his family].

But for now, let us firstly examine the distinction of Du’a from communication – since this is an early stumbling block in discussions of Du’a, i.e. How to identify what constitutes Supplication?

Dua and the realm of Super-Nature

We previously mentioned that we look at Du’a from the aspect of Supplication as opposed to communication. To get a better understanding of this, we need to know how to differentiate the two.

We know that when we talk to each other face-to-face, we are communicating. It is the same for talking on phone or via other technological devices. Even when we send letters, whether by snail-mail or e-mail, this also constitutes communication.

However, when we invoke God Almighty, we call this, prayer or supplication. The same goes for Zoroastrians invoking Ahura-Mazda, Hindus invoking Vishnu, American

Indians invoking spirits of their ancestors, Buddhists invoking Buddha, Satanists invoking Satan, Christians invoking the ‘Father’, Son, Mary⁵, etc.

The question arises as to where is the line of demarcation between communication on one hand and supplication on the other?

Firstly, we recognize that supplication is performed towards a superior being as is logically pointed out in the definitions provided by Allamah Hilli and Allamah Tabataba’i. But this still leaves the demarcation grayed since one can claim that even though, Holy Mary (for example) may be a superior being, what demarcates the boundary between communicating to her or praying to her?

Since Mary (as), mother of Christ, is a globally known entity and there is much literature surrounding her, her example would make a good test case for our investigation. Let us first take the period during the lifetime of Mary (as). We know that all verbal exchanges at the time recorded in scripture are classified as ‘Communication’. We also know that when Mary allegedly miraculously appeared (presumably by claims of the Catholics) at Town of Fatima, Portugal, her famous exchange with the 3 children (Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco) is also recorded and classified as ‘Communication’ and not prayer. However, when the common Christian devotee calls upon Mary, it is classified as ‘Prayer’. So where is the second line of demarcation (beyond superiority of the appealed being)?

The above simple examples are presented for the purpose of clarity since they are easy to comprehend. There obviously is a clear distinction between the cases where exists a *communication-channel* (such as in Mary’s life or during her appearance to the three children), as versus the cases where this (identifiable communication-channel) does not exist (such as the common Christian devotee praying to her).

The latter case is classified as Supplication precisely because it cannot be classified under any known communication-channel. It therefore stands in the *faith* that the supplicant is being heard by the supplicated (Mary in this example), precisely because the addressed has a super-power (beyond the nature known to us) that allows this entity to hear the supplicant’s pleas. It also logically derives that the supplicant submits the appeals to the addressed in the *belief* that the addressed also has the ability to take an action that is beneficial to the purpose of supplication.

The demarcation lines that define Supplication, hence become:

- 1) Belief in superiority of Entity supplicated
- 2) Belief in super-power of Entity to listen to supplicants pleas in absence of any known communication channel
- 3) Belief in ability of supplicated to take an action favorable to supplicant in regards to the purpose of supplication

⁵ The International Marian Research Institute at Dayton, Ohio has an informative online piece on the subject matter under section of Prayers: question 3: “Why do Christians pray to Mary?” that can be read at <http://www.udayton.edu/mary/questions/faq/faq17.html>

These last two elements above are some properties of what we refer to in this thesis as Super-Nature. Before we delve further into this Super-Nature, let us examine two more examples to fully clarify the demarcation between Du'a as supplication versus Communication.

As an additional example, take the case of Prophet Moses (Hazrat Musa (as)), who is known as 'Kalimullah' (He who has spoken to Allah (swt)). Unlike most prophets, Hz. Musa (as) had the honor of direct communication with Allah (swt), in the sense that the Almighty Lord addressed him directly (and vice-a-versa). During these episodes, we say Moses *spoke* unto his Lord, such as in the case of the burning bush. However, there were times (most of the time) when such direct communication did not exist. In the absence of this direct communication, Hz. Musa *prayed* unto his Lord for help and bestowal of favors for himself and his nation. The difference between the two (speaking and praying) was therefore the absence of a communication-channel (in the sense of comprehension by the human being within the limits of the realm of nature).

A second additional example is that of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (sawa) ascension to the heavens, better known as the event of the Meraaj. The Holy Prophet had the honor of being addressed directly by Allah (swt) and vice-a-versa. So, he got the opportunity to *speak* with the Lord Almighty. However, this was a most uncommon exception and typically the Prophet (sawa) *prayed* to his Lord, Allah Almighty.

Innumerable examples can be given along the lines mentioned above. Infact, this ability of hearing pleas of supplicants and taking action in response, was the main aspect of defining God or gods by the common man throughout the annals of History (as we will see in a later section that deals with Pre-Islamic religions).

It is prudent to mention at this point, however, that existence of Super-Nature (or super-natural occurrences) is a concrete Islamic belief. It is also an Islamic canon classified as 'Imaan-bil-Ghaib' (Faith in the Unseen). It is also known that Allah (swt) exhibits signs of his super-natural might, power and ability in various ways and also displays them at times through messengers to accomplish some purposes. To what degrees this super-nature is exhibited through humans, is a topic followed up in a later section that deals with miracles and their relationship to Super-Nature.

But for now, it would be important to first investigate and delve into what is Nature.

Nature and Limits of Humanity

Irrespective of which religion one belongs to, or even if one takes atheistic viewpoint of science, it would be agreed that we are generally bound by a set of environmental laws that govern our way of life. These very laws that collectively constitute 'Nature', also allow us to define ourselves as 'humans'. What does this mean?

It means that we are created as limited (in a sense weak) beings who in our natural bounds cannot see beyond what a human eye sees, cannot run beyond what humans legs can race, cannot eat beyond what a human body can store, cannot hear beyond what a human ear can hear, cannot shout beyond where a human voice can reach, etc. This, and many other such examples are what make us human, and limited beings in the material sense. Infact, the Olympics that was constituted by the ancient Greeks, was a formal ceremonious event intended to celebrate the people who could approach the upper limitations of nature's bounds for humanity.

However, mankind is also endowed with a super-material quality of 'Intellect' (amongst others) that allows him to learn this nature governing his environment and to use it towards his benefit. He keeps track of what he learns and keeps building on it in order to expand his understanding and utility of nature's powers. This process can collectively be identified as 'Knowledge Gathering and Growth'. Man's progression is therefore directly tied with the acquisition of knowledge, which in turn allows him to create technology and leverage it to his benefit.

Any act that defies the known bounds of nature, is therefore classified as one of three things:

- 1) Superior knowledge of nature (such as relatively advanced technology, like gun-machinations used by colonialists and thought of by some as super-natural)
- 2) Magic and Witchcraft
- 3) Act of a super-human being

The first case (superior knowledge) above applies in cases of technology whereby one human nation has advanced to such a high-level that is unknown to another human nation, and as such the second human nation (if not informed) might observe exhibition of such knowledge to be a super-natural act.

The second case relates to Magic and Witchcraft, and this is beyond the scope of this thesis. However we must point out that it is considered strictly forbidden in Islam.

The last case however, refers to acts that could not be performed by given individuals within a given human nation without intervention of a super-human being or power. Those who subscribe to the concept of God, would term this as Divine Intervention and such acts are generally referred to as Miracles.

Miracles aside (we'll discuss them in next section), man is limited by human abilities that do not exceed what we observe in contests of sport such as the Olympics, etc. These limits, if removed or altered, would change our humanity and we would not be the humans that we know we are. Hypothetically, if our limbs are swapped for fins and respiratory system replaced with gills and then we are dumped into water, then we would be classified as Fish. But we know that this is not the case, and we cherish our humanity.

From Islamic point of view, man is a superior creation in the world, but we are purposefully created as bound (weak) beings. The bounds applied unto us from the Lord

Almighty are the laws that govern our environment (space and time), and these laws are collectively known as ‘Nature’. These limits are in one sense a test-environment for us (with recompense of reward or punishment on a judgment day), and in another sense, a mercy from God – since we are endowed with ability to learn and apply nature’s laws to our benefit and the benefit of humanity as a whole.

But most importantly and from a theological point-of-view, limits of nature are a sign for us to recognize who we are – a weak and abject creation subject to a superior divine Being, who is our merciful Master that is holding the reigns of power over us. He has made us appreciate our weakness so that we can eliminate our sense of pride and arrogance, and rather humble ourselves in His domineering presence, for our own benefit. By recognizing our limitations, we open our eyes to recognizing His wonders as well as Might (super-powers) beyond us that He exhibited directly or via his Messengers.

In fact humanity has in general over the ages acknowledged this fact, and that is why we find the concept of a powerful ‘Creator’ being, prevalent all over the world. In fact even the concept of a *Single* powerful Creator being was prevalent over the world (but not necessarily a single being that would own or administer the affairs of the world).

The Abrahamic monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) believed that Allah (swt) sent many messengers to guide humanity, and one of the signs that these messengers brought as proof of their Messengership was the sign of Super-Nature. The exhibition of an occurrence that defied the laws of nature, and that could not have been a result of superior technology (since the messengers belonged to the same nations), was henceforth a sign of divine intervention. These signs came for different purposes such as: warnings, identifiers, punishments, rewards, etc. as befit the nation of each messenger, and collectively these signs have come to be known as ‘Miracles’.

Miracles versus Ownership of Super-Nature

As mentioned previously, Miracles are the phenomenon of divine intervention, whether as an instantaneous active intervention, or a limited-interval purposeful gift. They are tied to a purpose that the Divine would like to accomplish, usually in the line of validating a message proving ‘Messengership’ of a messenger, or to accomplish a specific task.

Miracles are therefore dependant on the *Will* of the Almighty for a specific or general purpose defined by Him. Some examples of instantaneous miracles are the splitting of the Nile by Musa (as), and the appearance of the extra-ordinary Camel to the nation of Prophet Saleh (as). On the flip, some examples of limited-interval miracles are the healing of diseased by Isa (as), and the control of Winds given to King Sulaymaan (as).

In all these cases, we can clearly identify the purpose of Allah (swt), who intends to make a point to His subjects through the miracles. In the case of splitting the Nile, it was a fulfillment of Word to the nation of Israel, whom the Lord Almighty had promised deliverance from Egypt’s Pharaoh through the hands of Moses. In the case of Saleh, it

was a sign to his nation for proving the Prophethood of Saleh, and the validity of the guidance he carried. With Isa (as), it was both a mercy from Almighty and more importantly a sign of Messengership of Isa (as). With Sulaymaan (as), who was one of very few anointed as King certified from Allah (swt), it was one of the many abilities to execute reign with ease over the Kingdom that Allah (swt) bestowed upon him.

The cases of miracles, such as those we have discussed above, all involve the *Will* of the divine in accomplishing a purpose defined by Him. On the flip side, Ownership of Nature, whether directly or indirectly, involves the *Will* and *Decision* of the holder or executor of the Super-Nature.

In the above cases, the miracles were of the prophets, but the ownership was of Allah (swt), since He determined the Will and Decision. However, there are cases of beliefs in a variety of theologies that point towards the *Will* and *Decision* of a non-supreme being, to be the source of execution of Super-Nature. In such cases, the demarcation lines of divinity usually blur and therefore some religions consider these beings as gods, whereas others consider them as divinely gifted administrators.

Many science fiction compilations present the case where nations of immensely superior technology are made the focus of devotion by inferior nations, simply because they take the nation of superior technology as super-natural beings who can *willfully* determine their fate and make *decisions* impacting their life, in a super-natural like fashion. So these nations offer those superior nation persons sacrifices to win their favor and appease them.

Many ancient civilizations in Africa, Asia and the Americas believed in the ability of spirits to willfully impact the lives of 'alive' persons. They all recognized the 'aliveness' of the 'dead' ancestors in a spiritual realm (much like the monotheistic religions), however, they also believed in an impacting and willful connection between the realms.

They believed that these ancestors, or certain selected members amongst them, had the ability and administrative power to impact their lives according to their desires and decision-making. Therefore there existed the need to please them in order to gain favors from them, as well as to ward off their wrath. Whether this ability on the ancestors was bestowed by a higher divine being, or by the spirits being divine themselves, became inconsequential and rightfully so. This is because the impact was presumed to be certain, and it was of no consequence how the spirits got to have the influence to exact impact.

The above example shows how the concept of Ownership of Super-Nature, such as by spirits of ancestors impacting the lives of the living, is different from the aspects of miracles, because whereas the former involves the *Will* and *Decision* of the non-supreme entities, the latter involves the Will and Decision of the Supreme Entity. It is this demarcation that was to define the reasoning by which variety of differences arose in the concepts of Supplication.

Whereby one system proposes that based on the understanding that Miracles are the *Will* and *Decision* of the Supreme Entity, who owns Super-Nature, so it becomes His exclusive right to be supplicated-

An alternate second system proposes that Super-Natural occurrences (including ability to Super-Naturally impact lives of other beings) is possible at the *Will* and *Decision* of non-supreme beings holding some levels of authority over Super-Nature, so this entitles those particular non-supreme beings to deserve a right to be supplicated to.

This is why there exists a difference in Supplication theory between even factions of monotheists (besides between monotheists and polytheists) as to those who believe that Supplication is restricted to the Supreme Being, as verses those who believe that Supplication is valid to non-supreme beings in position of authority over Super-Nature. In this statement, we are considering monotheists to be believers in one God / Supreme Being, and polytheists to be believers in multiple gods / Supreme Beings. And so the issue in this sense is not only a monotheist vs. polytheist issue, but also one of consequence amongst monotheists themselves.

Dua in Pre-Islamic Religions

- *In Progress*

Dua in relation to Worship

- *In Progress*

Form of Du'a

This calling upon need not necessarily be either vocal or silent. As long as it is a conscious calling upon the Lord be it vocal or silent, it will be heard by As-Sami (The All-Hearing). This calling upon need not necessarily be in the Mosque or otherwise, in congregation or otherwise, because irrespective of where one is, Al-Baseer (The All-Seeing) is watching over us all and sees us all when we call him.

Purpose of Dua

There are many reasons why we would need and desire to connect to the Almighty. Amongst these are:

- Praising Al-Khaliq (The Creator) and acknowledging his Mastership over us. This in itself makes Man independent of all others, since he sincerely bears witness to submission of the one & only Lord.

- Praising the Ar-Rahmaan (The Merciful to all) and Ar-Raheem (Merciful to the believers) who showers us with his Mercy and Blessings. Acknowledging and Thanking the Lord for what he has bestowed upon us – for indeed every breath we take is not but an element of his Beneficence.
- Submitting our desires and wants to Ar-Razzaq (The Provider) and Al-Wahhab (The Bestower) since whatever benefit we attain, it is by his permission and whatever is not by his permission is not attainable. We may seek material or others benefits from Individuals (such as contracts, transactions, etc.), however, we still must call upon Allah (SWT) because it is only by his permission that we can actually acquire the benefit that we desire. We must therefore seek his favor.
- Repentance. When we break the laws of the Mighty Lord, we have no other option other than that which he has provided us – Calling upon Al-Ghaffar (The Forgiver) and Al-Afuw (The Pardoner).
- Hope & Solace. When we are in distress, we can always call upon him who cares about us exponentially more than both the parental and prophetic guardians that he assigned unto us. He is Al-Salaam (Source of Peace) and Al-Wali (The Protecting Friend). And in times of desperation, we look upon him for peace of heart and mind.

Beyond the afore-mentioned five powerful reasons for making Du'a, there are several others. In fact in every name of Al-Mubdi (The Originator), you'll find another new reason to call upon the Lord.

The Lord in all his mercy, could not have created mankind and then left him to fend for himself, forgotten. He sent many guides and prophets to show him the light and the straight path (Siraat-al-Mustaqeem) and to provide him with all he needed to know in order to live a successful life in this world and earn a lofty status in the Hereafter.

Besides the guides, he gifted man with Aql (Intellect) so that he may recognize right from wrong and he also dispatched for mankind words of wisdom and laws for guidance in the form of Holy Scripture.

