

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Does God Exist?
If Not, Then Who
Answers Our Prayers?**

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**Editor:
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Naba Cultural Organization

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Introduction

We live in a world where millions doubt the existence of God: a world of science and technology in which people only accept what they can prove, see, measure, weigh or touch. Understandably, abstract concepts are accepted with caution. Belief in the existence of God is, therefore, treated with suspicion, disdain and often with amusement. Certainly the sophisticated western mind calls for more than nebulous unproved theories upon which to base faith. Nevertheless, were you to visit any country in the world, you would find that the majority of people believe that a supernatural Being (we'll call Him God) does exist. In other words, believers in a God of some sort outnumber unbelievers. Many people believe that there are thousands of gods, not just one: though they will readily agree that over and above the lesser gods is One Almighty God (Allah). Allah is the

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standard Arabic name for "God." The term is best known in the west for its use by Muslims as a reference to God. Arabic speakers of all faiths, including Christians and Jews, use the word Allah to mean "God." The Muslim and Christian Arabs of today have no other word for "God" than Allah.

In Islam, Allah (SWT) is the only deity, transcendent creator of the universe, and the judge of humankind. Some Islamic scholars feel that "Allah (SWT)" should not be translated, because they perceive the Arabic word to express the uniqueness of "Allah (SWT)" more accurately than the word "god" for two reasons:

1. The word "god" can take a plural form "gods", whereas the word "Allah (SWT)" has no plural form.

2. The word "god" can have gender as male god or female god (called goddess) whereas the word "Allah (SWT)" does not have gender.

(Note: Subhanahu wa Ta'ala is an Islamic Arabic phrase meaning, "glorious and exalted is He (Allah)." This phrase often abbreviated to "SWT.")

In this booklet we will try to prove the existence of God with simple logic and small stories.

One important point we need to understand in the first place is that the existence of God can not be proved in the same way, as you prove the existence of a physical object. This is simply because God is not a physical object. Any physical object is subject to your five senses. In simple terms, you can see, hear, smell,

touch or taste a physical object. This is not possible in the case of God, as He is a Transcendental Being [existing on a level beyond our sensual perception].

There are people who argue that the only form of knowledge available to humans is experiential knowledge or experimental knowledge, gained primarily by the use of outer senses. This led to the belief that human beings are constituted in such a way that the knowledge of reality is always unavailable to them; and so it resulted in a renewal of attention to the everyday world of appearances. The knowledge of here and now became the only object of human knowledge and concern. Thus from this point of view, the project of seeking knowledge of reality behind appearances must be abandoned, because it is beyond the scope of human understanding.

Now think: Can't there be a way of "being" [existing] that is not susceptible of being perceived by the limited capabilities of humans through their defective senses?

I hope that the implications of the two expressions I used above ["limited capabilities" and "defective senses"] are evident to any thinking person. The claim that something does not exist, because you haven't seen or heard it is untenable. When we consider the limitations of our sensual perception and of our reasoning powers, it is not necessary that we understand everything. We can speak meaningfully about everything simply on the basis of our perception. So to speak of "proof" with regard to a Transcendental Being becomes irrelevant.

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What we can do is to point out facts which lead to a constant and inescapable awareness of the presence of God. It is clear that logically we can not rule out the possibility of more things existing than can be perceived by our senses or can be arrived at by our reasoning. As for Man, there are two dimensions to his existence: One of matter and the other of spirit.

Reduced merely to the level of material existence, Man becomes a machine or a mere animal at best. But think of a machine that rebels against being a machine; or of an animal that refuses to be an animal. That is what man is! What is it that makes him rebellious, angry, disappointed, frightened or hopeful? What is his dimension that gives him his imagination, his artistic genius, his creative urge? Why does he have nightmares and sweet dreams?

It is not matter that does it; evidently it is his spirit that makes him so different from animals. So to base our knowledge of the world and our philosophy of life simply on the material side of our existence to the complete exclusion of the spiritual dimension is undoubtedly faulty. The strength of Islam as a philosophy and as a way of life is that it does not separate man's material life from spiritual life, and that it seeks a balance between the two dimensions of human existence.

We should understand that human spirit is a reality incommensurable with material realities, and that it owes its existence only to God. Thus dear friends, if we ponder over the phenomena of the world around us and over the complexities of

our own existence, we are bound to conclude that God is the Reality behind all appearances. The holy Qur'an says in Surah 2, verse 164, the meaning of the following:

"Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men, and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then gives life with it 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 the heaven and the earth, there are signs for a people who understand." (2:164)

That is to say the external signs we see in the universe should necessarily lead a wise person to the Ultimate Reality behind it all. And that is how we arrive at the realization that God Almighty is the Moving Power behind all life and all existence.

What would constitute objective proof of God? Well, consider the following self-evident and universally recognized truth: Concept and design necessitate an intelligent designer. It's simply cause and effect. In our search for proof of God's existence, let's examine the various scientific and mathematical realities in our world. Let's look at the evidence now!

Origin of Creation Is Natural

Man, by a God-given instinct, seeks for the cause of every occurrence he witnesses. He never thinks it probable that a thing should come into being of itself, without cause, by chance. The driver whose car stalls steps out and checks the probable cause of the problem. It never occurs to him that the machine should stall when everything is in perfect running order. In trying to get the car started, he uses whatever means he has on hand; he never sits waiting for it to start by chance.

If someone is hungry, he thinks of bread; when he is thirsty, he looks for water; and if he is cold, he puts on extra clothing or starts a fire. He never sits assuring himself that chance will intervene. One who wants to erect a building naturally secures building supplies and the services of an architect and workers; he does not hope that his intentions will realize themselves.

So long as man has existed, mountains, forests, and vast oceans have existed on earth along with him. He has always seen the sun and the moon and shining stars moving regularly and ceaselessly across the sky.

Nonetheless, the world's savants have searched tirelessly for the causes for these wonderful beings and phenomena. They have never been heard to say, "So long as we have lived, we have observed these in their present forms. Therefore, they have come about of themselves".

This instinctive curiosity and interest in causes impels us to inquire into how the creation

arose and into its marvelous order. We are led to ask, did this vast universe, with all its interconnected parts that really form one immense entity, come about of itself, or did it gain its being from elsewhere?

Is this astonishing system that is in effect throughout the universe, governed by immutable laws admitting no exceptions and guiding every thing toward its own unique destiny, governed by a boundless power and knowledge, or does it arise from chance?

What If You Find a Watch?

Suppose you find a watch in the middle of a desert. What would you conclude? Would you think that someone dropped the watch? Or would you suppose that the watch came by itself?

Of course no sane person would say that the watch just happened to emerge from the sand. All the intricate working parts could not simply develop from the metals the lay buried in the earth. The watch must have a manufacturer.

If a watch tells accurate time we expect the manufacturer must be intelligent. Blind chance can not produce a working watch.

But what else tells accurate time? Consider the sunrise and sunset. Their timings are so strictly regulated that scientists can publish in advance the sunrise and sunset times in your daily newspapers. But who regulates the timings of sunrise and sunset? If a watch can not work without an intelligent maker, how can the sun appear to rise and set with such clockwork regularity? Could this occur by itself?

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Consider also that we benefit from the sun only because it remains at a safe distance from the earth, a distance that averages 93 million miles. If it got much closer the earth would burn up.

And if it got too far away the earth would turn into an icy planet making human life here impossible. Who decided in advance that this was the right distance? Could it just happen by chance?

Without the sun plants would not grow. Then animals and humans would starve. Did the sun just decide to be there for us? The rays of the sun would be dangerous for us had it not been for the protective ozone layer in our atmosphere. The atmosphere around earth keeps the harmful ultra-violet rays from reaching us. Who was it that placed this shield around us?

