A REMINDER
POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT _DU'A_

1. Every _du'a_ is not answered in the positive, however righteous the supplicant may be, for Allah is Master, Knower, Seer, and has power over all things and is not controlled by our requests.

2. Our hearts must be pure and sincere and devoid of any grievance or resentment towards anyone when we make _du'a_. Thus, the cleaner our lives, the more will our petitions be granted.

3. _Du'a_ must not be a repetition of certain magic formulae. Instead, we must know what we are saying and our hearts must be filled with fear and hope, anxiety and restlessness, when we supplicate.

4. To decide upon a matter beforehand and then make _du'a_ as if seeking Allah's legitimisation of our wishes, prejudices, predilections, etc., is self-delusion, and a curse, and is tantamount to putting Allah, Most High, to test. Also, we must never try to predetermine the result of our prayer, but instead, we must submit with a weeping heart when we lay our petitions to Allah and be willing to accept cheerfully whatever He may decree.

5. To neglect effort, or means, or the tools of work that Allah has provided for us, and to make _du'a_ and sit down and wait for things to come, also amount to putting Allah to test. On the other hand, to plan is not against the will of Allah, but we must implore Him to guide us to the best plan and then to give us His help to implement it all the way through.

6. To be hurry and impatient for a desired answer and to feel despondent when it does not come and so abandon prayers as useless, will only lead to a life of misery, for this amounts to a rejection of Allah, Most High. Look how long it took for Allah to answer the _du'a_ of Prophets Abraham and Ishmael! This was fulfilled in the coming of our Holy Prophet (pbuh) at least three thousand years after the _du'a_ was made.

7. _Du'a_ is so important that Allah will not care for us if we do not make supplication to Him (“Say: My Lord would not care for you, were it not for your prayer” – 25:77).

8. _Du'a_ is what lifts us from a state of utter helplessness to that of vicegerents of Allah on earth. Paradoxically, our weakness is the greatest source of our strength for we have recourse to the greatest Source of Power – Allah, Himself (“Or, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil, and will make you successors in the earth?” – 27:62).

9. Allah may answer a request in four ways:
   I. He may grant it immediately.
   II. He may refuse it at once.
   III. He may delay His answer
   IV. In His Wisdom and mercy, He may give us something better than what was asked for.

10. In regard to a _du'a_ to remove a burdensome calamity from us, Allah answers in three ways:
   (i) He removes the difficulty quickly; or
   (ii) He gives us superhuman strength to endure it; or
   (iii) He makes the misfortune a means of intense delight to us for then we are forced to beseech

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Him in total helplessness, and when we are in that condition, we arc close to Him and He, Himself, as it were, bears the pains and comforts our soul. That is why those who are advanced in spirituality actually make *du'a* for trials and tribulations to befall them! The Holy Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said: "Sorrow is my friend, for it brings me close to my Lord." Thus we are commanded to make ourselves helpless before Allah in *salah* (even if there is no misfortune), and to consider Allah as Most Powerful and Most Merciful. That is the prerequisite to the granting of any request of ours.

11. Allah, Most High, treats us like a favourite friend. Sometimes He gives us what we ask for: "He gives you all that you ask for," and "Call upon Me and I shall answer you." But we must not be one-sided, for Allah tells us that He will ask us for certain things, too, as we find in the Holy Quran: "And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them say: Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall return" (2:155-156).

12. There are three ways of showing compassion to others: one is physical and the other is financial; but the third, *du'a*, is the best, for it does not need worldly provisions and its scope is more extensive. As a result, it must become second nature for us to make supplication for others, including even our enemies. This will give us long life, as the Holy Quran says: "Whatever is of benefit to man, tarries in the earth" (13:17).

13. There is no contradiction between seeking physical means for the relieving of pain and making *du'a* for the same, for Allah has reposed properties in physical things for the alleviation or removal of distress. For example, food relieves hunger, water assuages thirst, etc. Similarly, through Allah's grace, *du'a* helps to activate causes in the physical and spiritual worlds for the expulsion of pain and distress. Therefore, although Divine decree is a fact and it is absolute, yet there is much room for the use and benefit of *du'a*, outside of those irrevocable decrees, and it is in this domain that *du'a* comes into bloom. Even those who believe that everything is decreed before hand and therefore *du'a* is of no avail, still visit the doctors when they fall ill and they also look for outside help in other matters. Remember that from time immemorial, *du'a* and *sadqah* (charity) have been used by man to avert all but the irrevocable decrees of Allah.

14. *Du'a* and planning are not antithetical but are rather complementary and work, in fact, like blood brothers for the advancement of man, for planning is the natural corollary of *du'a* and *du'a* stimulates and attracts plans like a magnet. In fact, if Allah does not illumine our brain, no good plan can be born.

15. While it is true that without overtly and consciously making *du'a* some people succeed in their occupation only through what appears to be their brilliant planning, yet that success is only apparent and not real, for without *du'a*, every "success" is inevitably followed by pain, grief, sorrow and disgruntlement, for peace, security and tranquillity can never come through planning alone. Only through *du'a* can one get true happiness for *du'a* makes us recognise the Source of all favours and successes, and inspires in our hearts the sincerest feelings of humility and gratitude. On the other hand, the successes of others eventually increase them in pride, vanity, arrogance and hard-heartedness.

16. When a *du'a* is answered, it forges an unbreakable bond with Allah, and not only brings us closer to Him, but enables us to "see" Him in this very life. For just as Allah has told us to seek for signs of Him in the organisation of the heavens and the earth: “In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which
profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the sky, then gives life therewith to the earth after its death and spreads in it all (kinds of) animals, and the changing of the winds and the clouds made subservient between heaven and earth, there are surely signs for a people who understand” (2:164), so, too, there are signs for His recognition in His acceptance of du'a. And just as a single flash of lightning can make us see our way out of a pit of darkness, so, too, can du'a illumine our lives and bring us face to face with Allah Most High. But even more than that, du'a helps man to achieve the status of sainthood and to become an intercessor for lesser mortals.