But foremost, in his infinite mercy – he opened a channel to mankind such that Man could, if he so desired, connect directly with the Almighty and call upon him in times of agony and bliss. A channel that would allow man to seek repentance, blessings, to offer thanks, express gratitude and worship him who is the most & only deserving of Worship. All Imams: Aql, Divinely appointed Guides, and revealed Scripture have identified this channel, i.e. Du'a.

It is this medium of Du'a that is so beneficial to us, that Allah (SWT) himself commands us to make use of it, for naught but our own benefit.

Du'a in the Holy Scripture

Command

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ **ادْعُونِي** أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

And your Lord says: **Call upon Me**, I will answer you; surely those who are too proud for My service shall soon enter hell abased.⁶

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا **دَعَانِ** فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so **they should answer My call** and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way.⁷

The two afore-mentioned verses, among others, are sufficient to convey the Command of Allah (SWT). Indeed Allah (SWT) has commanded man to invoke Du'a. Furthermore he has assured acceptance when a call is made upon him. The command is not specific to Prophets or Imams, but it rather spans across all his servants.

And those of his servants who are too proud to call upon the Supreme Lord will thence earn hell for rejecting the call of Allah (SWT) out of their arrogance – in so doing they will have followed the path of Satan, the known first servant of Allah (SWT) to have been chastised for his pride.

From the above verses, it is clear that Du'a is a supreme mercy to mankind, for Allah (SWT) has guaranteed acceptance for all (legitimate) Du'a invoked. And in his infinite mercy he has **commanded** men to invoke, so that they may be amongst the blessed.

Prescribed Method of Du'a

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي **أَسْمَائِهِ** سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

And **Allah's are the best names, therefore call on Him thereby**, and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His names; they shall be recompensed for what they did⁸

⁶ Surah Al-Mumin: 40:60

⁷ Surah Al-Baqarah: 2:186

⁸ Surah Al-A'araaf: 7:180

قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ
الْحُسْنَىٰ

Say: **Call upon Allah or call upon Ar-Rahmaan; whichever you call upon, He has the best names...**⁹

The above two verses make it clear that there is a specific prescribed method of invoking Du'a. We cannot claim that Allah (SWT) has not clarified the method of Du'a since the verses of the Holy Scripture openly state that the way of Du'a is by invoking the sublime names of the Mighty Lord.

It is observed that this methodology is rife throughout all major Du'a taught by the Ahlul-Bayt (as). For example the great Du'a-e-Mashloul and Du'a-e-Kumayl (taught by Ameer-ul-Momineen (as)) begin by mentioning several great Names and Attributes of the Mighty Lord before the supplicant even begins submitting his pleas to his Lord.

In a synopsis, the Masoomeen (as) re-enforced the prescribed methodology of Al-Qur'an by expressing their (taught) supplications in exactly the same way that the Qur'an has directed them to be.

In addition to the entity to whom to address Du'a, Allah (SWT) has directed us towards a particular style of supplication. Attributes of this style can be found in Qur'anic verses such as the ones below:

ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ
وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا
إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Call on your Lord humbly and secretly; surely He does not love those who exceed the limits. And do not make mischief in the earth after its reformation, **and call on Him fearful and hopeful;** surely the mercy of Allah is nigh to those who do good (to others).¹⁰

From the above, we know that the prescribed style of Du'a involves:

- State of humbleness whilst addressing the Lord
- Calling the Lord in secret (privately and directly – for personal prayer)
- Maintaining an awe of the Might and Prowess of the Almighty &
- Having full hope in the Lord's promise of fulfillment of Legitimate Du'a

⁹ Surah Bani-Isra'eel 17:110

¹⁰ Surah Al-A'raaf 7:55-56

Qur'anic Examples of Du'a

The Qur'an has many examples of how the believers invoked Du'a. Below are just a few of these:

Du'a of Prophet Ayyub (as)

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

And Ayyub, when he cried to his Lord, (saying): **Harm has afflicted me, and Thou art the most Merciful of the merciful.**¹¹

Du'a of prophet Yunus (as)

وَدَا النُّونَ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

And Yunus, when he went away in wrath, so he thought that We would not straiten him, so he called out among afflictions: **There is no god but Thou, glory be to Thee; surely I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss.**¹²

Du'a of prophet Zakariya (as)

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ

And Zakariya, when he cried to his Lord: **O my Lord, leave me not alone; and Thou art the best of inheritors.**¹³

Du'a of prophet Musa (as)

He said: **O my Lord! Expand my breast,** قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي

For me, and make my affair easy to me وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي

And loose the knot from my tongue, وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي

(That) they may understand my word; يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

And give to me an aider from my وَاجْعَلْ لِّي وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي

¹¹ Surah Al-Ambiya 21:83

¹² Surah Al-Ambiya 21:87

¹³ Surah Al-Ambiya 21:89

Family; Haroun, my brother,	هَارُونَ أَخِي
Strengthen my back by him, and	اشْتَدُّ بِهِ أَزْرِي
Associate him (with me) in my affair,	وَأَشْرِكُهُ فِي أَمْرِي
So that we should glorify Thee much,	كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا
And remember Thee often.	وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا
Surely, Thou art the All-Seeing. ¹⁴	إِنَّكَ كُنْتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا

From the above (and many other Du'as in Al-Qur'an), it could be deciphered that the chosen method of Nabi-Allah (prophets) was to call upon their Lord by his names & attributes.

It is prudent to note that when a particular desire is asked of Allah (SWT), the particular corresponding name of Allah (SWT) is typically mentioned. For example:

If I desire forgiveness, I would call upon Al-Ghaffar (The Forgiver).

If I desire a child, I would call upon Al-Mubdi (The Originator).

If I desire provision, I would call upon Al-Wahhab (The Bestower).

If I desire removal of Punishment, I would call upon Ar-Rahmaan & Ar-Raheem. Etc.

Du'a as a Tool of Da'wa (Proselytizing)

As mentioned in the beginning, the purpose of Life on Earth is Ibaadat-e-Ilaahi (Worship of God). Du'a is the Ibaadah of calling upon Allah (SWT) by his names for a variety of purposes. The specialty of calling upon the Mighty Lord by his names lies in the supplicant bearing witness to the Attributes of Allah (SWT).

In the perfect Du'as taught by the Masoomeen (as), the attributes of the Almighty are expounded upon in great detail. For every plea that the supplicant would make, he would repeat corresponding attributes and qualities of Al-Mutakabbir (The Majestic). When a supplicant repeats the holy words with sincerity and understanding, Allah (SWT) is pleased with him and grants unto him his legitimate desires.

The Masoomeen (as) leveraged this quality of Du'as to teach Mankind about Allah (SWT), his attributes and his nature – and in addition, to explain the relationship between Man and God. Also many other related issues are revisited in Du'as such as the Yaum-e-Qiyamah (Day of Judgment), Hell, Heaven, Morals, Appreciation of Allah (SWT), Social relations, Rights, Repentance, Forgiveness, Creation, and Submission – amongst others.

¹⁴ Surah Taa'Haa 20:25-35

Examples

Excerpt from Du'a-e-Kumayl:

“...Oh Allah! Forgive my sins, which taint my innocence. Oh Allah! Forgive my sins, which reverse thy blessings. Oh Allah! Forgive my sins, which intercept my prayers. Oh Allah! Forgive my sins, which cut short my hopes. Oh Allah! Forgive my sins, which bring down calamity on me. Oh Allah! Forgive all the sins which I have committed and all my transgressions for which I stand guilty...”

The above is not only a prayer for forgiveness of sins, but also a teaching that sins have a variety of effects such as: tainting of innocence, reversal of divine blessings, interception of prayers, cutting short of hopes, and bringing of calamities.

There are a variety of Du'as available to us that are full of valuable lessons. Imam Zayn-ul-Abideen (as), who was restricted from public speech (because the political regime of his time feared an Islamic revival), decided to frame the bulk of his Da'wa in the form of priceless Du'as that he left behind. Today, we are blessed to have those Du'as in the form of *As-Sahifah-as-Sajjadiya* – a compilation of his Du'as.

In addition, we have valuable lessons taught by Ameer-ul-Momineen (as) sewn into Du'as such as Dua-e-Mashloul, Dua-e-Kumayl and Dua-e-Sabah. Many grand compilations of Du'as taught by the Prophet (s.a.w.a) and his Ahlul-Bayt (a.s) exist in bindings such as Mafaatih-ul-Jinnah and others.

Du'a as an Extra Support

As observed in the preceding section, Du'a of one man can benefit others by way of guidance. As one supplicates, attentive listeners who reflect will automatically be pulled nearer to the 'Absolute' who is being invoked. In this manner, Du'a has indirectly benefited a third-party to the Du'a.

Additionally, a third-party can directly benefit from Du'a if they happen to be the subject of Du'a. That is, if a mother prays for her children, Allah (SWT) may count this prayer as an extra support in the benefit of the children.

However, it must be noted that Du'a for a third-party would depend on both the worthiness and depth of desire (sincerity) of the supplicant. It would also logically depend on who the 'subject' of supplication is. For example, Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur'an forbids Prophet Ibrahim (as) from invoking for the benefit of his former Guardian, Azar. Similarly, it counsels Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a) to not seek Du'a for the Mushrikeen (Polytheists), for such an invocation would be in vain.

However, in general there is no prohibition in requesting another for praying in one's favor. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) has advised the people to request their mothers to pray for them. Since the love of a mother is so immense for her child, her depth of intention will be able to provide extra support for the child in the court of the Mighty Lord.

As for the Masoomeen (as), they were known to always pray for the believers (Momineen) out of their generosity. It is simplistic to assume that they would pray for only those who had the chance to approach them with prayer requests. Their prayers are in line with their mission, the salvation of mankind. It would be simplistic again to assume that the Masoomeen (as) would invoke prayers as a substitute for Man's prayers to Allah (SWT) or as a substitute to the tests of Allah (SWT) (for such would be akin to the Christian belief that Prophet Isa (Jesus) (as) died for their sins thereby absolving them of the tests of this world by the Lord Almighty).

Similarly, it would be devious, in the least, to believe that they hold the Godly power of 'all hearing' to hear requests for their prayers from all supplicants afar, everywhere, at all times, all the time. This subject is expounded upon in great detail by *Allamah Mujtaba Musavi Lari* in his book, '*Imamate & Leadership*' (Chapter 23) and would be beyond the scope of this Article. Further discussion on this general issue can be found in *Appendix B: "But our Du'a is no more than seeking of extra support to intercede?"* of this thesis.

Concepts of Wasilah and Shafa'ah

Wasilah refers to the means/ ways of seeking nearness to Allah (SWT). Since this world is a test for us, our salvation lies in getting close to Allah (swt) as much as possible, in order to be worthier of his blessings and mercy. This could be by good deeds, strong belief, worship, etc.

Shafa'ah on the other hand, in general language terminology refers to a personal intercession. However, the Aayahs of Shafa'ah in Qur'an are generally in regards to intercession (for one) to Allah (swt) on the day of Qiyaamah. This is because Allah (swt) declares that He is the only Intercessor, but also that others can intercede, but only by His Permission. Therefore, on Qiyaamah (the Day of Judgment) the Shafa'ah will be by the 'Ashaab-ul-A'raaf' (Men of the Heights – Masoomeen (as)) for only those persons whom Allah (swt) desires and grants them permission to intercede for.

As relates to Du'a, one can request another to do Du'a for them, but this extra support is not the same as making one an intermediary or conveyance (whether by wasilah or shafi) to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is nearest to everybody and does not need anyone to convey messages to Him on behalf of others. Infact, requesting one to do Du'a (as extra-support, and not conveyance) from third party to Allah (swt) will necessitate that the request (to third party) cannot be a Dua in itself – therefore request for Du'a (as a request) can only be made to an entity that one is in contact with.

Wasilah

Wasilah literally means 'mode of approach'. The Prophet and his Ahlul-Bayt (AS) are undoubtedly one of the Wasilah to Allah (SWT). The most cherished Wasilah is indeed the following in the footsteps of the Masoomeen (as) and adhering to their guidance – for they were sent by Allah (SWT) to bring mankind closer to him (Allah (SWT)).

The Aa'yaat of the Holy Scripture prove this point. In Surah Al-Mai'dah, the Lord says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَعُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا
فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah and **seek means of nearness** to Him and strive hard in His way that you may be successful.¹⁵

In Surah Al-Ahzab, Allah (SWT) mentions the great status of the Ahlul-Bayt:

...إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ
تَطْهِيرًا

¹⁵ Surah Al-Mai'dah 5:35

...Allah only desires to keep away the uncleanness from you, **O people of the House!** And to purify you with a thorough purification.¹⁶

Finally, Allah (SWT) commands the Holy Prophet in Surah Ash-Shura to demand the love of the Ahlul-Bayt, from the believers, as recompense for the toils of bringing Islam.

... **قُلْ لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ...**

...Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives...¹⁷

It is agreed by the mufasssireen (Interpreters of Qur'an) that based on reliable authentic Hadith, as well as sheer logic – that the above 3 Aa'yaat are related. The prophet clearly identified Ameer-ul-Momineen Ali-ibne-Abi-Talib (as), Bibi Sayyeda (as), Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Husain (as) as his Ahlul-Bayt and Qurba (near in both relation & character).

To follow these distinguished personalities identified by the Holy Qur'an is the same as following the best guides who can practically explain and demonstrate the guidance of the silent guide (Qur'an) itself. Hence, to follow them and look to them for Guidance is ultimately the following of the best path to Allah (swt), and thereby a Wasilah.

Wasilah in Du'a

Based on the above-mentioned Aa'yaat, we should seek Wasilah (means of nearness) to Allah (SWT) through the Ahlul-Bayt. In the commentary of Surah Al-Mai'dah 5:35, Agha Mahdi Pooya (one of the great Mufasssir) defines Wasilah:

“Wasilah or ‘Means of access’ to Allah (SWT) is to faithfully follow the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and the Holy Imams of his holy house, who have been thoroughly purified by Allah (SWT)”.¹⁸

Wasilah in Du'a is no more than giving witness of following the path/ teachings of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and his Ahlul-Bayt (as). The Ahlul-Bayt themselves have taught a consistent method of incorporating Wasilah into Du'a. It is observed in the common and authentic Du'as such as Dua-e-Kumayl, Mashlool, Sabah & Du'as in Saheefa-e-Sajjadiya etc. that they conclude by sending blessings upon Muhammad (s.a.w.a) and his Ahlul-Bayt: **“Allah humma Salle Ala Muhammad (s.a.w.a) Wa aale Muhammad (s.a.w.a)”**.

This sending of blessings is commonly known as **“Salawaat”** and has been made obligatory in Salaah (The traditional method of worship), so that every Muslim may repeat and know that in order for them to seek nearness of Allah (SWT) they must send blessings upon Muhammad & his Ahlul-Bayt (as).

Some synonyms of the above style of sending blessings/ acknowledgement of Wasilah in Du'a are:

¹⁶ Surah Al-Ahzab 33:33

¹⁷ Surah Ash-Shura 42:23

¹⁸ Tafseer Al-Qur'an: Chapter Maidah 5:35 by Agha Mahdi Pooya

- "...By the grace (*Waasta*) of Muhammad and his Ahlul-Bayt"
- "...By the virtuousness of (*Be Hurmat-e*) Muhammad and his Ahlul-Bayt"
- "...For the sake of (*Be Haqq-e*) Muhammad and his Ahlul-Bayt"

Wasilah has been mentioned twice in the Holy Qur'an, once in the commonly quoted previous verse of Surah Al-Maidah 5:35 and secondly in Surah Bani-Isra'eel:

قُلْ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضَّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا

Say (to them): "Call upon (Du'a) to those whom you fancy - besides Him; they have no power to remove adversity from you, nor to change it."