We need to experience sunrise. We need the sun's energy and its light to see our way during the day. But we also need sunset. We need a break from the heat, we need the cool of night and we need the lights to out so we may sleep. Who regulated this process to provide what we need?

Moreover, if we had only the sun and the protection of the atmosphere we would want something more-beauty. Our clothes provide warmth and protection, yet we design them to also look beautiful. Knowing our need for beauty, the designer of sunrise and sunset also made the view of them to be simply breathtaking.

The creator who gave us light, energy, protection and beauty deserves our thanks. Yet

some people insist that he does not exist. What would they think if they found a watch in the desert? An accurate working watch? A beautifully designed watch? Would they not conclude that there does exist a watchmaker? An intelligent watchmaker? One who appreciates beauty? Such is God who made us. Subhan Allah (Glory be to God)!

Proof That There Is a Maker

When one puts his instinctive realism to work, wherever he looks in the creation, he sees abundant evidence for a Creator and Sustaining Power, because man perceives instinctively that each created thing enjoys the bounties of being and automatically follows a determinate course, eventually giving up its place to other things. They never bring about their own being, invent their own course of development, or play the least role in producing or organizing their way of existence. We ourselves have not chosen our humanity or human characteristics but have been created human and given these characteristics. Similarly, our instinctive realism will never accept that all these things have come about of themselves through chance and that the system of being have arose willy-nilly. Our intuition does not accept that some neatly stacked fragments of brick tumbled together by chance. Thus mans instinctive realism proclaims that the world of being certainly has a support that is the Source of being and the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and that this limitless Being and source of knowledge and power is God, from whose

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oceanic being the system of existence springs.
The Most High God says,

"He Who gave everything its nature and guided it." (20:50)

Belief in Almighty God is extremely important in Islam. Sometimes when we are asked to prove the existence of God, we tend to get lost and not quite sure how to answer. So, let us learn it from Holy Imams.

One day a man came to Imam Ja'far Sadiq (the grandson of Imam Ali son of Imam Husain, peace be upon them all), and asked: O son of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)! Is there a God?

Imam: Of course there is a God.

Man: But how can I be absolutely sure?

Imam: Make yourself comfortable and relax. (There was a small boy walking by with an egg in his hands. The Imam took the egg from him and hid it in his palms.)

Imam (to the man): Tell me something. Is it possible to keep two different liquid colors in one container without any barrier, and yet they don't get mixed?

Man: Impossible.

The Imam showed him an egg and asked, "What's this then? Who's got this power to do this?" When the egg is hatched, you see a beautiful and a colorful bird coming out of the egg. Have you seen anyone coming out of the egg or entering the egg to suggest that someone's been inside the egg to paint the bird?

Man: No.

Imam: That is God. You recognize your

Creator through His creations and His Might.

Is There a God

One day a man asked Imam Ali son of Abu Talib (peace be upon him): Is there a God?

Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.): Of course there is.

Man: How do I know?

Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) pointed towards the footprints of a camel on the sand and asked the man, what do these footprints tell you?

Man: That a camel has gone past from here.

Imam: But did you see the camel passing by?

Man: No, but the footprints are good enough to indicate the passing of the camel from here.

Imam: So when you see the sun, moon, stars, trees, animals, etc. doesn't your mind tell you that since all these things are there, there must be someone who has created them all? And that is your Creator, God.

Imam Ali's Reply to a Question about Seeing God

Dhi'lib al-Yamani asked Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) whether he had seen God.

Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) replied, "Do I worship one whom I have not seen?"

Then he inquired, "How have you seen Him?"

Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) replied, Eyes do not see Him face to face, but hearts perceive Him through the realities of belief.

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He is near to things but not (physically) contiguous.

He is far from them but not (physically) separate.

He is a speaker, but not with reflection. He intends, but not with preparation.

He moulds, but not with (the assistance of) limbs.

He is subtle but can not be attributed with being concealed.

He is great but can not be attributed with haughtiness.

He sees but can not be attributed with the sense (of sight).

He is Merciful but can not be attributed with weakness of heart.

Faces feel low before His greatness and hearts tremble out of fear of Him.

Recognition of Allah (SWT)

Man's turning to Allah (SWT) during times of calamities is a sign of our inclinations to Godliness. Man gets involved with his position and status so much that he forgets about Allah (SWT). He gets fully entangled in his sins and disobedience. Once a calamity befalls upon man, he suddenly remembers Allah (SWT) and turns to Him for help. Thus, we realize that this sense of Godliness is intrinsic in humans, but man's involvement in worldly affairs results in his forgetting Allah (SWT).

There is a well-known tradition that states that a man went to see Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h) and expressed his amazement about the

recognition of Allah (SWT). Man said: "I have discussed this issue with many knowledgeable people, but they have not been able to help me."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h) ended his amazement using his intrinsic human Godliness and asked him: "Have you ever been aboard a ship?" The man said: "Yes." Then Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h) asked: "Have you ever been on a sinking ship, and reached out for a narrow piece of board to stay afloat?" The man said: "Yes. I have."

Then Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h) said: "Then while you could not see any dry land or anyone there to save you, were you not really attracted to some power to rescue you?" The man replied in the positive and was finally relieved of his amazement about Allah's (SWT) recognition."

Imam Sadiq and Abu Shakir

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) was one of the most patient and tolerant teachers of his time. He used to take his classes every day. After his lectures he would listen and reply to the objections of his critics. He had asked his critics, who attended his classes, not to interrupt him during his lectures. They were quite free to ask him any question or raise any objection after the classes were over.

Once Abu Shakir, one of his opponents, said to him: "Would you allow me to say something and ask some questions?" "Yes, you can", replied Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.).

Said Abu Shakir: "Is it not a myth that there is Allah? You want people to believe in a

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thing which does not exist. If there was Allah, we could have felt his existence through our senses. You may say that we can feel His presence by the help of our inner senses, but our inner senses also depend upon our five outer senses. We can not conjure up an image of anything in which some of our senses were not involved. We can not conjure up the picture of a person whom we have not met; recall to our memory his voice if we have not heard him and feel the touch of his hand by our inner senses if we have never taken his hand in our hand."

"You may say that we can perceive the presence of Allah by our intelligence and not through our inner or outer senses. But our intelligence also needs the assistance of our five outer senses, without which it can not function. We can not make any reasoning or come to any conclusion without the help of our senses.

By your imagination you have created a being, which is of your own image. Since you see, talk, hear, work and rest, He also does exactly what you do."

"You do not show Him to anyone. To maintain your hold on the people you say that He can not be seen. You also say that He was not born from the womb of a woman. He does not procreate and that He would not die. I have heard that there is an idol in India, which is hidden behind a curtain and is not allowed to be seen by the Hindu devotees. The custodians of the idol say that it is out of mercy that their god does not appear before them, because whoever casts his eyes on it, would instantly die."

"Your Allah is also like the veiled god of the Hindus. It is out of His mercy that He does not appear before us. If he does, we shall surely die. You say that the universe was created by Allah, who did not talk to anyone, except to the Prophet of Islam. As a matter of fact the universe came by itself. Does anyone create the grass, which grows in the field? Does it not grow and get green by itself?

Does anyone create the ants and the mosquitoes? Do they not come out by themselves?"

"I must tell you, who claims to be a scholar and the successor of the Prophet, that among all the stories, which circulate among the people, none is more absurd and baseless than the story of Allah, who can not be seen. There are many baseless stories, but they, at least, depict real life and present before us the people and personalities, who may themselves be fictitious, but their acts and deeds are like those of real human beings. We can see them. They eat, they drink, they talk, they sleep and they love. When we read these fictitious stories, we enjoy them. We know that they are false, but we see in them the faces of men and women, who are like us. The people mentioned in the stories might not have existed, but our common sense accepts existence of such people in the world. However, when we can not see, feel, or touch Allah, our logic and reasoning, which depend upon our senses, do not accept his existence."