Those whom they call upon (Du'a), desire (for their own selves) means of approach (Wasilah) to their Lord, even those who are nearest: they hope for His Mercy and fear His punishment: for the punishment of your Lord is a thing to be cautious of.¹⁹

The above two Aayaah were revealed with respect to the position acclaimed by the common man in regards to certain lofty personalities who were perceived to be in the first ranks of submission to their Lord.

Man tends to venerate and adore those personalities that amaze him. However, this reverence can promulgate to the level that devotees may start idolizing their saints and looking upon them, rather than the Almighty Lord, for relief of their affairs.

From the above Aayaah, it is clear that veneration is forbidden if it strays to the level of Supplication (Du'a). The fact that the Holy Scripture cites the Veneered personalities as those who seek Wasilah, while simultaneously forbidding invoking them, makes it clear that Wasilah is not containing of Du'a. This re-enforces the definition of Wasilah that we earlier prescribed as, "**to faithfully follow the divinely appointed guides**".

Besides, as "means of nearness / closeness" to Allah (SWT), Wasilah is a lofty institution in that it propels man to come as close to Allah (SWT) as possible. It is therefore illogical for one to call upon (Dua) other than Allah (SWT) and claim that such a calling upon (Dua) is Wasilah – for it rather introduced one more tier between the direct relationship of Man to God.

To follow, praise and remember divinely appointed guides is Wasilah since they dutifully provided the guidance to the common man from the Almighty Lord, and such deeds

¹⁹ Surah Bani-Isra'eel 17:56-57

(remembrance, invoking Allah's blessings on them etc.) would encourage others to follow suit. However, to supplicate them or invoke their souls' for one's needs increases the tiers between the Supplicant and Allah (SWT) and as such is the sheer opposite of Wasilah (which means to bring close, rather than introduce avoidable tiers).

The concept of Wasilah is thus entirely distinctively different from the devious concept of invocations (Du'a) to Muhammad (s.a.w.a) or any amongst his Ahlul-Bayt (as).

Shafa'ah (Intercession)

Shafa'ah is a concept that is at times confused with Wasilah. Whereas Wasilah is means of seeking nearness, Shafa'ah means 'Intercession'. Shafa'ah is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an in regards to the Day of Judgment.

Shafa'ah will indeed benefit the Momineen on the Day of Judgment. This is because those who sincerely send blessings on the Prophet and his Ahlul-Bayt and thereby recognize their positions as divinely appointed guides to the believers, following in their footsteps and guidance – they will benefit by following their commandments. This bearing witness and following (of the Prophet & his Ahlul-Bayt) will carry the weight and argument of Mercy on the Day of Judgment for those believers who refrained from major sins and did their best to refrain from minor sins whilst striving to successfully execute their obligations.

There are several Aa'yaat concerning intercession (such as Al-Baqarah 2:255), found in the Holy Qur'an but they are beyond the scope of this article. Rest assured that the concept of Shafa'ah is clearly established by Qur'anic injunctions. In the hadith and ta'rikh (history) of the Masoomeen (as) we find many instances wherein they invoke Allah (SWT), on numerous occasions for the forgiveness and blessings of the Momineen (believers). However, it has also been established by Qur'anic injunctions in many Aa'yaat (such as: Al-Baqarah 2:48, 254 & Al-Mudatthir 74:48) that Shafa'ah for the unbelievers and muskrikeen (polytheists) will not be accepted.

A famous hadith of Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (as), the sixth rightful successor of the Prophet, is when he said at his deathbed that - intercession would not be for those who do not perform the obligatory injunction of 'Salaah' (ritual prayer). Hence he has clearly stipulated that intercession is for a select group of people and is indeed coupled together with deeds. It goes against logic that Allah (SWT), the Just, would allow easy-going free-will sinners to simply beg an individual and thereby be forgiven. Nay, in fact Allah (SWT) is the one who decides which group is worthy enough for intercession and permits the Masoomeen (as) to intercede on their behalf. This is why in Dua-e-Talab-e-Hawajj, Imam Zayn-al-Abideen (as) guides us in supplication to Allah (SWT) to be made worthy enough for the intercession of the Masoomeen (as). Intercession is a mercy of Allah (SWT) to the 'people who take heed' - and He has delegated this mercy to be invoked, on the Day of Judgment, by the Masoomeen (as) who are worthy of this station (Shafa'ah).

The distinguished deceased scholar Agha Tabataba'i clearly expounds on the subject of Shafa'ah in his tafseer Al-Mizan. Reproducing his research²⁰ here is beyond the scope of this Article. He basically divides Shafa'ah in two parts: For this life he includes in Shafa'ah: Repentance, True Faith, Good Deeds, Holy Qur'an, and anything related to good-deeds (these are the items we categorize as wasilah) as well as Prophets, Apostles, Angels and Believers seeking forgiveness for others (which are items in the context of extra support, and we have previously explained them as such).

This leaves Shafa'ah in the context of beyond this life. After expounding on the gist of the subject, Agha Tabataba'i re-iterates that Shafa'ah beyond this life is meant distinctively for the Day of Judgment. In his tafseer, under the topic of 'Shafa'ah', in the section of 'When will intercession be effected', he writes:

...To make a long story short, **intercession shall happen at the very last stage on the Day of Judgment; it shall bring the divine forgiveness to the guilty believers, prevent them from entering into hell and take those out who would have entered into it; it shall be by extension of mercy and/or manifestation of benevolence and magnanimity...**²¹

From the above, it should be clear that Shafa'ah scheduled for the Day of Judgment is based on intercession by the intercessors on behalf of the believers. The Masoomeen (as) will intercede for those believers for whom Allah (SWT) has permitted them – based on the beliefs and deeds of the believers. They (the intercessors) cannot be bribed into interceding for one who is not worthy and not within the realm permitted by Allah (SWT) – and definitely not on the simplicity of begging them for it. Infact since Allah (swt) is the independent owner of Shafa'ah, and like He says in many places that only He is the Shafi – it points out that the position of those who will be intercessors on Qiyaamah, is similar to chief-guests who gift out awards and benefits, but are not the determinants of who will receive the awards. The Masoomeen (as) thus would gift out the award of Shafa'ah to those whom Allah (swt) has decided upon either directly, or based on a set criteria to the Masoomeen (as). This is supported by the verses of Surah Al-A'araaf that allude to the fact that the 'Ashaab-ul-A'araaf' (People of the Heights) will identify the worthy from the unworthy by the signs / markings (That Allah (swt) marked them with):

For the worthy:

وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَاهُمْ
وَنَادَوْا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ
يَطْمَعُونَ

And between the two there shall be a veil, and on the most elevated places there shall be men who know all by their marks, and they shall call out to the dwellers of the garden: Peace be on you; they shall not have yet entered it, though they hope.²²

²⁰ <http://www.almizan.org/Qur'anic/Intercession.htm>

²¹ Al-Mizan Volume 1: 'Qur'anic discourse about Intercession' by Allamah Tabataba'i

²² Surah Al-A'araaf 7:46

And as for the unworthy:

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رَجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا مَا
أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

And the dwellers of the most elevated places shall call out to (other) men whom they will recognize by their marks saying: Of no avail were to you your amassing and your haughtily behavior²³

And as such, the determinant is Allah (swt) whereas the intercessors will intercede for those whom he desires and marks as so, either directly, or based on set criteria from Him.

Allah (SWT) negates the whole idea of calling upon (Du'a) entities (other than Him) for the sake of Intercession. Such calling upon (Du'a) can never profit, since Intercession (Shafa'ah) is not based on who implores or pleads to an "intercessor" the most. As long as we follow the commands of the Almighty, transmitted through the divinely appointed guides, we will be assured of their Intercession on the Day of Judgment. On the other hand, praying to Intercessors will do no good as is stated in the Qur'an itself:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ
هُؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أُنَبِّئُوكُم بِمَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

And they worship beside Allah what can neither harm them nor profit them, and they say: These are our intercessors with Allah. Say: Do you (presume to) inform Allah of what He knows not in the heavens and the earth? Glory be to Him, and supremely exalted is He above what they set up (with Him).²⁴

The above verse of the Holy Scripture emphasizes the fruitlessness of calling upon "Intercessors" for relief. Allah (SWT) has the command of Intercession and all things. He will choose Intercessors and permit Intercession for whomsoever he wills. The common man cannot influence nor circumvent the design of the Almighty Lord by appealing to Intercessors. Whoever Allah (SWT) chooses for Intercession will intercede at the command of the Lord and not the plea of mankind to the Intercessors.

The concept of Shafa'ah is thus entirely distinctively different from the devious concept of invocations (Du'a) to Muhammad (s.a.w.a) or any amongst his Ahlul-Bayt (as).

In conclusion, making the Masoomeen (as) the addressed entity in Du'a (as opposed to Allah (SWT)) is **not** the same as the concept of either Wasilah or Shafa'ah. Nay, it is in fact distinctively forbidden.

²³ Surah Al-A'araaf 7:48

²⁴ Surah Yunus 10:18

Forbiddance of Du'a to Intermediaries

Du'a is 'a calling', 'an addressing' for help etc. Can we make this call (Du'a) to others (intermediaries or otherwise) in the hope that they will pass on our requests to the ultimate Authority?

Based on all the arguments and evidence provided thus far, from the Holy Scripture and other sources (including ahadith), it can easily be inferred that Du'a must only be addressed solely and directly to the supreme Lord, Allah (SWT).

However, to add weight to this argument we will examine supportive verses and statements from the most important Holy Qur'an, as well as Ahadith and verdicts of the Ulema (Scholars). We'll treat this discussion as a set of questions outlined below.

Is calling upon others equivalent to calling upon Allah (SWT)?

This is a question of black-and-white logic. Calling A is not the same as calling B. In the logical sense, if we consider it the same then we have to consider A and B equivalent. Considering Allah (SWT) equivalent to his servants in Islam is known as 'Shirk'. Allah (SWT) has clearly distinguished between himself and his creation:

أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

Is He then who creates like him who does not create? Do you not then mind?²⁵

The above is just one example of the difference between Allah (swt) and His servants. Linguistically and logically by common sense, Allah (swt) and His servants cannot be the same. However, historically there have been different groups that have believed this in various forms. For example the Christians believe in the concept of trinity – thereby when they call upon Jesus, they claim to call upon Allah (swt). Similarly the Hindus who believe in re-incarnation and possibility of their god(s) taking human or other creature form – they also claim that calling upon that human or creature is the same as calling upon God. But since the Muslims believe in the purity of Allah (swt) and His independence from all forms of creation (since He is the Creator and above being bound by creation form), the question of “calling intermediaries as equivalent to calling of Allah (swt)” must never arise amongst them.

Of course the history of the Muslims has seen extremist groups such as the Ghullaat who included the Nusairis that believed in divinity of Imam Ali (as). These Nusairis and their like were Mushrik for what they believed and their claim that calling a human is the same as calling God (since the human is a divine being) is most abominable and Shirk.

No Muslim can honestly say that calling upon a creature or servant of Allah (swt) is the same as calling upon Allah (swt). They may say that they call them because of a power

²⁵ Surah An-Nahl 16:17

bestowed upon the servants or because the servants would convey the messages or desires of the people to Allah (swt). This is a different case and we will examine it too.

However, to plainly say that calling the servants of God is one and same as calling God is outright comparing Allah (swt) to His servants. Such comparison is refuted by the Qur'an, which draws a distinction between Allah (swt) and His servants as in the verse quoted below:

وَإِن يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِن يَمَسُّكَ
بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

And **if Allah touches you with affliction, there is none to take it off but He;** and if He visits you with good, then He has power over all things.²⁶

However, this issue of equivalence is barely in existence, as no Muslim can claim that Allah (SWT) shares his powers of governance with others (Otherwise he would not be a Muslim). Allah (swt) is alone the Judge and Decider of all affairs (Amr). He alone decrees sustenance, life, death, creation etc. At times he allows humans miracles in order that they may witness the glory of Allah (swt), however this does not deflect from the fact that Allah (swt) alone holds the command and reign of affairs and only He can do and Will as He desires.

If Allah (swt) gives sustenance to one man through another man, in reality it is Allah (swt) who has decreed the sustenance and so it is in actuality Allah (swt) who is the Giver. Similarly if the angel of death takes away the soul of a being, it is because Allah (swt) decreed it and not because the Angel of death, since the Angel does not have the power over death (it was only a messenger tasked and made able to execute Allah's decree). Which is precisely why we never call upon the Angel of death for life-extension.

This is therefore also the reason why we make the Duas to Allah (swt). Because He, and only He, is the decreer of needs-fulfillment (Qaazi-al-Hajaat), and one can pray only to a decreer. Allah (swt) has made provisions available to us within realm of nature in which He has bound us. But when we are unable to extract or find fulfillment of our needs within the realm that He has established for us, we return unto Him in Prayer (Dua) and call upon Him, the decreer of needs-fulfillment to fulfill our desire. For indeed He is the power over everything and everything is His servant and submits to Him and only He can decree affairs for ease of His servants.

This aspect of decreeing needs-fulfillment is what separates God from man in the aspect of invocation such that we can say that calling upon Allah (swt) is not the same as calling upon His servants - in the sense that calling upon the decreer of needs-fulfillment is not the same as calling upon an entity that itself is in need of fulfillment from Allah (swt).

²⁶ Surah Al-An'am 6:17

This puts to rest the argument of equivalence in calling upon Allah (swt) and calling upon His servants. We now continue the discussion by focusing on matters other than equivalence of invocations.

Now another concept, this time one of significant prevalence, is that of invoking Du'a to intermediaries with the intention of them transmitting the Du'a to the Almighty along with their recommendation stamp. This, we will now discuss below.

Is there support in Scripture for calling upon Intermediaries?

For Du'a to intermediaries to be legitimate, there must be support for this method of Du'a in the scripture. Or if the scripture is ambiguous about it, then maybe we could rely on support from Ahadith and/ or logical deduction.

So, does the Qur'an mention that we could or should call upon intermediaries?

As per my research and questioning men of knowledge, there is no such verse. In fact, based on previously mentioned Aa'yaat 2:186 and 40:60 Allah (SWT) commands us to supplicate to him (not intermediaries or any other) and has assured acceptance.

Does Qur'an leave the methodology of asking Du'a ambiguous, so that we could resort to methods that we find suitable to ourselves? Or does it decree a particular method of supplication?

Based on the Aa'yaat 7:180, 17:110 & 7:55-56 mentioned previously, we know that the Holy Scripture is very clear and specific on the method of Du'a. It decrees that the supplication should be addressed to Allah (SWT) by calling upon his various names and must be in a state of fear, awe, secrecy and hope. In one instance (17:110) Allah (SWT) mentions '...Call upon Allah or call upon Ar-Rahmaan; whichever you call upon, He has the best names...' Thus the Qur'an leaves no ambiguity in regards to the procedure of Du'a – that it must be to Allah (SWT) alone by the means of invoking his many names.

Is there then any need for Intermediaries?

This question can be divided into two parts:

- 1- Is the Help of Allah (swt), as controller of affairs, sufficient for His servants?
- 2- Is it sufficient to call upon Allah (swt) directly such that He will be able to hear our pleas without the involvement of intermediaries to get our pleas to Him?

As relates to the first question, in regards to sufficiency of Allah's Help, the Qur'an tells us that Allah (SWT) is sufficient (Kaafi) for His Servants:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَمَنْ
يُضِلَّ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

Is Allah not sufficient for His servant? And they seek to frighten you with those besides Him; and whomsoever Allah makes err, there is no guide for him.²⁷

As per the verse above, it is conclusive that Allah (SWT) is totally and absolutely independent and sufficient to administer the affairs of his servants. He stands in no need. In fact, he also commands the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) to declare it as:

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلْ
أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ
كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّهِ أَوْ أَرَادَنِيَ بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَاتُ رَحْمَتِهِ
قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

And should you **ask them, who created the heavens and the earth?** They would most certainly **say: Allah**. Say (to them, O Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a)): **"Have you then considered that those you do Du'a to besides Allah, would they, if Allah desire to afflict me with harm, be the removers of His harm, or (would they), if Allah desire to show me mercy, be the withholders of His mercy?"** Say: **"Allah is sufficient for me; on Him do the reliant rely"**.²⁸

In the above verse it is clear that Allah (SWT) reigns supreme in need of none and the prophet has subsequently delegated to the masses that if Du'a is invoked to other than Allah (SWT), it is of no benefit. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) declares, "HasbiY'Allah" (Allah (SWT) is sufficient for me). Thus we conclude that Allah (SWT) is in no need of intermediaries and his help is sufficient.

However, the question of our Duas reaching unto Him still stays unanswered. Is it possible for our Duas to reach Him without help of intermediaries? Are we in need of intermediaries to convey our Duas to Him?

- use referenced-aayahs and maybe even quotes from Agha Khoei
- use referenced-aayahs and maybe even quotes from Agha Beheshti
- The aayahs must encompass that ALLAH IS CLOSER TO US THAN OURSELVES, CLOSER TO US THAN OUR JUGULAR VEIN, TELL SERVANTS THAT ALLAH IS CLOSE SO THEY CALL UPON ALLAH, etc.

²⁷ Surah Az-Zumar 39:36

²⁸ Surah Az-Zumar 39:38

But then, does he desire intermediaries through whom to be reached? The Qur'an has no verse to support such a point. On the contrary, it alerts us to invoke him (without having any mention of any intermediaries). Then, can we say Allah (SWT) desires it?

But are the Masoomeen not Intermediaries/ 'Wakeel' over us?

'Wakeel' is the Arabic word that refers to agent, representative, lawyer, custodian, warden, keeper etc. In other words, one who could hold responsibility or guardianship over those that he represents. One upon whom we could defer our affairs to get done. Or one who would act as an intermediary.

There is a belief among some Muslims that the Masoomeen (as) are intermediaries/ custodians/ guardians over us, and that we could approach/ beseech them (via Du'a) with our affairs and they would get these affairs for us in order. In doing so, they would be acting as intermediaries/ agents for us, who would take our needs forward to the Mighty Lord.

Of course one can approach any living being with a request. But has Allah (SWT) entrusted or permitted any created being to be a custodian or guardian over us – such that we may redirect our beseeching and invoking to them? No.

The Qur'an has many verses that direct the prophet to preach that the only custodian over mankind, and indeed all things, is Allah (SWT) and none else (including the prophet himself).

Allah (SWT) reveals to the Prophet (s.a.w.a) in the Holy Book:

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ نَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

...**You are only a warner; and Allah is custodian (wakeel) over all things.**²⁹

The Qur'an re-iterates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) is not a wakeel but only a guide – a giver of glad tidings and a warner:

وَبِالْحَقِّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا

And with truth have We revealed it (Qur'an), and with truth did it come; and **We have not sent you but as the giver of good news and as a warner.**³⁰

As per the above verse, Allah (SWT) has clearly defined the function of the prophet as "Guidance", to teach mankind the right path and forbid them from error – as one who expounds on the Holy Qur'an.

He has not been sent as one who is a wakeel (guardian or custodian). Nay, in fact the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) only guides and the rest of responsibility for all else lies with the people themselves.

²⁹ Surah Hu'd 11:12

³⁰ Surah Bani-Isra'eel 17:105

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

Surely We have revealed to you the Book with the truth for the sake of men; so whoever follows the right way, it is for his own soul and whoever errs, he errs only to its detriment; **and you are not a custodian (wakeel) over them.**³¹

The Prophet (s.a.w.a) is himself commanded, by the Almighty, to tell the people:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

Say (O Muhammad (s.a.w.a)): O people! Indeed there has come to you the truth from your Lord, therefore whoever goes aright, he goes aright only for the good of his own soul, and whoever goes astray, he goes astray only to the detriment of it, **and I am not a custodian (wakeel) over you.**³²

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) is commanded further more (as if in clarification) to declare that the power of harm and benefit is only for Allah (SWT) and he himself can be of neither harm, nor of benefit.

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا

Say (O Muhammad (s.a.w.a)): "I do not own any (power) to harm or benefit you".³³

From all the above, we can now conclude that the Masoomeen (as) were not endowed with, nor delegated the responsibility for 'Wikaalat' (Custodianship/ Guardianship). In fact the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) was commanded by Allah (SWT) to make it clear that his only duty was to bring the message and from there man is free to do what he wills. Those on the right path will win the favor of Allah (SWT) while those who are not, will be the losers. And Allah (SWT) is the sole and only 'Wakeel' over all things.

Does the Qur'an specifically insist on invoking Allah (SWT) directly?

There are verses in the Holy Scripture that specifically command invocation to the Almighty:

³¹ Surah Az-Zumar 39:41

³² Surah Yunus 10:108

³³ Surah Al-Jinn 72:21

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

He is the Ever-Living. There is no god but He. Therefore make Du'a to Him, and be sincere to 'Deen' (belief). All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.³⁴

In the above verse, the command is clear that Du'a should be invoked to the Ever-Living, the one besides whom there is no god. This is sincerity in 'Deen' (Belief) – precisely because invoking Allah (SWT) and none other is also an attestation that absolute Independence and Sovereignty over all things belongs to him and him only, which is the very crux of the Tawheedi (One God) belief system.

There are also some other clear verses where it is declared that Du'a should be invoked to the 'One' and none other should be associated with him:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُو رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا

Say (O Muhammad (s.a.w.a)): **I invoke (make Du'a) only but unto my Lord and associate none with the 'One'**.³⁵

The prophet declares that his prayer (in conformance with the command of Allah (SWT)) is only to his Lord with whom none is associated. However, it could be said that the above verse was in the context of the Kaafireen (disbelievers) in the presence of whom the prophet was speaking.

But yet there is just as similar a verse specifically for the Muslimeen (believers) where the command is clear for Du'a to be invoked in mosques to Allah (SWT) only and none other.

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

And the places of prostration (mosques) are for Allah, and **don't call upon (do not invoke Du'a) to other than Allah the 'One'**.³⁶

A good question to ask is why is this command addressed to Muslims, who already believe in the Singular God? Obviously, for good reason so they may not dilute their 'Deen' (belief) by invocations to Intermediaries. And thus all theories of calling upon intermediaries are utterly unsubstantiated and invalidated by the Holy Scripture.

Does the Qur'an specifically forbid invoking others?

The verses mentioned in the preceding sections should be enough to substantiate the forbiddance of Du'a to others (including intermediaries) by virtue of the fact that Allah

³⁴ Surah Al-Mumin: 40:65

³⁵ Surah Al-Jinn 72:20

³⁶ Surah Al-Jinn 72:18

(SWT) commands us to invoke him alone. However, there are a few verses that drive this point further ahead:

وَأَنْ أَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ
فَأِنَّكَ إِذَا مَنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ وَإِنْ يَمْسَسْكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ
إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Set your faces towards 'Deen' (Belief) upright; **be not of the Mushrikeen (those who associate [shareek] others with God). Do not supplicate (make Du'a) to those other than Allah (SWT) for they will neither profit, nor harm you. And if you do, you will be of the 'Dhalimeen' (Unjust). And if Allah (SWT) brings you harm, none can remove it. And if he wishes you good, none can take away his grace.** It (his grace) reaches whomsoever of his servants he wishes; and he is Oft-Forgiving, Merciful.³⁷

The above verses clearly state that supplicating to other than Allah (SWT) is supplicating to one who neither has power to profit, nor to harm you. Compare this with Surah Al-Jinn 72:21 mentioned previously wherein prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a) is commanded to tell mankind that he has no power to profit or harm them. Thus if even the prophet cannot be in this category then it means none could. The verse continues to declare that calling upon to any entity other than Allah (SWT) is an act of 'Dhulm' (Injustice) – a great sin. Thus Allah (SWT) has not only commanded man to supplicate to him, but has forbidden supplicating to any intermediaries (and others) including the prophet. And furthermore declared such supplication an act of Injustice.

As if this was not enough, there is one more verse, perhaps the clearest in terms of forbidding supplication to intermediaries. In this verse Allah (SWT) makes it clear that Du'a can only, and must only be addressed to the Creator and not any created being.

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ

And those whom they supplicate (make Du'a to) besides Allah (SWT) have not created anything while they are themselves created³⁸

The above verse makes the identity (of to whom supplications must be addressed) clear beyond doubt, as the 'Khaliq' (Creator). Those who are created beings are not worthy to be supplicated to. The only King, the only Master, the only Lord, the only God, and

³⁷ Surah Yunus 10:105-107

³⁸ Surah An-Nahl 16:20

indeed the only One entity that supplications can and must be addressed to, is he who is the Creator – and has not been created. Every other entity, per the Holy Scripture, is a created being and by virtue thereof, not worthy of supplication.

This finally seals the discussion in its entirety.

Lessons from the Masoomeen (as)

The Holy Qur'an is so absolutely clear about the concept of Du'a that further explanations by the Masoomeen (as) (and further on, the Ulema) become redundant. However, keeping in light their duty to leverage this concept and further add the weight of their pen and voice, it would be advisable to include their puritan transmissions and explanations (via Ahadith/ Du'a) on the issue.

There are many Du'a that the Masoomeen (as) have taught that state their teachings on the concept of Du'a. In their narrations they have outlined the style and format of Du'a. Many wonderful authentic Du'as taught by the Imams such as Dua-e-Mashloul, Dua-e-Kumayl and Dua-e-Makaarimal Akhlaq (among others) have demonstrated the perfect practical application of the rulings and commands of the Qur'an on the subject of Du'a.

Even though the wealth of transmitted Du'as is vast, I'll suffice by quoting three very clear examples to drive my thesis per the puritan views of the Masoomeen (as) on Du'a.

In Dua-e-Kumayl, Ameer-ul-Momineen (as) states:

...(O Allah (SWT)) You've commanded your servants to worship you. ***Fa Innaka Fazaita 'Ala 'Ibadeka Be-Ibadateka***

You have commanded them (your servants) to make Du'a to you and have assured acceptance. ***Wa Amarta-hoom Be-Doaa'eka Wa Zaminta lahomaal-Ijabata***

So upon thee I look, and towards thee I stretch forth my hands. ***Fa-Ilaika Ya Rabbe Nasabta Vaj-heya Wa Ilaika Ya Rabbe Madad-to Yade-ya***

Therefore by your Honor (O Lord!) accept my Du'a (supplication)...³⁹ ***Fa-Be-'Izzatekas- Tajib lee Doaa'ee***

In the above narration, the Imam (as) reiterates the command of Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur'an as previously discussed. The Imam explains that Du'a is made to the Lord himself by virtue of his command and his infinite mercy in which he assures acceptance of legitimate Du'a. And it is based on this precept that the imam declares and addresses his invocations of Dua-e-Kumayl to his most merciful Lord.

³⁹ Dua-e-Kumayl (Excerpt) – by Ameer-ul-Momineen (as)

Secondly, in the below Du'a related by Bibi Sayyeda Fatima Zahra (as), she recounts the attributes special and unique to Allah (SWT), whereby she clearly relates that Allah (SWT) is directly approachable and must be invoked directly for he has no counselor, attendant or doorkeeper.

O He! Besides whom there is no lord to whom to address Du'a (to be Invoked). O He, above whom there is no god to be feared. O He, except whom there is no master to be obeyed. **O He, who has no counselor to be approached. O He, who has no attendant to be bribed. O He, who has no doorkeeper to be fooled.** O He, who gives generously, liberally irrespective of the demands, and (deals not) with numerous sins but mercifully and kindly. Send blessings upon Muhammad (s.a.w.a) and his progeny, and grant my prayers (Du'a, desires)⁴⁰

يَا مَنْ لَيْسَ غَيْرُهُ رَبٌّ يُدْعَى، يَا مَنْ
لَيْسَ فَوْقَهُ إِلَهٌ يُخْشَى، يَا مَنْ لَيْسَ
دُونَهُ مَلِكٌ يُقَى، يَا مَنْ لَيْسَ لَهُ
وَزِيرٌ يُؤْتَى، يَا مَنْ لَيْسَ لَهُ حَاجِبٌ
يُرْشَى، يَا مَنْ لَيْسَ لَهُ بَوَابٌ يُعْشَى،
يَا مَنْ لَا يَزْدَادُ عَلَى كَثْرَةِ السُّؤَالِ إِلَّا
كَرَمًا وَجُودًا وَعَلَى كَثْرَةِ الذُّنُوبِ إِلَّا
عَفْوَاً وَصَفْحاً صَلَّى عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَافْعَلْ بِي كَذَا وَكَذَا

Finally, in a portion of the famed Dua-e-Makaarimal Akhlaaq, Imam Zayn-al-Abideen (as) supplicates to his Lord, and teaches us thereby, that Allah (SWT) is the only entity that must be approached in times of distress, need and misery.

Furthermore, the Imam seeks refuge from Allah (SWT) from any temptation that may divert him to ask of one other than his Lord. And such an asking he says would amount to the abandonment of that slave by Allah (SWT) the Almighty – which, would be a state of great loss as outlined in the excerpt of the Du'a below:

“...Oh Allah! Make me leap to thee in times of distress, ask from thee in times of need, and plea to thee in times of misery. Tempt me not to seek help from other than you when I am distressed, or to humble myself in asking from someone else when I am poor, or to plea with someone less than thee when in state of fear – for then (if I do that) I would deserve Thy abandonment, Thy withholding, and Thy turning away, O Most Merciful of the merciful! ...”⁴¹

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي أُصُولُ بَكَ عِنْدَ الضَّرُورَةِ،
وَ أَسْأَلُكَ عِنْدَ الْحَاجَةِ، وَ أَتَضَرَّعُ إِلَيْكَ
عِنْدَ الْمَسْكِنَةِ، وَ لَا تَقْتِنِي بِالِاسْتِعَانَةِ
بِغَيْرِكَ إِذَا اضْطَرَرْتُ، وَ لَا بِالْخُضُوعِ
لِسُؤَالِ غَيْرِكَ إِذَا افْتَقَرْتُ، وَ لَا بِالتَّضَرُّعِ
إِلَى مَنْ دُونِكَ إِذَا رَهَيْتُ، فَاسْتَحِقَّ بِذَلِكَ
خِدْلَاتِكَ وَ مَنَعَكَ وَ إِعْرَاضَكَ، يَا أَرْحَمَ
الرَّاحِمِينَ

Similar variations are found in other Du'as of Imam Zayn-al-Abideen including Dua-e-Abu Hamzah Thumali and Dua-e-Talab-e-Hawaij – *referenced in Appendix A*.

From the above three quotations of the Masoomeen (as), it can be noted that the members of the pure household of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a), as expected, were in absolute conformance with the teachings and guidance of the verses of the Holy Scripture.

⁴⁰ Dua of Salat-e-Fatima Zahra (as) – Mafaatihul Jinaan (by Shaykh Abbas Qummi)

⁴¹ Dua-e-Makaarimal Akhlaaq (Section # 12) – Imam Ali ibn-e-Husain Zayn-al-Abideen (as)

The followers, if sincere, must abide by the same pure and authentic style and format of Du'as as taught by the noble Masoomeen (as) without impurity of any baseless conjecture.

Verdicts of the Ulema

In addition to the verdicts of the Holy Scripture and Ahadith/ Du'a referenced above, I'd like to provide few quotations of some of the Ulema who have lent their pen to the endeavor of clarifying this issue. Once again, these quotations are redundant given the clear explanation of the Qur'an and Ahadith above. However, I'm including them for purpose of clarity and audit.