"I know that some people, who have been deceived by you, believe in your invisible Allah,

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but you can not deceive me and make me believe in Him. I worship a god, who is made of wood and stone. Although my god does not talk, I can see him with my eyes and touch him with my hands."

"You say that the god whom I have made from my own hands is not worthy of being worshipped, while you ask the people to worship Allah, you have created by your imagination. You deceive innocent people by saying that your imagined Allah has created the universe, but I do not deceive anyone. No one created the universe. There was no need of any god to create it. It came by itself. God can not create anything. He is himself our creation. I created him by my hand and you by your imagination."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) did not say a word during the long tirade of Abu Shakir. Sometimes his students, who were present, wanted to intervene but he asked them to remain quiet. When Abu Shakir stopped his lengthy discourse, the Imam asked him, if he had anything more to say.

Retorted Abu Shakir: "By introducing your invisible Allah to the people, you want to acquire wealth and position and have a respectable, comfortable and luxurious life. These are my last words. I do not want to say anything more."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said: "I would like to start with the last part of your speech. Your accusations that I want money, position, and a comfortable life would have been justified if I was living like a Caliph. You have

seen today that I have eaten a few morsels of bread only and nothing else. I invite you to my house to see for yourself what I will have for dinner and how I live."

"Abu Shakir, if I wanted to acquire wealth and have a good life, as you say, I was not obliged to teach and preach to get rich. I would have earned money and got rich by my knowledge of chemistry. Another way to get rich was to do business. I have more knowledge about foreign markets than any merchant in Medina. I know what goods are produced in different countries and where to sell them for profit. I also know how to bring them here to reduce the cost of transport. Our merchants import goods only from Syria, Iraq, Egypt and some other Arab countries. They do not know what goods are available in Isfahan, Rasht and Rome; otherwise they would have imported them and sold them with profit."

"Abu Shakir, you said that I ask people to worship Allah in order to deceive them and to get rich.

I must tell you that I have never taken anything from anyone, except some fruits as presents. One of my friends sends to me every year fresh dates from his garden and another some pomegranates from Taif. I accept these presents so that they may not get offended."

"I have heard, O Abu Shakir, that your father was a pearl merchant. You may have some knowledge about pearls. But I know all about pearls and precious stones. I can also appraise their market value. If I wanted to get rich I would

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have worked as a jeweler. Can you test and recognize a precious stone? Do you know how many kinds of rubies and emeralds there are in the world?" "I know nothing about them", replied Abu Shakir.

"Do you know how many kinds of diamonds are there and what colors they have?" asked Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.). "I do not know", replied Abu Shakir.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said: "I am not a jeweler, but I know all about the pearls and precious stones. I also know where they come from. All jewelers must know about gems, what I know, but few of them know their sources."

"Do you know what makes a diamond shine?" asked Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.). "I never was a diamond merchant, nor was my father. How can I know why diamonds shine?" replied Abu Shakir.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) Said: "Diamonds are obtained from the beds of rivers and streams. Rough diamonds are cut by experts. It is the cut of a diamond, which gives it its brilliance. Those who are experts in cutting diamonds are trained from the childhood in the profession of their fathers and forefathers. Cutting a diamond is a very delicate and difficult art. A diamond is cut only by a diamond."

"Abu Shakir, I have said all this simply to show you that if I wanted to accumulate wealth, I could have done so by making use of my knowledge about jewels. I have replied to your accusations and now I shall deal with your objections."

"Abu Shakir, you have said that I have fabricated stories and ask people to worship Allah, who can not be seen. You refuse to acknowledge existence of Allah, because He can not be seen. Can you see inside of your own body?" Replied Abu Shakir: "No, I can not."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said: "If you could have seen what is inside you, you would not have said that you do not believe in Allah, who can not be seen."

Abu Shakir asked: "What is the relation between seeing within one's own body and the existence of your unseen Allah?"

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) replied: "You have said just now that a thing, which can not be seen, touched, tasted or heard, does not exist."

Abu Shakir said: "Yes, I have said that and I believe it is true."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) asked: "Do you hear the sound of the movement of blood in your body?"

Abu Shakir Said: "No, I do not. But does blood move in the body?"

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said: "Yes, it does. It makes a full circuit in your body. If the circulation of blood stops for a few minutes you will die."

Abu Shakir said: "I can not believe that blood circulates in the body."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said: "It is your ignorance, which does not let you believe that your blood circulates in your body, and the

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same ignorance does not let you believe in the existence of Allah, Who can not be seen."

Then the Imam asked Abu Shakir whether he has seen the tiny living beings, which Allah has created in his body.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) continued: "It is because of these small creatures and their wonderful work that you are kept alive. They are so small that you can not see them. Since you are a slave of your senses, you do not know about their existence. If you increase your knowledge, and decrease your ignorance, you will come to know that these small beings in your body are as large in number as the particles of sand in the desert. These small creatures are born in your body, multiply in your body, work in your body, and die in your body. But you never see them, touch them, taste them, or hear them in your life time."

"It is true that one who knows himself knows his Allah. If you had known yourself and had the knowledge of what is going on inside your body, you would not have said that you do not believe in Allah, without seeing Him."

Pointing his finger to a huge stone he said: "Abu Shakir, do you see the stone, which is in the foot of that portico? To you it seems lifeless and motionless, because you do not see the brisk motion, which is inside the stone. Again it is lack of knowledge, or your ignorance, which would not let you believe that there is motion inside the stone. The time will come when the learned people would see the motion which is in the stone."

Continued the Imam: "Abu Shakir, you have said that everything in the universe came by itself and has no Creator. You think that the grass in the field grows and gets green by itself. You must know that the grass can not grow without seeds and seeds would not germinate without moisture in the soil and there would be no moisture if no rain falls. The rain does not fall by itself. First the water vapors rise and gather above in the atmosphere in the form of clouds. The winds bring the clouds. Then the water vapors condense and fall down as rain drops. The rain must also fall at the right time; otherwise no grass will grow and become green. Take the seeds of ten kinds of herbs and put them in a closed jar, which has sufficient water, but no air. Would they germinate? No, in addition to water, seeds need air also. It is possible to grow grass, herbs and fruits in hot houses, when it is very cold, provided there is sufficient air. Without the presence of air no grass will grow in the fields and get green. If there is no air, all plants and animals, including human beings, would die."

"Abu Shakir, do you see the air, on which your very existence depends. You only feel it when it moves. Can you refuse to believe in the existence of air? Can you deny that to grow and get green the grass needs many things like seeds, soil, water, air, a suitable climate and above all a strong managing power, which may co-ordinate the action of these different elements. That Managing and Coordinating Power is Allah."

"You say that everything comes by itself because you are not a scientist. No scientist

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would ever say that. All scientists and all scholars believe in the existence of a creator, albeit, they may call Him by different names. Even those, who do not believe in Allah, believe in a Creative Force."

"Abu Shakir, it is not because of one's knowledge, but it is due to his ignorance that he does not believe in Allah. When a wise man thinks of himself, he finds that his own body needs a controller so that all its organs and systems may function properly. He then realizes that this vast universe also needs a controller or supervisor so that it may run smoothly."

"You said just now that both of us create our own gods - you by your hands and I by my imagination. But there is a big difference between your god and my Allah. Your god did not exist before you made him out of wood or stone, but my Allah was there before I could think about Him. I do not create my Allah by my hands or by my brain. What I do is to know Him better and think of His Greatness. When you see a mountain you try to know more about it. It is not creating the mountain by imagination. That mountain was there before you saw it and it would be there when you are gone."