Below follow some self-explanatory quotations from four of the renowned & distinguished scholars of the school of the Ahlul-Bayt:

Ayatullah Shaheed Dashte-Ghaib writes in his Book, "How to get Peace of mind":

The true believer in God has neither expectation nor greed from any creature. He does not fear any creature either. **If he is fearful of his sins, it is due to his fear from God. His expectation of grace and forgiveness is from God alone. God alone is the center of fear and hope for him.** (If he runs away from any beast, enemy or harmful thing, it is because Almighty God has commanded him to keep away from these and not due to fear of these. Similarly, **if he has any expectation from any person, it is because God has commanded that we should support one another. In fact this expectation as well is from God alone that He may get the job done with support from another person.**)

The holy Quran says: "Those to whom the people said: 'Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them,' but this increased their faith, and **they said: 'Allah is sufficient for us and most excellent is the Protector.'** So they returned with favor from Allah and (His) grace, no evil touched them and they followed the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is the Lord of mighty grace." (Surah Aal-e-Imraan 3:173-174).⁴²

The Late Grand Ayatullah Al-Uzma Abul-Qasim Al-Khu'i writes in his commentary (in Al-Bayaan) of "Iyyaka Na'budu wa Iyyaka Nasta'een" (Surah Al-Fatihah 1:5):

1. **No believer can practice the "aqeedat" of beseeching help from anyone who is not present. Allah (SWT) only can be beseeched.** He is omnipresent. No one is like him in this respect. Omnipresent means: Present everywhere at the same time, watching and hearing...
2. The directive to serve Allah (SWT) and also to beseech him for help – in this verse – is linked. **Any believer who worships Allah (SWT) and then in Du'a seeks help from other than Allah (SWT), is like worshipping other than Allah (SWT)...**
3. **"Tawassul" is wrong if the perception is that Allah (SWT) is confined and reachable only through intermediaries or intercession.** It goes against the Qur'anic guidance and amounts to joining them with Allah (SWT). Allah would be deemed to be dependent upon the intermediaries for access to his servants...
4. **Only Allah (SWT) can be praised and thanked with regard to his power to help and grant "Haajaat"...**⁴³

The late Agha Mahdi Pooya famed for his popular commentary of Al-Qur'an, relates in his 'tafseer' in regards to the same Aayat of Surah Al-Hamd 1:5

⁴² How to get Peace of Mind (Vol.2) by Ayatullah Shaheed Dashte-Ghaib

⁴³ Taken from Urdu edition of *Al-Bayaan*, Chapter of "Sifaat-e-Al-Hamd" by Agha Khu'i

Keeping to the norm of the universal submission, **man must also submit and surrender his will to Allah's will, and seek help from no one but Him...** It is logical as well as profitable to **seek help only from Allah whom the supplicant has accepted as his 'rabb', and has undertaken to serve Him only, because the infinite mercy of the merciful Lord will be available to the seeker of help** in proportion to the sincerity of his commitment...

'*Iyyaka na-budu wa iyyaka nasta-in*' is the norm of human activity. Man must obey Allah's will, and seek His help, which also is obedience to Him... Man's effort and strive in the way to perfection, by perpetual obedience and quest for help and guidance, should be continuous, then alone he can keep to the right path which leads to Allah...⁴⁴

Agha Pooya continues in 1:7 to alternately define the true role of the Prophet & his Ahlul Bayt (as) as being Guidance (Hidayat):

The right guidance, identified beyond doubt, has been made available to mankind. **To follow the path of the divinely guided guides, on whom Allah has bestowed His bounties, is the right guidance...** The essential prerequisite for following the path of an ideal, worthy of imitation, is to love the cherished model with heart and soul. To serve this necessity the almighty Allah and His Holy Prophet have enjoined the love of **the Ahlul Bayt, the thoroughly purified and divinely chosen guides, who show the right path...**⁴⁵

Agha Pooya returns in 2:186 (the verse of invoking Du'a to Allah (SWT)) to re-iterate that reliance must be on Allah (SWT) alone:

Allah is very near, nearer than the jugular vein. Awareness of this fact serves two purposes-it stops man from drifting towards evil, and secondly it gives him heart and confidence to rely upon Allah alone, independent of all created beings, making him understand the ever-living reality of Allah who **alone controls the whole universe and that which takes place in it. He answers the prayer of every sincere supplicant when he calls on Him.**⁴⁶

In the continuing tafseer of the same Aayat, Agha Pooya quotes from a sermon of Ameer-ul-Momineen (as). Imam Ali ibn-Abi Talib (as) says:

Put faith in Allah. Seek His protection.

Direct your prayers, requests, solicitations and supplications to Him and Him alone.

To give as well as to withhold lies in His (only in His) power.

Ask as much of His favors as you can.

Know that **Allah owns the treasures of the heavens and the earth.** Not only He has given permission to ask for His mercy and favors, but also has promised to listen to your prayers. **He has not appointed guards to prevent your prayers reaching Him. Invoke His help** in difficulties and distress. Implore Him to grant you long life and sound health. Pray to Him for prosperity...⁴⁷

Ayatullah Shaheed Beheshti approaches the matter from a different perspective, i.e. one of societal application including its historical legacy. He mentions in his treatise on "The Theory of 'Alam al Khalq and 'Alam al-'Amr"⁴⁸ regarding the variety of devious beliefs that existed in Arabia preceding the coming of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a).

⁴⁴ Tafseer Al-Qur'an Chapter 1:5 by Agha Mahdi Pooya

⁴⁵ Tafseer Al-Qur'an Chapter 1:7 by Agha Mahdi Pooya

⁴⁶ Tafseer Al-Qur'an Chapter 2:186 by Agha Mahdi Pooya

⁴⁷ Tafseer Al-Qur'an Chapter 2:186 by Agha Mahdi Pooya

⁴⁸ Published in al Tawhid Islamic Journal Vol.1, No.2 Rabi-al-Thani 1404 AH. Available online at http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/khalq_amr/

He writes of the people of that time (on the basis of Historical and Qur'anic sources):

“...It can be inferred in general that **the Arabs** recognized the creation of the world as the work of God and believed in God, the Creator. However, they **held diversified views regarding how the worldly affairs were administered and who administered them ...**”

Citing the first of three devious belief systems, he mentions:

“...**Some believed that God created the world** as He willed; **thereafter He left the affairs of the world** and its creatures to themselves without having anything to do with its big or small affairs. **Hence, to worship or to pray to Him for fulfillment of our needs, was considered futile and meaningless.** After this assumption, no room is left for prophethood, resurrection, duties, reward and punishment. If God has nothing to do with the affairs of the world, where is the need to send apostles to prescribe duties and obligations, and to forewarn regarding reward or punishment in the Hereafter? ...”

Of the second group, he writes:

“...**Another group believed that God** created the world but **did not entrust the regulation and administration of affairs to the creatures, but to the angels, gods of the sun, the moon, and the stars, or spirits of His favored and intimate servants** etc., so that they might do whatever they wanted in the world. **Therefore, men should pray and appeal to these authoritative managers of the world for the solution of their difficulties,** and should have nothing to do with God. **People should worship them to please them and to invoke them for solution of their problems.** They should stand facing their icons or statues and perform ceremonies to worship and glorify them. They should make offerings and sacrifices to them lest they may get enraged and cast their wrath on human beings ...”

Of the last group, he writes:

“...**Another group said that God** created the world and **held the reins of the affairs of the world in His own hands.** However, He did not involve Himself in all big and small matters of the world. Rather, **like a great emperor, He sought the assistance of His agents and representatives for the administration of this great kingdom.** God, also, like great emperors, is not easily accessible to His creatures for submission of their applications and petitions. **They have to resort to God's agents and assistants, and try to earn their good pleasure so that they may, as and when necessary, convey their demands to God and act as intercessors and intermediaries between God and His creation.** Hence people should bow their heads on the thresholds of these intermediaries so as to approach God and have their needs and demands fulfilled ...”

Of these three belief-systems, Ayatullah Shaheed Beheshti concludes:

“...**In view of such curious beliefs, the Quran, in many of its verses, announces that they are totally baseless and nonsensical ...**”

He proceeds to mention a variety of reasons for his conclusions, the detail of which can be found in his paper, “The Theory of 'Alam al Khalq and 'Alam al-'Amr”.

After careful study of the three belief-systems that Ayatullah Beheshti has cited, it is inferred that the first group is that of the Materialists; the second of “Open-Polytheists”, those who openly associate partners to the Lord Almighty; and the third is that of “Hero-Worshippers”, those who admire their heroes to the level of making them intermediaries

between themselves and Allah (SWT) in so much a way that their souls would be called upon to convey desires and get needs and demands of the common man fulfilled by the Almighty.

Whereas the first two systems have been relatively wiped out, the third system stays active at varying degrees amongst all major strains and sects of the originally monotheistic (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) worlds. Even though the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a) was sent by the Lord Almighty as his final messenger to eliminate all ideologies that conflict with the puritan Tawheed (Oneness of God) system, yet within his nation the notion of supplicating intermediaries still exists to some degree. Divine guidance imposes upon us to always seek truth and attempt to propagate it. And only when men of understanding take a stand, then the flow of guidance can continue on its designated path.

It is in this spirit that I pray to Allah (SWT) to generously reward the above-quoted scholars (behaqqe Masoomeen (as)) for their contribution that goes a long way in clarifying the issue of Du'a to the masses at large. I have hope that Inshallah the sincere devotees will continue to carry the flagship of puritan proselytizing of Islam, unadulterated by the likes of diluted and misguided traditions. Ameen.

Taught Du'as as not a symbolic tradition

Having dissected the issue of impermissibility of Du'a to the Masoomeen (as), let us move to a more pragmatic aspect of the spirit of Du'a i.e. Method of invocation.

Based on previously mentioned Aayat 7:55-56, it is clear that the spirit of Du'a must contain one or more, if not all, of the attributes of: **Humbleness**, **Fear** of the Almighty, **Secrecy** (complaining to Allah (SWT) of your personal issues in private) and **Hope** in the promise of acceptance that the Lord has claimed in his book.

The only way that these attributes can be obtained is if the supplicant completely immerses the self in total submission to Allah (SWT). The invoker must be in a state of awe and admiration of the Might and Prowess of the Lord and must acknowledge the complete dependency of the self on the most supreme.

Furthermore, the supplicant should beg of his Lord as one who is sincere in his devotion and supplication. He must understand the statements and pledges in his communication to his Lord. This sincerity of the supplication is the gist from which the promise of the Lord to answer the prayers immerses.

It is unfortunate that in the age of today (and perhaps in the past as well) there has been a strong tendency of devotees repeating Arabic verbage of which they know not the meaning nor the depth, and are deficient in awareness of what they speak let alone the sincerity required. Many compete on speed of recital while others emphasize the 'music' (rhyme) of recital. On the other hand, many people consider it simply a formality or tradition in gatherings to be inherited from and repeated as per the style of their ancestors.

In this notion of abject insincerity, the spirit of Du'a is lost and it becomes not more than mere fruitless and empty recital of words. The word Du'a is defined as 'Calling Upon'. It is a paradox to 'Call Upon' an entity and not even acknowledge the call i.e. not feeling that one is in the presence of the Almighty who created all that one knows about by one's limited senses. Especially in the cases when one recognizes not the meanings of the words that one speaks. Surely, can one 'Call upon' without knowing the 'Call'? It is simply not so.

Efforts must be made to re-invigorate the spirit and purpose of Du'a into the masses. Du'a has a purpose and a method of execution. It is a sanctified, divinely graced communication and plea of a servant to his master. And anything out of those bounds would not fit the definition of the 'Call'. I pray that Inshallah we return to the pure roots of sincere devotion by proper application of Du'a as taught by Al-Qur'an and the Guides.

Divisions on Du'a have taken an extreme

As mentioned in the previous section, Du'a is a sacred channel of communication opened by the supplicant with the purpose of invoking his Lord. Du'a is a divinely subscribed methodology that has the purpose of bringing the supplicant closer to his Lord for the sake of material and/or spiritual benefit.

It is a deplorable actuality that the divisions and extremes on such a sacred gift from the Almighty end up tarnishing the amicability of the Muslim nation. We've already discussed the extreme of supplicating to intermediaries. The other extreme is general claims of infidelity of whole sections of Muslims society by other whole sections of Muslims (claiming to be custodians of the religion) who then further accentuate their wicked claims by perpetuation of violence.

Interestingly, Islam derives from the root word 'Salaam' or Peace. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) despised war and resorted to it only when faced with the task of protecting the Muslim nation from external harm. Islam is by nature peaceful. It is therefore most unfortunate that some extreme sectors of Muslims society use violence against their own Muslim brethren in the name of Islamic purification.

If a Muslim finds another Muslim at fault, it is his duty to preach to him worthiness of good deeds and refraining from forbidden deeds (*Amr-bil-Ma'arouf wa Nahaita Anil-Munkar*). This should be done in the context of love and guidance – per the tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). Imposition by way of force (*Jabr*) is the way of the people of Ignorance (*Jihalah*) and not the followers of Truth (*Haq*).

In trying to gage the extent of propagation of violence, I've browsed through various documents and websites. It is appalling to witness clear generalized calls of death in the name of Islam (by some leaders of some groups) for people who they believe do not maintain the sacred channel of Du'a in the proper prescribed manner. It is a shame that the sectors of Muslims who vouch for such violence, claim knowledge and propagation

of the book – yet they ignore the clear guidance of the book in which by parable of parents, Allah (SWT) asks for dealings in kindness even if they force the child into association (*shirk*) of others with the Lord:

وَأِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, **do not obey them, but keep company with them in this world kindly, and instead follow the way of him who turns to Me**, then to Me is your return, then will I inform you of what you did⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Surah Luqmaan 31:15

Appendix A: Dua-e-Talab-e-Hawajj (Dua for Seeking of Needs)

His Supplication in Seeking Needs from God⁵⁰

O God,
O ultimate object of needs!
O He through whom requests are attained!
O He whose favors are not bought by prices!
O He who does not muddy His gifts by the imposition of obligations!
O He along with whom nothing is needed and without whom nothing can be done!
O He toward whom desire is ever directed and never turned away!
O He whose treasuries cannot be exhausted by demands!
O He whose wisdom cannot be altered by any means!
O He from whom the needs of the needy are never cut off!
O He who is not distressed by the supplications of the supplicators!

Thou hast lauded Thyself for having no need for Thy creatures, and it suits Thee to have no need for them, and Thou hast attributed to them poverty, and it suits them to be poor toward Thee.

So he who strives to remedy his lack through what is with Thee and wishes to turn poverty away from himself through Thee has sought his need in the most likely place and come to his request from the right quarter.

But he, who turns in his need toward one of Thy creatures or assigns the cause of its being granted to other than Thee, has exposed himself to deprivation and deserves to miss Thy beneficence.

O God,
I have a need of Thee:
My exertion has fallen short of it and my stratagems have been cut back before reaching it. My soul induced me to present it to him who presents his needs to Thee and can do nothing without Thee in his requests, but this is one of the slips of the offenders, one of the stumbles of the sinners!

Then through Thy reminding me, I was aroused from my heedlessness, through Thy giving success, I stood up from my slip, and through Thy pointing the way, I returned and withdrew from my stumble.

I said:
Glory to my Lord!
How can the needy ask from the needy?
How can the destitute beseech the destitute?
So I went straight to Thee, my God, in beseeching, and I sent Thee my hope with trust in Thee. I came to know that the many I request from Thee are few before Thy wealth, the weighty I ask from Thee is vile before Thy plenty; Thy generosity is not constrained by anyone's asking, Thy hand is higher in bestowing gifts than every hand!

O God,
So bless Muhammad and his Household, take me through Thy generosity to Thy gratuitous bounty and take me not through Thy justice to what I deserve!