"You can not know much about the mountain because of your limited knowledge. The more your knowledge grows, the more you will learn about it. It is impossible for you to find out when and how that mountain came into being and when it would disappear. You can not find out what minerals are there inside or underneath

the mountain and what is their benefit to mankind."

"Do you know that the stones, out of which you make your idols, came into being thousands of years ago and shall exist for thousands of years more? These stones have come here from a distant place. They could travel that long journey because different parts of the earth are always moving, but this movement is so slow that you do not feel it. There is nothing in the universe, which is not in motion. Rest or motionlessness is meaningless. We are not at rest even when we are sleeping. We are in motion because the earth is in motion. Besides, we have a motion inside our own bodies."

"Abu Shakir, if you had any knowledge about the piece of stone, out of which you carve an idol, you would not have denied the existence of Allah and said that I have created Him by my imagination. You do not know what a stone is and how it came into being. Today you can handle it as you like and cut it into any shape or form, but there was a time when it was in liquid state. Gradually it cooled down and Allah solidified it. In the beginning it was quite brittle and would have broken into pieces in your hand like a piece of glass."

Asked Abu Shakir: "Was it in a liquid condition before?" "Yes, it was", replied Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.)

Abu Shakir burst into a peal of laughter. One of the students of Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) got angry and was about to say something when he was stopped by his teacher.

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Abu Shakir said: "I am laughing because you say that the stones are made of water." Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) replied: "I did not say that the stones are made of water. What I had said was that in the beginning they were in a liquid state."

Abu Shakir said: "What difference does it make. The liquid and water are the same things."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) replied: "There are many liquids which are not water. Milk and vinegar are liquids, but they are not water, although they have water content in them. In the beginning the stones were liquid like water and they flowed like water. Gradually they cooled down and became hard so that you could cut them and make them into idols. The same hard stones will turn into liquid, if they are heated."

Said Abu Shakir: "When I go home I will check the truth of your statement. I will put the stone in the fireplace and see if it turns into liquid or not."

Said the Imam: "You can not liquefy stone in your fireplace. Can you liquefy a piece of iron at home? A very high temperature is required to turn solid stone into liquid."

"Do you realize how you could make the idols out of stones? It was Allah, who made the stones.

It was He Who created you and gave you the hands with the unique fingers, which enabled you to handle tools and chisel out the idols from the stones. Again it was He who gave you power

and intelligence, which you used in making the idols."

"Abu Shakir, do you think that the mountains are only heaps of stones? The Great Allah has created them to serve some very useful purpose. They were not created so that you may take stones and turn them into idols. Wherever there is a mountain there is flowing water. Rain and snow which fall on the mountain tops produce streams of fresh water. These streams combine together to form big rivers, which irrigate farms and fields. The people who live in the valleys, through which the rivers flow, are assured of constant supply of water. People, who can afford it, go to the mountains during the summer season to escape the heat of the plains."

"The mountains work as a great bulwark and protect towns and villages, which are in their valleys from the devastation and destruction of hurricanes. Green mountains provide good grazing grounds for sheep. When scorching heat burns the pastures down in the plains and no fodder is left, the shepherds take their flocks of sheep to the mountains and stay there till the end of summer. Mountains are also habitats of birds and animals, some of which are a good source of food for those, who live there. Even the mountains, which are not green, are not without some use. If the people try, they may discover in them mines of metals and minerals which are useful for mankind."

"Abu Shakir, I am too small and too weak to create Allah with my brain. It is He, who has created my brain, so that I may think of Him

and know Him - my Creator. He was there before I came into being and He would be there when I am no more. I do not mean that I would be totally destroyed. Nothing in the universe is totally destroyed. Everything is subject to change. It is only Allah, Who does not change."

"Abu Shakir, please tell me sincerely to whom will you turn for help when you are in trouble? Do you hope that the idol you carve out of stone can come to your succor? Can it cure you when you are sick; save you from mishaps and calamities; save you from starvation and help you pay your debts?"

Abu Shakir replied: "I have no such expectations from the stone, but, I think there is something inside the stone, which will help me. Moreover, I can not help worshipping it."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) enquired: "What is inside the stone? Is it also stone?"

"I do not know what it is. But it can not help me if it is also stone," replied Abu Shakir.

Said Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.): "Abu Shakir, what is inside the stone and is not stone and can help when you are in trouble is, Allah."

Abu Shakir pondered over the subject for a while and then said: "Is Allah, who can not be seen, inside the stone?" The Imam replied: "He is everywhere."

Abu Shakir said: "I can not believe that a thing may be everywhere but remain unseen."

The Imam said: "Do you know that the air is everywhere but can not be seen?"

Said Abu Shakir: "Although I can not see the air, I can, at least, feel it when it moves. But I can neither see your Allah nor feel his presence."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) said: "You do not feel the presence of air when it is not moving. The air is only a creation of Allah. He is everywhere, but you can not see Him or feel His presence by your senses. You have admitted just now that although you do not see it, but your instinct or your soul tells you that there is something inside the stone, and is not the stone, which can help you.

That something is Allah. Your instinct also tells you that you can not live without Allah and without worshipping Him."

Abu Shakir said: "It is true. I can not live without worshipping idols."

Said Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.): "Do not say idols. Say Allah. It is He, Who is worthy of worship. Just like you everyone is obliged to worship Him. One, who does not worship Allah, has no guide and no guardian. He is just like one, who can not see, can not hear, can not feel and can not think. He does not know where to go and on whom to depend when in trouble. Worshipping Allah is a part of living. Every living being worships Him instinctively. Even the animals can not live without worshipping Him. We can not ask them and they can not tell us that they worship Allah, but their well regulated and orderly life is sufficient proof that they worship Him.

"I do not say that the animals believe in Allah and worship Him just as we do. But there

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is no doubt that they obey the laws made by their Creator faithfully, which means they worship Him. If they were not obedient to their Creator, they could not have such an orderly and regulated life."

"We see that just before the advent of spring the titmouse (a kind of small bird) always comes at the same time and sings, as if to give us the tiding of the new season. The itinerary of these migratory birds is so regulated and their schedule so fixed that even if the last days of winter are still cold, their arrival is not delayed for more than a few days. When Chilchila (a migratory bird) returns after covering a distance of thousands of miles, it builds its nest at the same place, where it had built it last spring. Was it possible for these small birds to have such a well organized life if they did not obey the laws of Allah and worship Him?"

"Abu Shakir, even the plants obey the laws made by Allah faithfully and worship Him. Out of 150 species of plants, which are further divided into hundreds of sub-species you will not find even one plant, which has a disorganized and disorderly life."

"Abu Shakir, just like us the plants also does not see their Creator, but they worship Him by obeying His laws instinctively."

"I know that you will not accept, or perhaps you do not understand, what I say. A man must have sufficient knowledge to understand complicated problems."

"Abu Shakir, not only animals by their animal instinct and plants by their plant instinct

obey Allah and worship Him, the lifeless and inanimate objects also, with whatever instinct they have, obey Allah and worship Him. If they did not worship Him, they would not have followed the laws made by Him. As a result, their atoms would have broken apart and they would have been destroyed."

"The light which comes from the sun also worships Allah by obeying his laws, which are very stringent and exact. It comes into being by the combination of two opposite forces. These forces also obey the laws of Allah and worship Him, otherwise they can not produce light."