I am not the first beseecher to beseech Thee and Thou bestowed upon him while he deserved withholding, nor am I the first to ask from Thee and Thou wast bounteous toward him while he merited deprivation.

⁵⁰ Saheefa-e-Sajjadiya – Collection of Du'as taught by the fourth Imam Zayn-al-Abideen (as) Dua # 13

O God,

Bless Muhammad and his Household, respond to my supplication, come near my call, have mercy on my pleading, listen to my voice, cut not short my hope for Thee, sever not my thread to Thee, turn not my face in this my need, and other needs, away from Thee, attend for my sake to the fulfillment of my request, the granting of my need, and the attainment of what I have asked before I leave this place through Thy making easy for me the difficult and Thy excellent ordainment for me in all affairs!

Bless Muhammad and his Household with a permanent, ever-growing blessing, whose perpetuity has no cutting off and whose term knows no limit, and make that a help to me and a cause for the granting of my request! Thou art Boundless, Generous!

And of my needs, My Lord, are *such and such...*

[STATE YOUR NEEDS, THEN PROSTRATE YOURSELF, AND SAY IN YOUR PROSTRATION]

Thy bounty has comforted me and Thy beneficence has shown the way, so I ask Thee by Thee and by Muhammad and his Household (Thy blessings be upon them) that Thou sendest me not back in disappointment!

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

Haven't the Masoomeen (as) been delegated the power to Help?

If this were to be true as a rule/generalality, then it should be observed that those closest to the Masoomeen (as) would know about it and would make use of it. So, the question would be, *'Are those who were close to the Masoomeen (as) known to have made such a claim about the Masoomeen (as) and did they call upon them in times of need?'* (Of course here we are not talking of regular help – rather help by supernatural phenomenon). There are innumerable cases that we can pick over the course of history to study if this supposed phenomenon (or supposed general rule) is valid.

Take the case of Hazrat Muhammad bin Abu-Bakr who was raised by Ameer-ul-Momineen (as) and was a staunch supporter (Shi'a) of him. He was delegated by the Imam to be his representative (governor) of Egypt. Unfortunately, he soon faced the hostile terrorizing armies of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and Amr bin Aas (may the curse of Allah (SWT) be upon both of them). He met martyrdom at the hands of enemies who were most humiliating and ruthless in their style of killings and vicious rampaging. However, Muhammad resorted himself to his Lord and met martyrdom with dignity. History does not tell us of him invoking Ameer-ul-Momineen (as) from afar – rather it recounts the grief of the Imam when his companion's fate was related to him. Similarly, we have stories of several companions such as Hazrat Malik-e-Ashtar, Hazrat Maitham-e-Tammar, Hazrat Muslim bin Aqeel, Hazrat Zayd bin Ali etc.

History has always related to us that the Masoomeen (as), irrespective of the immense blessings and privileges bestowed upon them by the Lord Almighty, have in general maintained a life of natural phenomenon – with the obvious understandable exception of when supernatural phenomenon must be used in the line of their mission (Such as the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) splitting the moon and Ameer-ul-Momineen (as) wielding the heavy gate of Khaybar as his shield).

Those who claim that general use of supernatural phenomenon, is valid for the final Imam (irrespective of if it was for previous Imams), need to reflect on the massacres of the Shi'a by aggressors in recent times – such as in Iran by the late Shah Reza Pahlavi, in Lebanon by the Israelis, in Iraq by Saddam etc. If the theory of super natural phenomenon is valid, then how come the Final Imam did not come to the help of his Shi'a? And if we consider this as a test, then by the same token, Life itself is all a test, one that we cannot evade, despite our best conjectures to formulate escapism theories.

A final point to note is that if we were to consider Masoomeen (as) as entities who are delegated the power of all-out-support, entities that Man is to benefit from, by calling upon – then such a notion would belittle the command of Qur'an to call upon Allah (SWT) only. It would appallingly also place the Lord Almighty in the belittling position of Constitutional Monarch. Such belief is most far from the true Shi'a of the Ahlul-Bayt.

But don't the Masoomeen (as) have the power of Shafa'ah?

Shafa'ah (or Intercession) is meant for the Day of Judgment. Shafa'ah is based on both beliefs and deeds. Shafa'ah of the Masoomeen (as) will remove some or all of the minor sins of the Momineen, provided that they have refrained from the major sins and strove to fulfill their obligations.

For more details, please refer to the chapter, "*Concepts of Wasilah and Shafa'ah*". Please note that Shafa'ah and Du'a are two different and distinct concepts.

But don't the Masoomeen (as) have the power of Wasilah?

Wasilah is 'means of nearness' or 'mode of approach'. Masoomeen (as) have the mission of bringing mankind closer to Allah (SWT) and have been sent for this purpose. This is why Allah (SWT) has delegated them as Wasilah. Before the time of the final Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a), the primary proof of prophet hood was expressed by means of miracles, and by this means people were attracted towards reflecting on Haqq (the ultimate truth). However, the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) was delegated by Allah (SWT) to especially propagate and enshrine the final complete message along the cherished dimensions of intellect and logic. This is why the Holy Qur'an (the miracle delegated to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a)) is referred to as the greatest Miracle of time. Because, it tasks the most profound, and sensible faculty of man – the faculty of '*Understanding*'. In fact Allah (SWT), in his absolute mercy, has gifted us with this faculty so we may try to recognize him and seek nearness to him.

The silent Qur'an brings us closer to Allah (SWT). The spoken Qur'an, i.e. the Ahlul-Bayt who expounded and clarified the silent Qur'an, also bring us close to Allah (SWT) in a similar fashion. By doing so, they accomplish the gist of their mission i.e. being Wasilah (by bringing the creation that was gifted with Intellect, closer to Allah (SWT)).

For more details, please refer to the chapter, "*Concepts of Wasilah and Shafa'ah*". Please note that Wasilah and Du'a are two different and distinct concepts.

Doesn't piety accord the Masoomeen (as) much Power & Knowledge?

It is true that piety brings man closer to Allah (SWT), and the closer one gets to Allah (SWT), the greater is the likelihood of Allah (SWT) revealing more and more doors of his mysteries. There are innumerable examples of power including those we have cited before, such as the splitting of the moon and the wielding of the door of fort Khaybar.

Power is tied with knowledge. He, who for example has the knowledge of designing a cement manufacturing plant, may use this knowledge to build sturdy, imposing buildings. The Holy Qur'an tells us that Hazrat Asif, the vizier of Prophet Sulaymaan (Solomon) was able to transport the throne of the Queen of Sheba, along with her, from a far-away land in the twinkle of an eye. The reason cited, was that he had knowledge of a portion of

a Holy book of Allah (SWT). Similarly we can relate that since the Masoomeen (as) are the most gifted of the creation of Allah (SWT), they must be wielding immense power.

However, it must be noted that power is not the same as absolute power. And also that power comes with responsibilities. Allah (SWT) makes himself recognized by certain attributes in the Holy Qur'an. These attributes (Sifaat-e-Subutiyah) include 'All-hearing', 'All-Seeing' and 'Omnipresent'. These attributes are reserved for Allah (SWT) and he does not share them with any other entity – otherwise that entity would become a demigod. Also noteworthy is that the closer one becomes to Allah (SWT), the more care the individual would exert towards their duties and responsibilities. Whereas Allah (SWT) could and has blessed the Masoomeen (as) immensely, they do not make use of his blessings except in the line of his service. Everything they do is 'Fi-Sabeelillah' (For the sake of Allah (SWT)). Whereby Allah (SWT) would allow a pious entity access to a portion of his secrets and destined knowledge, it would be expected of the pious entity, in proportion with their piety to use the blessings in the line of service to their Lord. It would be logical to assume that the Masoomeen (as) use any delegated super-natural power only in the line of duty towards Allah (SWT), like when the Prophet (s.a.w.a) displayed the miracle of splitting the moon, or when Imam Ali (as) displayed the miracle of wielding the gate of Khaybar as a sign of strength from Allah (SWT) to grant victory to his people (the Muslims) over a misguided group of their scheming enemies.

Allah (SWT) reserves Du'a for himself since he alone is Omnipresent and he alone therefore is able to see and hear all and everything at the same time. He clarifies further by commanding in the Holy Qur'an that Du'a be asked only of him and none other. He may then decide to answer a supplicant, out of his mercy, in any way he wishes. This may include delegating his Angels or appointed 'Wali(s)' (entities delegated with authority) to mind to particular tasks. However the channel from man to his Lord is direct via the specified means of Du'a. Being blessed by power and knowledge does not make an entity a deputy through whom one reaches Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) encourages man to come closer to him. And it does not befit this notion that one would replace calls to Allah (SWT) with calls to his agents in order to reach Allah (SWT) who himself is closer to us than ourselves.

Along the same lines, it does not make sense to call upon the Angel of death or to plead with it to give one some more time in this life. The angel will do only what Allah (SWT) has commanded it to do. It takes commands from Allah (SWT) only and does not listen to pleas or supplications from the common man. Similarly, the Masoomeen (as) have been delegated a specific task, i.e. Guidance. Their roles and responsibilities revolve around this task. Included in Guidance, they have been tasked with Mastership over the Momineen. This is because the rule established by them will create an environment wherein man will be involved in his main mission – 'Ibaadat-e-Ilaahi' (worship of the Almighty). This is why the Momineen crave the subservience of the Masoomeen (as) and the return of the Mahdi (as) in particular.

They, the Masoomeen (as), must be viewed as Masters & Rulers and not as (God forbid) subservient or plead-able tools accessible to us to get Allah (SWT) to fulfill our desires.

What of belief that the Masoomeen (as) can see, hear & answer us?

To believe that the Masoomeen (as) are seeing and hearing everybody, will put them at about the same level as Al-Baseer (All Seeing) and As-Sami (All Hearing). These are attributes by which Allah (SWT) identifies himself and none is a partner in his attributes.

However, it can be asked that can't the enormous knowledge and power accessible to the Masoomeen (as) allow them to know details of any event or occurrence? This is true since Allah (SWT) has given them great knowledge of events past, present and future. But having ability to access or desire to know of an event is different from the attribute of All-Knowing. Al-Aleem (All-Knowing) is a divine attribute and a name of Allah (SWT). We must remember that none can share in the attributes of Allah (SWT), for such belief would be absolutely against the precepts of Islam.

Furthermore, it does not make sense why the Masoomeen (as) would desire to know of the intricate details of all people's lives. The Masoomeen (as) are far above such material desire. It would however make sense for them to know the details of how the world progressed, where it is headed and the important events that change the course of motion in it. In addition, any events related and relevant to their mission of Guidance and calling people towards Allah (SWT) would be something desirable and expected of them to know. For, it is illogical that the great Master would delegate a task to his servant and withhold the knowledge, which the servant would need to accomplish the task.

However, if Allah (SWT) gives his close servant knowledge, this does not mean they have the permission to interfere with the natural course of life. Allah (SWT) himself does not alter the natural course of Life (from what has been destined) except when one calls upon him, and surely he is the answerer and has commanded men to call upon him. We know that the Masoomeen (as) were aware of many events such as who would assassinate them and when. However, they always maintained a course of 'naturalness' as if they were unaware of what was to transpire. This was because the purpose of Guidance entailed them to tread the path of the 'natural' man, so that they could be a perfect example for mankind to emulate – otherwise, man would declare them inimitable.

So is it right to pride ourselves with the status that the Masoomeen (as) would desire to listen to, or see us? Even when we have not made effort in the path of striving towards Islam and making of an impact? It only makes sense that the Masoomeen (as) would have a desire to know /or meet the Muttaqeen (God-fearing) and Momineen (Faithful Believers) and such people might thereby be blessed enough to have audience with the Imam of the time. However, such a station of piety would only be attained due to minding of Islamic obligations, calling upon Allah (SWT), fearing Allah (SWT), revering the Mighty Lord, and following in the footsteps of his chosen servants (the Masoomeen (as)) – and not by acclaimed far-fetched expectations, nor by supplicating to the Imams.

In conclusion, as previously discussed, knowledge of events does not trigger Imam to take action unless Allah (SWT) tasks or permits him to do so in the line of duty (such as for sake of Guidance (Hidayah), Leadership (Imamah), Judgment, and sake of Emulation)

What of Ziyarah? Can't we connect with Masoomeen (as) that way?

Ziyarah is a way of renewing allegiance and bearing witness. Ziyarah is not a way to supplicate to the Masoomeen (as). Nor is it necessary for the object of allegiance (in Ziyarah) to listen to or reply to the words of the one giving allegiance. For example, one may go to the grave of their grandmother and make allegiance to follow the instructions the grandmother left behind. Further more he could make promises that he would make her proud. This is figurative speech. And so is Ziyarah.

In Ziyarah, we renew our allegiance by bearing witness to the status of the chosen servants of Allah (SWT). This allegiance/ bearing witness, when said with conviction, becomes a means of nearness to Allah (SWT). In Ziyarah, we make promises such as declarations to follow in the footsteps of divinely appointed Guides. We also send blessings (salaams) to the holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) & the Ahlul-Bayt (as). This sending of blessings (known as 'Salawat') is one of the ways Allah (SWT) has commanded us to utilize in the symbolic repaying of the prophet (s.a.w.a) for his guiding us to the right path. And this sending of blessings is for our own benefit, since allegiance to the Guides of Allah (SWT) is allegiance to Allah (SWT) himself and following in the footsteps and commandments of Allah's chosen servants is tantamount to following the supreme command of the Mighty Lord himself.

Ziyarah is therefore a symbolic renewal of allegiance and a bearing of witness. It is thus distinctively different from Du'a. It must neither be used as Du'a, nor perceived to be so.

But how come the Ulema permit us to call upon the Masoomeen (as)?

Concepts & Principles of Religion (Usool), which include the philosophy of Imamah, must be studied and adopted by each individual on their own. There is no blind following as regards the principles of religion and all religious scholars agree that 'Taqlaed' (blind following of verdicts) on Usool is absolutely forbidden. Allah (SWT) commands men to ponder and accept Islam of their own volition. Accepting and following of Islam solely based on verdict of parents, scholars, etc will not be accepted on the Day of Judgment. This is clear since a non-Muslim could equally argue that he also simply followed the verdicts of his parents, scholars, etc and should therefore be accorded equal treatment.

Since the concept of Du'a is obviously an issue of Usool, we need to look at it in the Light of the Holy Qur'an, the teachings of the Ahlul-Bayt (as), and of course the power of the Intellect. We have sufficiently examined the topic of Du'a based on these precepts in previous chapters of this research work. Given current evidence, we have proved beyond doubt that according to the Holy Qur'an, the teachings of the Ahlul-Bayt (as) and the explanations by some of the Ulema; that it is absolutely forbidden to invoke the Masoomeen (as), any intermediaries or any created entity for that case.

Some Ulema may allow figurative invocation of the Masoomeen (as) if one self-acknowledges that Allah (SWT) is the giver. However, we witness in today's world that

this figurative invocation has been taken as no more than a license to invoke ‘Ghair-Allah’ (those other than Allah (SWT)). In this light especially, great care must be taken to avoid even figurative invocation. Besides, if one knows that Allah (SWT) is the giver, does it make sense to supplicate others? Even after Allah (SWT) has forbidden it? And after the Qur’an clearly forbids it? Especially after the Ahlul-Bayt (as) and learned scholars have provided befitting guidance on the issue?

It is amazing that man is so keen to protect the institution of Taqleed and institution for blind following of fallible leaders to such a degree that he turns a blind eye and deaf ear to the clear injunctions of the ‘Ashab-e-Thaqalayn’ i.e. The Holy Qur'an & the Masoomeen (as). The only legitimacy granted to the scholars is due to reason of study of the Holy Book & Masoomeen (as). To therefore reject the clear ‘Kalam-e-Ilahi’ (words of God) & Guidance of his chosen servants (Masoomeen (as)) in favor of unexplained statements by only some of the scholars, amounts to nothing more than burial of reason and intellect. However, if those scholars or men who claim validity of supplicating the Masoomeen (as) can provide evidence for their theory in such a way that they can prove that both the Qur’an and Ahlul-Bayt (as) support their viewpoint, then their research is welcomed in the spirit of open-mindedness, dialogue and quest for the truth. As per my research, the only major claim I’ve come across that people provide in support of supplicating intermediaries is the ‘Nadey-Ali’ (an invocation to Imam Ali (as)). It has been alleged that the Prophet (s.a.w.a) invoked Imam Ali (as) by recitation of it.