"Abu Shakir, if there was no Allah there would have been no universe and no you and me. The sentence, "There is no Allah", is meaningless. The existence of Allah is a must. If attention of Allah is diverted, even for a moment from the affairs of the universe to something else, it would break up. Everything in the universe obeys His laws, which are permanent and eternal. Because of His absolute wisdom and knowledge, He could make such wonderful laws, which will last for ever. Each and every law, made by Him serves some special and useful purpose."

When the Imam concluded his discourse, Abu Shakir fell into a deep reverie as if he was greatly inspired.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) asked: "Do you now believe that Allah, who can not be seen, does exist and what you worship is the unseen Allah?"

Abu Shakir replied: "I am not yet convinced. I am in a quandary. I am full of

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doubts and misgivings about my faith and my convictions."

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) remarked: "The doubt about idol worship is the beginning of the worship of Allah."

Another conversation

An atheist professor of philosophy speaks to his class on the problem science has with God, The Almighty.

He asks one of his new students to stand and...

Prof: So you believe in God?

Student: Absolutely, sir.

Prof: Is God good?

Student: Sure.

Prof: Is God all-powerful?

Student: Yes.

Prof: My brother died of cancer even though he prayed to God to heal him. Most of us would attempt to help others who are ill. But God didn't. How is this God good then? Hmm?

Student: Silent.

Prof: You can't answer, can you? Let's start again, young fellow. Is God good?

Student: Yes.

Prof: Is Satan good?

Student: No.

Prof: Where does Satan come from?

Student: Silent.

Prof: Tell me son, is there evil in this world?

Student: Yes.

Prof: Evil is everywhere, isn't it?

Student: Yes.

Prof: So who created evil?

Student: Silent.

Prof: Is there sickness, Immorality, Hatred, Ugliness? All these terrible things exist in the world, don't they?

Student: Yes, sir.

Prof: So, who created them?

Student: Silent.

Prof: Science says you have 5 senses you use to identify and observe the world around you. Tell me, son...have you ever seen God?

Student: No, sir.

Prof: Tell us if you have ever heard your God?

Student: No, sir.

Prof: Have you ever felt your God, tasted your God, smelt your God? Have you ever had any sensory perception of God for that matter?

Student: No, sir. I'm afraid I haven't.

Prof: Yet you still believe in Him?

Student: Yes!

Prof: According to empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says your GOD doesn't exist. What do you say to that, son?

Student: Nothing. I only have my faith.

Prof: Yes. Faith. And that is the problem science has.

Student: Professor, is there such a thing as heat?

Prof: Yes.

Student: And is there such a thing as cold?

Prof: Yes.

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Student: No sir. There isn't. (The lecture theatre becomes very quiet with this turn of events.)

Student: Sir, you can have lots of heat, even more heat, superheat, mega heat, white heat, a little heat or no heat. But we don't have anything called cold. We can hit 458 degrees below zero which is no heat, but we can't go any further after that. There is no such thing as cold. Cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We can not measure cold. Heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir, just the absence of it. (There is pin-drop silence in the lecture theatre.)

Student: What about darkness, Professor? Is there such a thing as darkness?

Prof: Yes. What is night if there isn't darkness?

Student: You're wrong again, sir. Darkness is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light... But if you have no light constantly, you have nothing and its called darkness, isn't it? In reality, darkness isn't. If it were you would be able to make darkness darker, wouldn't you?

Prof: So what is the point you are making, young man?

Student: Sir, my point is your philosophical premise is flawed.

Prof: Flawed? Can you explain how?

Student: Sir, you are working on the premise of duality. You argue there is life and then there is death, a good God and a bad God. You are viewing the concept of God as

something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science can't even explain a thought. It uses electricity and magnetism, but has never seen, much less fully understood, either one. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death can not exist as a substantive thing. Death is not the opposite of life: just the absence of it.

Now tell me, Professor. Do you teach your students that they evolved from a monkey?

Prof: If you are referring to the natural evolutionary process, yes, of course, I do.

Student: Have you ever observed evolution with your own eyes, sir? (The Professor shakes his head with a smile, beginning to realize where the argument is going.)

Student: Since no one has ever observed the process of evolution at work and can not even prove that this process is an on-going endeavor, are you not teaching your opinion, sir? Are you not a scientist but a preacher? (The class is in uproar.)

Student: Is there anyone in the class who has ever seen the Professor's brain? (The class breaks out into laughter!)

Student: Is there anyone here who has ever heard the Professor's brain, felt it, touched or smelt it? No one appears to have done so. So, according to the established rules of empirical, stable, demonstrable protocol, science says that you have no brain, sir. With all due respect, sir, how do we then trust your lectures, sir? (The room is silent. The professor stares at the student, his face unfathomable.)

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Prof: I guess you'll have to take them on faith, son.

Student: That is it sir... The link between man and God is FAITH. That is all that keeps things moving and alive.

God Is Everywhere

A father has three sons. One day he brought candy for his sons. His sons became happy and thank him for bringing the candy for them.

The father gave each of his three sons some candy. Actually father wanted to test the boys. So he put one condition before handing the candy. I want you to eat the candy in a place where you can't be seen.

That seems easy for boys, because they knew great places to hide.

The eldest brother ran to his room. He hid under his bed. And said: No one can see me eat under here.

The next brother dashed to the secret tree house. He shut the door and windows. And said: I can't be seen now.

The youngest brother hid in his best hiding place; behind the couch. And said: No one ever sees me when I hide here. But something is not quite right this time. So he went and hid in his closet to make sure the dark. Again here also something is not quite right.

He sat in the dark garage for twenty two minutes. But this time he is definitely sure that something is not quite right and it is not working.

Later the family sat for the dinner. Father asked the boys: so tell me, did you all find a place to eat the candy without being seen. Eldest brother replied: Yes dad, under my bed. Next brother said: I ate in the secret tree house. Father turned to the youngest child and asked: What about you?

Youngest child replied: Well dad, I tried so many places, but in the end I didn't eat the candy. Why not asked the father. Because you told us to eat the candy where we couldn't be seen, but I keep thinking God can see me wherever I am.

The boy has passed the test. God is everywhere. Well done my son, you are right. There was nowhere to eat the candy without being seen by Almighty God.

We Can Not See God

Once there was a farmer who was a very good man. He worked hard on his farm and said his Salat/Namaz (prayer) on time every day.

Once he saw a sick man lying on the roadside. He helped him up and took him home to look after him. The next morning when the farmer got up for Salat he woke up his guest who said he did not want to pray.

The guest said that he could not see God so he did not want to pray to One whom he could not see. The farmer did not say anything.

The next day the guest was feeling better and wanted to go home. The farmer walked with him across the fields. Suddenly they saw

footprints. The guest told the farmer that they were the footprints of a tiger.

"I don't believe that!" said the farmer. "I can't see a tiger here!"

The man looked surprised and said "Are these footprints not enough to tell you that a tiger was here?" The farmer said "Dear brother when you saw the footprints you believed that a tiger had passed this way; so are not the Sun, the Moon, the flowers, and the trees signs enough to make you believe that there must be one who made them?"

The man thought for a while and said "You are right. We can not see God with our eyes but we can understand from the things he has made that He exists."

Hence, from the above evidence, discussion and stories, we are certain that Almighty God exists. But just knowing is not sufficient. Because knowledge is simply a mental image, a reflection of some natural interaction upon the intellect. Even religious knowledge, like knowledge from holy texts, is not some sacred thing that automatically distinguishes the one who holds that knowledge. It isn't necessary to immediately act on that information. Rather, we should allow it to ferment in the soul until it transforms into firmly rooted faith. It will then ignite an intense desire to act.