Firstly, one must consider that Imam Ali (as) has strictly spoken out against invocation to ‘Ghair-Allah’ and so have the other Masoomeen (as) – whose quotations we have referenced in previous chapters of this research work. Secondly, the Masoomeen (as) have cautioned us that all Ahadith (related traditions) that clash with the Holy Qur’an are forgeries and must be rejected. Apparently, this is the case with the alleged ‘Nadey-Ali’. Thirdly, the greatest Shi’a expert scholar of ‘Ilm-ul-Rijaal’ (study of transmission of Ahadith) in recent times, the late Agha Abul Qasim Al-Khu’i (May Allah (SWT) be pleased with him) has rejected the ‘Nadey-Ali’ and declared it as unauthentic based on his research.⁵¹

Therefore, we conclude that in the absence of any valid reasoning in support of supplicating the Masoomeen (as) and in the presence of much evidence (including the sayings of the Masoomeen (as)), the conclusion is easy and obvious to make. We invite the Muslimeen and Momineen to reason with open minds, have fear of Allah (SWT), and sincerity of heart when approaching an issue that might as well lie within the crux of Tawheed. Supplicating to none other than Allah (SWT) is a clear commandment in the Qur’an, as well as a very clear guidance from the Masoomeen (as), and commandments of Allah (SWT) must not be taken lightly. Per the verdict of the Qur’an and the teachings of the Ahlul-Bayt (as), we must ponder and reflect in order to seek the right path. Blind following on principles of Religion will do no good to people on the Day of reckoning. In fact, had answering calls by the Imam been a generality, we wouldn’t be hard-pressed to use logic and teachings of Qur’an and Ahlul-Bayt (as) as we are doing today.

⁵¹ <http://www.al-islam.org/organizations/aalimnetwork/msg00061.html>

But our Du'a is no more than seeking of extra support to intercede?

It is perfectly fine to request someone to invoke Allah (SWT) for the sake of oneself, as long as this asking is a request and not a beseeching (i.e. a Du'a in itself). The asking should be one of extra support and not a Du'a. Note that it would make sense to seek extra support only if one has already supplicated his Lord. Otherwise what would the purpose of extra support be, by definition? In addition, requesting extra support without supplicating Allah (SWT) would be insult-like since Allah (SWT) is closer to us than ourselves and has commanded us to supplicate him. So extra support must be requested when one has already supplicated Allah (SWT). Also we must keep in mind that there is no guarantee that the requested will supplicate on behalf of the requestor or that Allah (SWT) will accept it. Still, it is a good habit to seek extra support since this (concept of requesting) is a valid means of desperation in seeking favor from the Almighty Lord.

But even in the case of extra support, it would make sense to put this request to the Masoomeen (as) (from afar) only if the following 4 assumptions could be established:

- 1- That the Masoomeen (as) have ability to see everyone and they are seeing us.
- 2- That the Masoomeen (as) have ability to hear everyone and they are hearing us.
- 3- That the Masoomeen (as) have permission to supplicate to Allah (SWT) on behalf of mankind in this state (of physical absence).
- 4- That the Masoomeen (as) have the ability to supplicate on behalf of potentially millions of people for potentially millions of desires within a given tiny small time frame and yet to do it in the style typical of Masoomeen (as) when they supplicate – their style being that of extraneous, elongated amounts of time spent on repetitive supplication to their Lord.

However, the above theories seem to contradict the notion that All-Hearing and All-Seeing are titles exclusive for Allah (SWT). But yet we know that these titles are reserved for Allah (SWT) and that he has no partner in his attributes. If one can come-up with sufficient authentic evidence to support the above 4 points in a way that will not contradict the fact that Allah (SWT) has the full reserved attributes of All-Hearing and All-Seeing, then such evidence could be examined in further research. Personally, I have not come across such evidence (in Islamic resources) nor have I been presented such evidence in discussions, dialogue and debate.

Furthermore, there has been no trend indicative of calling /or talking to the Prophet or Imams in this nature (i.e. via thinking, verbal chants, raising of hands etc.) during the period of the Masoomeen (as) before the 'Ghaybat-e-Sughra' (minor occultation). Then during the Ghaybat-e-Sughra, the trend has been one of communication through a delegate. This lasted for a period of 70 years spanning the lives of 4 delegates. Again, there has not been a trend witnessed during the Ghaybat-e-Sughra where one would raise their hands to talk to the Imam.

However, this does not mean that the Imam is oblivious to world events. Nay, in fact by the grace of the Almighty he knows of what transpires as is relevant to his cause of reforming the world at an unknown appointed time.

But per the individual desires and requests to him by thoughts or raising of hands – if it be believed that this connects us to him – then proof better be provided – lest we reduce the position of the Imam from servant of God to (God-forbid) servant of people. Remember that in the absence of supportive evidence, conjecture serves only disservice and invitation of baseless controversy.

We have previously mentioned that several massacres of millions of Shi'a have taken place in the past few decades, but yet we did not witness the Imam coming for help. We have also mentioned that our religious scholars have been entangled in religious debate over issues (Du'a might be one of these issues) and if it was as simple as praying to the Imam (as) or using him as a medium to Allah (SWT), then how come he has not appeared to solve these issues?

All this evidence points to the fact that we cannot connect to the Imam by simply calling upon him. By the same token it points to the fact that the Imam does not interfere in the natural course of events except when Allah (SWT) assigns him to. The Imam's tasks and position in respect to this world are based upon the duty conferred upon him by the Lord Almighty. There is no evidence that fulfilling people's desires is a duty of the Imam. In contrast, the Imam's duty is to fulfill the desire of Allah (SWT) and we must look at him in that respect.

The great scholar, Seyyed Mujtaba Musavi Lari, has written profoundly⁵² about the issue of 'Ilm-ul-Ghaib' (knowledge of the unseen), and elaborates on how the Imam has access to a portion of this knowledge. He details out how the Imam would typically not make use of this knowledge except in the line of duty and how he does not use this knowledge to change the natural course of this world (with the obvious exception of when Allah (SWT) desires such a task from him). He gives examples of how the Imam would judge a case based on Islamic precepts without utilizing access to 'Ilm-ul-Ghaib' for zeroing-out the perpetrator. From all this we understand that the purpose of an Imam is Leadership and Guidance, and not a god-like oracle to answer calls or prayers. We have provided what we believe is more than sufficient evidence in this research work to prove that the Holy Qur'an and Ahlul-Bayt (as) have specifically commanded Du'a to Allah (SWT) and have declared those who do otherwise (i.e. supplicate to others) as 'Dhalimeen'.⁵³ We must remember that one of the duties of the awaited savior (Imam Al-Mahdi (as)) is the elimination of the Dhalimeen. We must desire to be in his camp and not out of it. We all Inshallah await the re-appearance of Imam Al-Mahdi (May the blessings of Allah (SWT) be upon him), so that he may restore this world to a state of peace and tranquility where everyone is involved in the line of worship and service of Allah (SWT) under the guidance and leadership of his very beloved servant and representative, Imam Mahdi (as).

⁵² Imamate and Leadership (Chapter 23: The Imam's communication with the world of the Unseen)

⁵³ Surah Yunus 10:105 – 106

Appendix C: Amusing Naiveties

Several issues have been brought up as questions that really do not merit mention in the FAQ due to their far-fetched nature. Whereas no question is a useless question, some are best placed in a separate accommodating gallery, where their importance is proportionate to their nature.

Isn't the Prophet (s.a.w.a) Ar-Rahmaan?

This issue was brought up in one discussion in reference to Surah Bani-Isra'eel 17:110 (...*Call upon [supplicate] Allah (SWT) or call upon [supplicate] Ar-Rahmaan (the Merciful to all)...*). It was mentioned by one person that Ar-Rahmaan probably refers to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) since he is known as 'Mercy to the Worlds'.

Irrespective of what titles have been assigned to the Prophet, and what their meaning might be, there are certain names and attributes that Allah (SWT) has reserved for himself. These include Ar-Rahmaan and Ar-Raheem, each of which we mention tens of times every day when worshipping the Lord Almighty. Every Surah (with the exception of one) in the Holy Book begins with the names of Allah (SWT): Ar-Rahmaan and Ar-Raheem. In Surah Al-Fatihah (the Opening), these names appear twice each and every Muslim knows very well to whom they belong. Sharing these attributes with anyone else, even the greatest Prophet (s.a.w.a) is a sign of polytheism due to the conjured association.

Imams have power of Shafa'ah, so we'll just call them and not worry

This is a more common belief whereby some people believe that love of the Masoomeen (as) will wash away every sin and so the one who calls upon them becomes free of worry. This is a most erroneous belief that openly misleads people towards belittling the forbiddance of sins. The Christians believe that Christ died for purification of their sins and that they are free now. Those who believe that love for the Masoomeen (as) is sufficient, would feel they need to do nothing more. They would be no different from the Christians and might thereby end up suffering the same fate.

It must be noted that love of the Masoomeen (as) would be sufficient only if it is taken in the context that we love them for the status Allah (SWT) has conferred on them, and that Allah (SWT) has bidden us to love them – so that we may follow their examples of perfection, thus becoming perfect Muslims ourselves.

There is a misguided belief amongst some that if they cry for Imam Hussein (as), then Bibi Fatema Zahra (as) would collect their tears and intercede for them on the Day of Judgment to the level that they will be absolved of all their wrongdoing. They thus misinterpret the concept of Shafa'ah as a license for wrongdoing since their logic leads them to believe that a few tears will absolve them of all sins. Some of these people therefore do not see the need for ritual prayers (Salaah). They happen to forget the famous Hadith of the 6th Imam Jaffer Al-Sadiq (the truthful) who warned at his deathbed that skipping of Salaah would automatically nullify Shafa'ah on the Day of Judgment.

Bottom line – we cannot just call upon them and not worry (& be free to do as we wish).

If Imam Sadiq (as) will not, other eleven Imams will do Shafa'ah

One person mentioned that if Imam Sadiq (as) has put a condition of Salaah for Shafa'ah, others have not specifically done so. Thus we'll just go ahead and seek their Shafa'ah. It seems that some people might have forgotten that what one Masoom says in Guidance, is the same as what the others say. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a) said that he and Ali (as) were from the same Noor (light) and Nafs (selves). Therefore what one preaches is precisely what the other does. Several Ahadith and simply plain logic pronounce that what one Masoom has said is one and the same as the others. Therefore we cannot hide behind such a theory of pick and chose per benefits.

It is prudent to note that such a viewpoint of pick-and-choose comes to play only when one is desperately seeking an easy way out to skirt the divinely apportioned obligations, thereby trying to enjoy the best of both worlds. We cannot get the best of the next world if we do not exert effort in this world. Allah (SWT) teaches us the parable of the farmer, '*You reap what you sow*'. If we do not sow, we should not expect to reap Shafa'ah, Mercy, Forgiveness, and blessing for the Day of Judgment and the hereafter.

Agha Khu'i might have got confused

When faced with the prospect that one of the greatest renowned Scholars of Shi'a Islam has declared the invoking of intermediaries as forbidden, a simple answer was that Agha might have got confused. As it became known that Agha Khu'i nullified the 'Nadey-Ali' Hadith, which nurtured the claim that one could and should invoke intermediaries, his popularity plummeted and suddenly emotions wrought a greater weight than logic.

Granted that all men (save such as the Ahlul-Bayt (as)) are fallible, we can vouch for logic more than following verdicts. However, what we cannot vouch for is follow verdicts when they equate to our wishes and denounce them when they do not. This research work has provided many proofs based on Qur'an, Ahlul-Bayt (as), Verdicts of Ulema as well as Logic in support of Du'a solely to Allah (SWT). Agha Khu'i must be commended for the courageous stand he took for the sake of truth-propagation. We have backed his theories by our own explanations and those of others mentioned herein.

We must be sincere and must not take the stand of denying scientifically sifted proof by merely relying on emotion. Such would be the way of the Ignorant and not the Muslims.

We must not interpret Qur'an. We must only follow Ulema

The notion of following Ulema in all aspects of Life is unfounded. The Holy Qur'an calls upon men to ponder and reflect. We must follow Islam and not Ulema for all aspects of our Life. Following Islam may entail following revered scholars for those details of ritual acts or complexities of 'Ahkaam' (deeds) – that we typically find in '*Tawdhi'ul Masaal*'.

However, as regards issues of principles and concepts of religion, every man will be individually responsible for their belief system (Usool) and reliance on following Ulema for this will not be accepted. All Ulema adhere to this logic and promote open logical and scholarly thinking and research by all in regards to the core concepts of religion.

So what if Qur'an says Prophet is not our Wakeel? We feel that he is

True that we must strive to understand Islam better. However, this must not be at the expense of ignoring the same sources that we need to understand it. Rejecting of Qur'an, Ahadith, teachings of Ahlul-Bayt (as), scholarly opinions, and logical proofs & evidence can only lead us down the path of 'Jihalah' (Ignorance). For it is these very sources and tools that are the Imams that Allah (SWT) has appointed over us. If we want to sincerely seek the truth, then we must strictly follow the divinely appointed leaders.

One of these leaders is the Holy Qur'an that we must not overlook. One person rejected the notion of the prophet not being a wakeel, in a debate with myself. Sometimes we get so engrossed in debate that we lose sight of our statements. It is not I, but the holy Qur'an that has made the declaration that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) is not a wakeel. I've included references to the specific Aayaat in a previous relevant chapter. So before we adorn our gear of dialogue and debate, we need to beware that we must never allow our emotions into argument to such a level that we start denying the clear verdicts of the Qur'an in order to prove certain points that are emotionally dear to us.

Du'a commands in Qur'an are addressed to Non-believers, not to us

Not all the Aayaat relating to Du'a are addressed to non-believers. For example, Surah Al-Jinn 72:18 states, "The *masaajid* are for Allah (SWT) so do not invoke anyone along with him". The 'mufasssireen' (scholars of Qur'an) have two interpretations for *masaajid*: Houses of Worship & parts of a human body that touch the ground during 'Sajdah' (prostration). This proves that there are some clearly inclusive Aayaat that point to the believers (those who go to houses of worship, as well as those who worship).

Besides, if the persons physically present in front of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) were polytheists, this in no way means that the verses revealed were exclusive to them, unless the style of addressing implies the command to the specific group. Had interpretations been based on levels of presence, then we'd probably put aside a major part of the Holy Qur'an, saying that this was not addressed to Muslims or even to us on an individual basis – so each person could thence claim exemption for virtually every command. Thus, the notion of dependency on persons present is decrepit from the very base.

What we really need to do is rather observe if the verse specifically mentions a specific group (like many of them do). Our observation is that the verses relating to Du'a are typically general and would therefore apply to everyone, most of all to the believers.

We mustn't take Qur'an literally. It says something, means otherwise

Allah (SWT) is free and far from defective expressions. We pray that he protect us from ever conjuring such attribution. Even the simple human writers know that if anyone writes or says something but actually means something else, then this person has just proven his/her insincerity & defect. Subhanallah! In fact, Allah Himself says in the Quran that He has made it an easy Book so that we (mankind) may understand it!

Quran may have at times used metaphors or figures-of-speech but this is not equal to 'saying something & actually meaning something else'. Allah (SWT) has used the Arabic language that is known for its depth and array of verbage. It therefore does not make sense for Allah (SWT) to use one word whereas he meant another.

Some claims have been made that Allah (SWT) used 'Du'a' whereas he meant 'Salaah'. Since both words have been used in the Qur'an, it is senseless to believe that Allah (SWT) fell short of words in this case (as well as in any other case).

However, it is prudent to note that since Du'a literally means 'Calling Upon', it could be used for two meanings, 'addressing' and 'invocation'. The verses of the Holy Qur'an are very clear as to when which meaning is used (since the contexts ensure that the other meaning would be senseless in that place).

Imam cries in his Du'a per Emotion, not per Guidance

The above was stated in regards to clear commands by Imam Zayn-al-Abideen (as) who, in his Du'as, specifically forbade Du'a to other than Allah (SWT). First of all, it must be remembered that this Imam of the Momineen had been banned from preaching publicly and thus he had made his 'Saheefa' of Du'as his only tool /outlet for Da'wa.

But irrespective of that, Imams cannot preach anything out of bounds of Haq (truth), since they are the divinely appointed representatives of Allah (SWT). We must also note that giving in to emotion, to a level that it overrides logic, is most far away from these pure entities who happen to also be the staunchest supporters of Logic and Intellect.

To therefore use this flawed rationale to evade the forbiddance of Du'a to 'Ghair Allah' (other than Allah (SWT)), is absolutely ridiculous and unfounded.

What good are the Imams to us if we cannot do Du'a to them?

The above statement is of a purely materialistic nature. It only stands to show that they, who stand by it, love the Imams not for the sake of Allah (SWT), but for their own selfish sake. These kind of people probably have more (selfish) love for the Masoomeen (as) than Allah (SWT) since they take the Masoomeen (as) as their providers and protectors from the wrath of Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment.

The Masoomeen (as) have a very specific defined purpose, known to all men of knowledge, that they are a Wasilah (means) to bring us closer to Allah (SWT). Their purpose is to guide us and lead us in a way that makes us attached to the one and only supreme Lord Almighty. For this they have left us a great wealth of knowledge, one pearl of it being that we must supplicate only to Allah (SWT) and only invoke him for our needs and desires. It is prudent to mention here that invoking Allah (SWT) to enable and strengthen us in following and emulating the Masoomeen (as) would be amongst the best of invocations. For Allah (SWT) has sent the Masoomeen (as) specifically for this purpose and commanded us to seek means to closeness to him through following their leadership, command and guidance.

We fear that our generations might lose love for the Masoomeen (as)

Once again, neither our love nor that of our generations must be for a selfish nature especially one that derides logic and intellect. For what gain would such a love be if the objects of love, themselves reject the love offered by the desirous? Loving the Masoomeen (as) to the extent of breaching their commandments is no love.

We must love the Masoomeen (as) for the sake of Allah (SWT) and for the sake of the status he has conferred upon them. Many scientists and engineers who have introduced great convenience to our lives, have come and gone, but we do not love them (at least relatively) because they are not a means of salvation for us in the divine court of our Lord Almighty. On the other hand, we love the Masoomeen (as) because they beam light upon the path that leads to Allah (SWT). This is why Allah (SWT) has obligated us to love them. It is only by following their commandments (such as supplicating to only Allah (SWT)), that we can tread the path of divine mercy and salvation (including Shafa'ah) on the Day of Judgment.

Thus, this only, is the concept that must induce the love of the Ahlul-Bayt (as) into us all.

Qur'an did not support Du'a to Imams due to their absence

This is a very simplistic viewpoint, to say the least. First of all, one cannot claim that the Imams can listen to Du'as in a state of absence, and yet the Qur'an cannot support this point again for the same reason. Hence one belief must be dropped, hopefully the former.

Secondly, we know that the Holy Qur'an is the final complete text version of guidance from Allah (SWT) and none will come thereafter. Also we know that the Qur'an contains all core concepts of Islam and is devoid of none. Besides this, the 'Panjetan' (pure five – Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his Ahlul-Bayt (as)) were present during the divine revelation of the Holy Qur'an, but yet we do not see any allowance for Du'a to them?

For those who claim that the final Imam Al-Mahdi (as) was not present and in his absence, we have to invoke him and that Qur'an could not mention this fact since he was not present – then such a belief in incompleteness of the religion is a most devious and dangerous concept. To believe in the incompleteness of the religion after the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), is outside the sacred bounds of Islam. Everything necessary for the belief system was provided by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) who declared the completeness of the religion, in the Land of 'Ghadeer-e-Khum', with the final command of Mastership of Ameer-ul-Momineen (as).

Thus, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) sincerely fulfilled the duty entrusted upon him by his Master, the Lord Almighty, by completing the Holy Qur'an and Islam on that day.

Ya Abbas! Ya Ali Madad! ...Is intended to call upon Allah (SWT)

It is claimed that such calling is an intermediation to calling upon Allah (SWT). The Lord Almighty does not need any intermediary for purpose of calling and he has never claimed such. Besides, these (prayer) statements do not even have a reference to intermediation.

It is Ibaadah and Sajdah that are exclusive for Allah (SWT), not Du'a

Granted that Ibaadah (Worship) is exclusive for Allah (SWT). However, as was mentioned towards the beginning of this research work, Allamah Hilli has mentioned at least three times in one of his Masterpiece treatises – Oddatul-Da'ee (The Asset of the Supplicant), the Hadith of the Prophet, 'Dua is the gist of Worship' (*Afdhalu Ibaadati Du'aau*). It goes with logical reasoning too that supplication is part of worship. Allamah Tabataba'i has defined Du'a for the western thinker as the equivalent of the English 'Prayer' in Christianity. Du'a is therefore universally accepted as an act of worship.

The biggest problem that Muslims have with Christians is that they worship Jesus (including supplicating to him). It is worth pondering, if we would call upon the Angel of death to grant us long life (by extending the time before of extracting the soul)? Why not? This is because only Allah (SWT) has the authority to delegate such action. We must invoke Allah (SWT) who by his mercy and might can direct his servant Angel as when to extract the soul. We must always keep in mind that the act of asking (commonly confused with Du'a) is different from the act of Supplication (Du'a). Du'a is a methodology where by our calls can reach Allah (SWT) via what to us is super-natural phenomenon. We'll probably never understand scientifically how Allah (SWT) is All-Seeing and All-Hearing, for He is beyond science and anything imaginable.

Another point to ponder upon is how firm we are in believing that Sajdah (Prostration) is reserved for Allah (SWT), but then at times falter on Du'a. Sajdah is a way of totally submitting oneself in full humbleness and surrender to the Almighty Lord. It is amongst the best acts of Worship. Similarly, Du'a is an act of Worship, except that as previously mentioned, it is the best act of worship. And therefore it is deemed by this token to be reserved for Allah (SWT). We must also note that Salaah, the obligatory daily ritual worship to Allah (SWT), is a combination of Dua and Sajdah, as well as proclamations and Ruku (bowing down – knees bent). It is only logical that the major constituents of Salaah (Du'a, Ruku and Sajdah) be reserved for Allah (SWT). Unfortunately though, even Sajdah has come into question in current day times. Some people proclaim the deed of supplicating Bibi Fatema Zahra (as) whilst in Sajdah, and this deed has appeared in some famous books of deeds. It is unfortunate that this is done despite the famous Du'a of Bibi Fatema Zahra (as) in Mufatih-ul-Jinaan (quoted earlier in this research work), wherein she proclaims that Du'a must be directed only and only to Allah (SWT).

We must not forget that this world started with a Tawheed base by Hazrat Adam (as). Then how did people become Idol worshippers from Ummat-e-Adam, Ummat-e-Nooh, and even Ummat-e-Ibrahim? The only explanation that I have been provided is that their people made pictures, images and /or statues of those personalities whom they looked up to as the best servants of Allah (SWT). They sought inspiration from this imagery (up until here everything was fine). But eventually, and unfortunately, they started attributing divine powers to these personalities and started supplicating to them, and finally prostrating to them. Maybe this is why Imagery of the Prophet (s.a.w.a) and his close ones is forbidden in Islam. There is a great lesson in this to learn Inshallah.

Imams are the Giver! Allah (SWT) too can give...

The above statement was made in one of the discussions where a ‘compromise’ was desired. It is appalling that our tongues and thoughts have unfortunately got so used to the concept of calling upon ‘Ghair Allah’ that even when we try not to, the words seethe onto our speech.

Even though some of us pacify ourselves by claiming and trying to shield our conscience with a mask of intercession, it seems pretty clear that slowly and slowly this forbidden concept of Du’a to ‘Ghair Allah’ gets to the root where it slowly replaces the position of Allah (SWT) with others in a bit-by-bit manner.

Maybe the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) was referring to these situations when he said, in a famed tradition, that he feared the time polytheism would creep into his ‘Ummah’ (nation) in the same way that a black ant creeps on a black rock in the midst of a dark night. That is to say, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) feared for the day when his Ummah would be victim to a kind of polytheism that is virtually invisible to note and identify. Maybe this is what he meant. Allah ho Aalam (God knows best).

Why can we not ask Imams if it is okay to ask the Doctor?

The answer to the above classical argument is embedded in the question itself. As far as questions is concerned, how many of us have asked the Imam (as) and gotten back a reply? In contrast, we can at least get a reply back from the doctor.

But the issue here is one of Du’a. Can we claim that we make Du’a to doctors? Those, who engross themselves with the above arguments, like playing a game of semantics. However if you ask their true selves, they will never accept that they supplicate or invoke doctors. They will try to use logic to prove that Du’a is simply an asking and therefore you could ask anyone. This they say in clear violation and attempted disproving of the command of the Holy Qur’an that Du’a is reserved for only Allah (SWT).

Coming back to the question of asking, we typically do not get any replies from the Imam (as) if we attempt to ask via supplication or invocation. Neither do we supplicate, nor invoke the Doctor. Therefore this is an absolutely unfounded theory simply embroiled in semantics.

The truth is that both the doctor and the Imam help us. The doctor by medical guidance, whereas the Imam by spiritual guidance. How? Over a period of more than two centuries, the Imams established a great wealth of knowledge, sufficient for Mankind to probe and seek out all the mysteries. They gave us books, we need only open them; They showed us the path, we need only walk it; They gave us the light, we need only open our eyes; They provided us the answers, we need only jot them down on the examination sheet. The Imams have already completed for us in the spiritual domain that which we still seek from doctors in the medical domain. Their guidance for the soul is of utmost reliability and their science of the soul is perfect. However, they have put the onus on us, so that we have the chance to seek it and thereby prove our love and dedication to Almighty Allah.

This will propel us to the station whereby sincere dedicated servants of Allah (SWT) earn the eligibility of Shafa'ah on the Day of Judgment and shall Inshallah thereby enter the Heavens, and be praised by the angels.

It is simplistic to think that the help of the Imams is a supernatural miracle phenomenon accessible to every caller. We know for a fact that this is not more than a practiced tradition. Even the Hindus claim that when they ask their god, Rama, their wishes are fulfilled. Then how can we use the same argument that when we ask our Imams, our wishes are fulfilled?

There is only one answer. Follow in the footsteps & guidance of the Prophet (s.a.w.a) and his Ahlul-Bayt (as) and you will have achieved your answers to the essence of this life and the hereafter. That is the equivalent of asking the doctor. As per supplication, no one really prays to the doctor, so this argument is but trash.

Do not say these words! You will plead for help of Imams on Qiyamah

These kinds of remarks are typically given in desperation when all else fails. He, who relies on Allah (SWT) and the guidance provided by his loved servants, has nothing to fear. It is Allah (SWT) who is supposed to be feared and loved. If anyone has to be feared or loved, it is because of the station Allah (SWT) accords him or her. Similarly if anyone has to be hated or despised, it is because of their distance far away from Allah (SWT) that they have to reckon with such lowly position.

We must strive to fear Allah (SWT), just as we saw the Masoomeen (as) express their fear of the Lord Almighty. The status of the Masoomeen (as) is in proportion to their 'Taqwa' (Fear of Allah (SWT)). They similarly urge us to induce this awe of the great Lord into ourselves. But yet this great Lord is the most loving and merciful, so we must learn to love him the way the Masoomeen (as) did. This will be more than sufficient to earn the mercy of the Almighty Allah on the Day of Reckoning.

As for those who plead to the Masoomeen (as), they might as well be given the message in the final hour that their deed was against the wishes of Allah (SWT) and his close servants. They did not heed the call to follow in the footsteps of the Masoomeen (as) and in fact acted against them in the name of love for them. Such love would have no value on the Day of Judgment. Hence we need to be warned and pray that Allah (SWT) include us in the party of the true believers and join us with the Momineen and Muttaqeen who have realized the worthlessness of this world and the worthiness of the next. May Allah (SWT) inspire us, and help us inspire others to tread the path of Sincerity and Dedication to his cause. This is the only way to earn salvation in this world and the next.

Let us recite Du'as in Arabic to enjoy their rhyme and Mysticism

This is unfortunately the biggest quagmire that we have fallen into. The Arabic-speaking population in the world today is only a small fraction of the total Muslim world population. But our fascination of the Arabic language sets our emotion one step above logic when we lose sight of the purpose of Du'a and replace it with music and rhyme.

Basically, we have inherited the shell but yet it is hollow in the inside. We stubbornly insist to listen to and recite Du'as in Arabic for the sake of emulation, without giving a pinch of thought to the meanings of the Du'as.

We need to look back at the purpose with which the Masoomeen (as) taught these Du'as. Did they desire of us to enjoy the rhyme and music? Or did they desire us to have competitions of speed? Or was it simply to decorate our social gatherings with it? No! It was definitely with the intention of providing us a means to approach Allah (SWT) and seek nearness to him.

We established that getting close to Allah (SWT) is the most important duty of mankind. We also established that the teachings of the Masoomeen (as) are the shiniest, shortest and most perfect path to get to Him. Then how come we ignore the wealth of guidance embedded in the Du'as they have taught? How come we overturn the purpose of Du'as that made the Masoomeen (as) weep more than a grieved mother, to mere traditions? How come we replace calls to Allah (SWT) that they so often repeated, with calls to the Masoomeen (as) themselves? How come we admire the sounds of the rhymes, but ignore the meanings and purpose behind them? How come we so fervently repeat these Du'as in Arabic, graciously thinking that they are having a great spiritual effect, but then argue against the same concept of 'Du'a to Allah (SWT) only' preached so fervently in them?

Therefore it is absolutely pertinent that we must strive to understand, and I cannot stress enough that we must strive to understand, the hidden pearls and treasures of Du'as. Those of us who do not know Arabic (the vast majority of us) must leverage the great efforts of the scholarly translators, who have taken great pains to bring this wealth to us in a form we can comprehend. And for those of us who are Arabic speaking, the onus rests upon us to ponder and reflect on the depths of the meanings (and guidance) embedded in the cries of the revered Masoomeen (as). The answers are all there. We need only open our eyes.

Conclusion

Allah (SWT) makes an easy and simple command in the Holy book – that we must all call upon Him. Why is it so difficult? It was supposed to be an easy deed – like it was for the people during the times of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). What happened? How far did we drift? Where did all the complications come from? Why? Why are we even arguing? Per chance, a century from now, little children might be surprised at the intricacies and complexities of our time.

Allah (SWT) makes a promise in the Holy Qur'an to answer prayers. If an employer promises thousands of \$\$s in bonus, will we take it lightly? If we are promised extended life in our youth, will we take it lightly? If we trade deals with man that gives us several-fold profit, will we take it lightly? Then why, and how, do we forget God's promise of answering our prayers? Why do we perceive him so far (Yet he is closer than the Jugular vein)? Why do we find it so averse to ask him for Du'a? Why do we seek other means, intercessors, channels, etc.? Why do we love making it complicated for ourselves? Is it per chance that we are far from Him? Or Satan has taken us far? These are all questions we must ask ourselves. The solutions are present. We need only open our eyes.