There is a huge gulf between knowledge and action, a gap that is not crossed but by the ship of faith. Look at how persistent some people are in defying the dictates of reason and true character, much less the things that have been

spelled out clearly for them like religious prohibitions. They have the knowledge but it means nothing to them. Now, with the help of the following story we will learn how to place our faith in Almighty God firmly, with sound reasoning and full understanding.

Faith in God

The holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was once walking with his companions when he saw an old lady working at a spinning wheel. Whilst she was working she was praising God for all that He had given her.

The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) greeted her and asked her: "Your faith is admirable; will you tell me what made you believe in God?"

The woman answered: "O Messenger of Almighty God! If I do not move my spinning wheel, it does not spin. If a simple thing like my spinning wheel, can not turn without help how it can be possible that the whole universe can operate so efficiently without a driving force. There must be a Great one running it. Someone who controls every atom. The Great One can only be God, who is the Creator and Master of everything."

The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was very pleased with the old woman's reply. Turning to his companions he said: "See how this old lady came to know about God through such a fine and simple way. Your faith in Almighty God should also be as firm as hers."

Inner Revolution

God is the greatest of all powers. No one can escape His reckoning. He will deal severely with the wicked. Belief in a God of this awesome nature is no simple matter; faith transforms a person a being when it enters his soul.

Imagine the change that comes over a person who suddenly realizes that a tiger is roaming freely in close vicinity of him. A far greater change occurs when one truly realizes the existence of God. To believe in God is to discover Him, and when one truly discovers God, one becomes more certain of His existence than of anything else, one fears Him above all else.

Faith in God is like an earthquake, which shakes the human soul. The true believer sees the Day of Resurrection before it comes. Such belief engulfs one's entire being in the fear of God. This fear is manifested in all one's dealings with others. One does not humiliate the weak for one sees that they are God's envoys. One does not cover before the strong, because one sees that all are helpless before God. One accepts the truth when it is proven, for denying it would be like seeing heaven, and hell before one, then leaving the fresh gardens of paradise to plunge into the flames of hell.

From the above discussion, we know Almighty God exists everywhere and also we know how we should place our faith in Almighty God. Hence, now let us talk on the subject of Dua (prayer).

Dua and Its Exhortation

Dua (Supplication) in Arabic means "To call", and "To invoke". In the Islamic terminology, it means a humble prayer by a modest person to a superior. In another words, Dua means calling Almighty God for our needs and problems. It is a method of communication by means of which any soul on earth may present his/her requests to the Almighty God.

According to Ave Sina (his Persian name: Ibn Sina) in Kitab al-Najat: Dua (Prayer) is that which enables the soul to realize its divinity. Through prayer human beings worship absolute truth, and seek an eternal reward. Prayer is the foundation-stone of religion; and religion is the means by which the soul is purified of all that pollutes it. Prayer is the worship of the Creator of all things, the Supreme ruler of the entire world, the Source of all strength. Prayer is the adoration of the one whose being is necessary.

The Almighty God likes to help us and He Himself asks us to call Him, whenever we need His help.

Almighty God, the most Exalted, says in His Glorious Book:

"(Oh! Prophet) when my servants ask you about me, then (say to them) verily, I am near. I answer the prayer of supplicant when he beseeches me". (The holy Qur'an. 2: 186)

Many verses in the holy Qur'an lay stress on Dua, and explain the value of Dua. Also, there are numerous traditions of the holy Prophet

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(p.b.u.h) and Imams (p.b.u.t.) which stress on the importance of Dua in the life of a believer.

Almighty God openly invites us for invocation.

"And your God says: Call upon Me, I will answer you". (The holy Qur'an. 40: 60)

Almighty God loves the hands of His creatures that are stretched before Him with all humility, imploring Him to grant his/her prayers. Almighty God feels shy of returning those supplications unanswered and unattended. Saying of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) confirms it. It is narrated by Salman Farsi, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said, "Almighty God is modest as well as generous. When His servant spreads his hands before Him [for prayers], He feels shy to return them empty handed" [Abu Dawood, Tirmizi. and Ibne Ma'ja]. His response comes in three ways: Either He accepts, or differs, or sheds our sins; or elevates our position in Akhirah (Hereafter). But on the other hand we, human beings, due to our utter ignorance start complaining without understanding the logic, as it can be seen in the following story.

Shipwreck: Faith in Allah

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for Allah to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements, and

to store his few possessions. But then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived 'home' to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened; everything was lost. He was stunned with grief and despair. "Allah, why have you forsaken me?" he cried.

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him. "How did you know I was here?" asked the weary man of his rescuers. "We saw your smoke signal," they replied. The man's knees crumbled and he fell to the sandy ground and stretched out his arms towards the skies and cried out with joy: "O Almighty Allah, please forgive me for doubting you. You have shown me your great Mercy and I shall always put my trust and faith in You forever more."

It is easy to get discouraged when things are going bad. But we shouldn't lose heart in our trust and faith, because Allah is always near us, [***"...We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein."*** (*The holy Qur'an. 50:16*) In other words, it means that Allah is quicker to our heart than the blood which flows through our heart] even in the midst of pain and suffering. Remember, next time your little hut is burning to the ground it just may be a smoke signal that summons the Grace of Allah. For all the negative things we have to say to ourselves, Allah has a positive answer for it, if we sincerely have trust and faith in our hearts believe in only Him. Almighty God is very kind and magnanimous in showering His

limitless bounties and infinite mercy on His obedient slaves.

Just P.U.S.H!

This is a fictional story, only for the purpose of explanation and easy understanding. Because what we Muslims believe in Allah is different, as defined by Shaykh Saduq, one of the most distinguished scholars is as follows:

"Verily, Allah is One, Unique, nothing is like Him, He is Eternal; Hearing, Seeing, Omniscient, Living, Omnipotent, above every need. He can not be described in terms of substance, nor body, nor form, nor accident, nor line, nor surface, nor heaviness, nor lightness, nor color, nor movement, nor rest, nor time, nor space. He is above all the descriptions which can be applied to His creatures. He is away from both extremes: Neither He is just a non-entity (as atheists implied), nor He is just like other things. He is Existent, not like other existing things."

A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light, and the God told the man he had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The God explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. So, the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down; his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all of his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain.

Since the man was showing discouragement, the Adversary (Satan) decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the weary mind: "you have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't moved." Thus, giving the man the impression that the task was impossible and that he was a failure. These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man. Satan said, "Why kill yourself over this?" "Just put in your time, giving just the minimum effort; and that will be good enough."

That's what he planned to do, but decided to make it a matter of prayer and take his troubled thoughts to the God. "O' God," he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter. What is wrong? Why am I failing?"

God responded compassionately, "My Servant, when I asked you to serve Me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all of your strength, which you have done. Never did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. And now you come to Me with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown, your hands are callused from constant pressure, your legs have become massive and hard.

Through opposition you have grown much, and your abilities now surpass that which you used to have. Yet you haven't moved the

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rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. This you have done. Now I, my servant, will move the rock."

At times, when we hear a word from God, we tend to use our own intellect to decipher what He wants, when actually what God wants is just a simple obedience and faith in Him. By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is still God who moves mountains.

*When everything seems to go wrong ...
just P.U.S.H!*

*When the job gets you down ... just
P.U.S.H!*

*When people don't react the way you
think they should ... just P.U.S.H!*

*When your money is "gone" and the bills
are due ... just P.U.S.H!*

*When people just don't understand you ...
just P.U.S.H!*

*P + U + S + H = Pray + Until +
Something + Happens*

The Ultimate Truth of life!

One more fictional story, only for the purpose of explanation and easy understanding.

A man who is constantly in trouble, prays to God one day and due to his persistent and dedicated prayer, God appears in front of him and pleasingly tells him "my dear servant, do tell me what your doubts are about?"

The man happily starts to narrate this "Oh my merciful God, I have a vision, in which I

could see my past life and I have doubts on it which I wanted you to clear." Smilingly God tells him to carry on.

The man says thus "God, I saw that in my past, whenever I was happy and good things happened in my life, I could see two pairs of foot steps on the path of life. One of them is mine; I could not understand the other pair of footstep which was following me. Who does these belong to?"

God smiles and says "Dear, whenever you were having good time and happy, I would silently walk behind you allowing you to enjoy the fruits of your good deeds."

The man then asks "Ok, God, I saw that whenever am in troubles or sad times I saw two pairs of footsteps again! And this time, the second pair was beside me all along the path."

Calmly, God says "Dear, whenever you were in bad situations of life, I would walk beside you, guiding you through the tough times into the good times ahead."

The man, satisfied with the reply, then looked puzzled and sad; says "But God, I also had a vision that whenever am in the worst of troubles and the most toughest times I have ever faced in my life, I saw only one deep pair footsteps all along the path. Why have you deserted me when I need you the most?"

Now God looks at him lovingly and says: "Oh my slave, you could see only one pair of footsteps during the worst part of your life because those belonged to mine, and I was carrying you all along, on my shoulders!

Remember this, I never have and will never desert you, my dear slave." Thus saying The Almighty one disappears! The ultimate truth of life! Never doubt the Almighty God and remember that He never ever gives-up on us!

"If you would have trusted Allah (SWT) as HE (SWT) deserves to be trusted then HE (SWT) would have fed you the way HE (SWT) feeds the birds." (The holy Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h))

Few Observations about Dua

(A) Dua Is a Link:

The biggest benefit of Dua is that it is a kind of link between a man and Almighty. Man is in great need to make contact with Almighty. This need is present in all spheres of a man's life. One of these spheres in which he feels this need is his psychological sphere (i.e., his Nafs = soul).

1. How? What do we mean by psychological need?

A man must have a balance in his personality and character. A balance between his feeling weak and his feeling strong.

If a man feels weak and sees his soul weak, in face of difficulties and problems, he will not be able to face life and will crumble. At the same time, if a man is full of courage, then this leads him to be proud. So there must be a balance in the soul of a person.

2. How and when can you get this balance?

It can be obtained when you link yourself with God and get into contact with God.

Dua gives man strength when he feels weak, because such a man sees that all the troubles and all the forces against him are nothing compared to God and His strength.

But at the same time he doesn't get proud, because he who remembers God and His position, will feel weak and disgraced when he compares God's strength with his own.

For example, if you are in contact with a King or a ruler, you have confidence that he will help you, since he has strength, and at the same time when you compare his strength with your own, you won't be proud.

Thus Dua gives you confidence, and at the same time prevents you from being proud. This is the reason why most of the Duas of our 14 Infallibles (Masoomeen) (p.b.u.h.) talk of the greatness of God, and remind man of his weakness compared to Almighty God.

"O Allah! I ask you by Your mercy that encompasses everything. O Allah! You are strong and I am weak."

The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says: "The best form of worship is Dua". The laziest man is that who doesn't remember God by his lips or tongue, in spite of being healthy and idle.

The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says: "The most incapable man is the one who neglects Dua".

Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) says: "The best deed toward Allah is Dua".

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Imam Baqir (p.b.u.h.) says: "Do not get bored with Dua as it is very highly ranked by Allah".

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) says: "Increase Dua because it is the key to all mercy and fulfiller of every need".

The Power of Prayer

Muniba, a young Muslim university student, was home for the summer. She had gone to visit some sisters one evening and the time passed quickly as each shared their various experiences of the past year.

She ended up staying longer than she had planned.

Evening came and Muniba had to walk home alone, but she wasn't afraid because it was a small town and she lived only a few blocks away. As she walked along under the tall elm trees, Muniba asked "God" to keep her safe from harm and danger. When she reached the alley, which was a short cut to her house, she decided to take it.

However, halfway down the alley, she noticed a man standing at the end, as though he was waiting for her. She became uneasy and began to pray, asking for "God's" protection. Instantly a comforting feeling of quietness and security wrapped around her; she felt as though someone was walking with her. When she reached the end of the alley, she walked right past the man and arrived home safely.

The following day, she read in the paper that a young girl had been assaulted in the same

alley, just twenty minutes after she had been there.

Feeling overwhelmed by this tragedy and the fact that it could have been her, she began to weep. Thanking God for her safety and to help this young woman, she decided to go to the police station. She felt she could recognize the man, so she told them her story. The police asked her if she would be willing to look at a line up to see if she could identify him.

She agreed and immediately pointed out the man she had seen in the alley the night before.

When the man was told he had been identified, he immediately broke down and confessed.

The officer thanked Muniba for her bravery and asked if there was anything they could do for her, she asked if they would ask the man one question.

Muniba was curious as to why he had not attacked her? When the policeman asked him he answered, "Because she wasn't alone. She had two tall men walking on either side of her." Subhan Allah (Glory be to God)!

Never Underestimate The Power of Prayer!

He, who loses money, loses much

He, who loses a friend, loses much more

He, who loses FAITH, loses ALL

(B) Dua Is a Weapon:

It is essential that a man recites Dua at all times, especially in this era. The need for Dua is

greater today, because we are living in dangerous conditions. In the face of all this difficulties, we must recite Dua constantly.

Of course, we must act too. In Hadith – "A prayer of supplicant without action is same as a bow without a string". But action without God's help is also of no use.

Dua plus action shall help us. Dua not only can uplift us spiritually, but it gives us strength as well. As The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "Dua is a faithful people's weapon".

The Rope: Prayer without Action

Another fictional story, to understand prayer without complete faith and action!

The night fell heavy in the heights of the mountains and the man could not see anything. All was black. Zero visibility, and the moon and the stars were covered by the clouds. As he was climbing only a few feet away from the top of the mountain, he slipped and fell in to the air, falling at great speed. He could only see black spots as he went down, and the terrible sensation of being sucked by gravity.

He kept falling and in the moments of great fear, it came to his mind all the good and bad episodes of his life. He was thinking now about how close death was getting, when all of a sudden he felt the rope tied to his waist pull him very hard. His body was hanging in the air.

Only the rope was holding him and in that moment of stillness he had no other choice other than to scream: "Help me God". All of a sudden a

deep voice coming from the sky answered, "What do you want me to do?"

"Save me God".

"Do you really think I can save you?"

"Of course I believe You can."

"Then cut the rope tied to your waist."

There was a moment of silence and the man decided to hold on to the rope with all his strength. The rescue team tells that the next day a climber was found dead and frozen his body hanging from a rope. His hands holding tight to it, only one foot away from the ground!

Hence, a prayer without sincere action and full trust is no use. How attached we are to our rope will we let go? Don't ever doubt about the words of God. We should never say that He has forgotten us or abandoned us.

The holy Qur'an says, "Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the evil ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein (Forever)." (2:257)

Prayer without Belief

A tale is told about a small town that had historically been "dry," (no alcohol sold) but then a local businessman decided to build a tavern.

A group of Christians from a local church were concerned and planned an all-night prayer meeting to ask God to intervene.

It just so happened that shortly thereafter lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground. The owner of the bar sued the church, claiming that the prayers of the congregation were responsible, but the church hired a lawyer to argue in court that they were not responsible.

The presiding judge, after his initial review of the case, stated that "No matter how this case comes out, one thing is clear. The tavern owner believes in prayer and the Christians do not."

(C) Beseech Allah for Everything and on Every Time:

One other observation is that we should beseech Allah's help to all our serious and trivial problems. It is true that a man should ask Allah for everything, even for the salt of his table, but important things come first.

Our Prophets asked for victory, asked for truth to win. The followers of Prophet Moses (p.b.u.h.) used to ask for steadfastness, and patience against troubles. Everybody should ask for Islam's victory.

Dua should go with the time, and many scholars say that Dua is not that which is written

in books only, but a man is allowed to pray the way he wants.

Dua is a contact with Almighty God, so make the contact the way you feel best. Of course, the Duas of our Imams (p.b.u.t.) are more comprehensive and effective, but making contact yourself with your own words and thoughts is allowed too.

Express your inner feelings to Almighty God. Our Imams (p.b.u.t.) use to pray for social conditions and political conditions that they lived in.

Imam Ali (p.b.u.h.) would pray against Moawiya and Amr Ibn Aas. Imam Hussain (p.b.u.h.) prayed against the army of Bani Umayya on the day of Ashura.

If the Dua in books doesn't express what you feel, go ahead and express your feelings from the bottom of your heart, with choking voice with all devotion and concentration.

How Much a Prayer Weighs?

A poorly dressed lady with a look of defeat on her face, walked into a grocery store. She approached the owner of the store in a most humble manner and asked if he would let her charge a few groceries. She softly explained that her husband was very ill and unable to work, they had seven children and they needed food. The grocer scoffed at her and requested that she leave his store.

Visualizing the family needs, she said: "Please, sir! I will bring you the money just as soon as I can." He told her he could not give her

credit, as she did not have a charge account at his store.

Standing beside the counter was a customer who overheard the conversation between the two. The customer walked forward and told the grocer that he would stand good for whatever she needed for her family.

The grocer said in a very reluctant voice, "Do you have a grocery list?"

She replied, "Yes sir"

"OK" he said, "put your grocery list on the scales and whatever your grocery list weighs, I will give you that amount in groceries." She hesitated a moment with a bowed head, then she reached into her purse and took out a piece of paper and scribbled something on it. She then laid the piece of paper on the scale carefully with her head still bowed.

The eyes of the grocer and the customer showed amazement when the scales went down and stayed down. The grocer, staring at the scales, turned slowly to the customer and said grudgingly, "I can't believe it."

The customer smiled and the grocer started putting the groceries on the other side of the scales. The scale did not balance so he continued to put more and more groceries on them until the scales would hold no more.

The grocer stood there in utter disgust. Finally, he grabbed the piece of paper from the scales and looked at it with greater amazement. It was not a grocery list; it was a prayer, which said: "O' God! You know my needs and I am leaving this in Your hands."

The grocer gave her the groceries that he had gathered and stood in stunned silence. The lady thanked him and left the store. The customer handed a fifty-dollar (\$50) bill to the grocer and said, "It was worth every penny of it." Only God knows how much a prayer weighs.

Pray to Almighty God

The holy Qur'an says:

"And when affliction touches a man, he calls on Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove his affliction from him, he passes on as though he had never called on Us on account of an affliction that touched him". (10:12)

Almighty brings problems so that we may establish contact with Him, but some people even don't do this, even if they are faced by problems as we can from the following story.

Why So Much Pain and Suffering in the World?

A man went to a barbershop to have his hair cut as always. He started to have a good conversation with the barber who attended him. They talked about so many things on various subjects.

Suddenly, they touched the subject of God. The barber said: "Look man, I don't believe that God exists as you say so."

"Why do you say that?" asked the client.

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Well, it's so easy; you just have to go out in the street to realize that God does not exist. Oh, tell me, if God existed, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God existed, there would be neither suffering nor pain. "I can't think of a God who permits all of these things."

The client stopped for a moment thinking but he didn't want to respond so as to prevent an argument.

The barber finished his job and the client went out of the shop. Just after he left the barbershop, he saw a man in the street with a long hair and beard (it seems that it had been a long time since he had his cut and he looked so untidy). Then the client again entered the barbershop and he said to the barber: know what? "Barbers do not exist."

"How come they don't exist?" asked the barber. "Well I am here and I am a barber."

"No!" The client exclaimed! "They don't exist because if they did there would be no people with long hair and beard like that man who walks in the street."

"Ah, barbers do exist, what happens is that people do not go to them."

"Exactly!" Affirmed the client.

"That's the point. God does exist, what happens is people don't go to Him and do not look for Him that's why there's so much pain and suffering in the world."

(D) Dua with Congregation (Jama' ah):

Dua of a congregation is better than an individual's Dua. The people should get used to praying together.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (p.b.u.h.) says: "If 40 people gather together and pray, Almighty shall certainly accept at least one man's Dua".

Some people in the congregation may be good and sincere, and because of them, Dua of all the rest shall be accepted.

The Ship: Our blessings Are the Fruits of Other prayer

A voyaging ship was wrecked during a storm at sea and only two of the men on it were able to swim to a small, desert like island.

The two survivors, not knowing what else to do, agreed that they had no other recourse but to pray to God. However, to find out whose prayer was more powerful, they agreed to divide the territory between them and stay on opposite sides of the island.

The first thing they prayed for was food. The next morning, the first man saw a fruit-bearing tree on his side of the land, and he was able to eat its fruit. The other man's parcel of land remained barren. After a week, the first man was lonely and he decided to pray for a wife. The next day, another ship was wrecked, and the only survivor was a woman who swam to his side of the land. On the other side of the island, there was nothing.

Soon the first man prayed for a house, clothes, and more food. The next day, like magic,

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all of these were given to him. However, the second man still had nothing.

Finally, the first man prayed for a ship, so that he and his wife could leave the island. In the morning, he found a ship docked at his side of the island. The first man boarded the ship with his wife and decided to leave the second man on the island. He considered the other man unworthy to receive God's blessings, since none of his prayers had been answered.

As the ship was about to leave, the first man heard a voice from heaven booming, "Why are you leaving your companion on the island?"

"My blessings are mine alone, since I was the one who prayed for them," the first man answered. "His prayers were all unanswered and so he does not deserve anything."

"You are mistaken!" the voice rebuked him. "He had only one prayer, which I answered. If not for that, you would not have received any of my blessings."

"Tell me," the first man asked the voice, "What did he pray for that I should owe him anything?"

"He prayed that all your prayers be answered."

Hence, for all we know, our blessings are not the fruits of our prayers alone, but those of another praying for us.

Beg not from the Beggars:

It is Allah (SWT) who is the Emperor of all emperors on this earth.

Once Akbar, the Emperor of India was riding his horse in the countryside of Agra, he felt hungry and asked a peasant for some food. The peasant believing him to be an ordinary traveler brought some food and cold water and did his best to make his stay in the house comfortable.

When the mighty Emperor was refreshed and was ready to leave, he told the peasant: My good man, I am the Emperor of India. If you are ever in need of any assistance, please come to my palace in Agra without any hesitation. I am pleased by your hospitality and will be glad to be of help to you in every way I can?

After some time, the peasant fell on hard times. Famine had set in his village and food was hard to find. There was no work for the farmers. The peasant remembered the words of the Emperor; he decided to go to Agra and asked for an interview with Akbar, the Emperor of India.

Peasant was immediately ushered into the Emperor's private chambers, where he found to his astonishment that the Emperor of India who had just finished his prayers was supplicating to Allah (SWT), and with raised hands was begging Allah (SWT) numerous favors for himself, his family and his subjects.

Soon, the Emperor finished his prayers and his eyes fell on the peasant who was waiting to meet him. Emperor recognized him immediately as the same man who had attended to his needs during his journey to the countryside. The Emperor greeted him warmly and had him seated by his side, and humbly asked him if there was anything that he could do for him? O mighty

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Emperor, said the peasant. Will you please tell me what were you doing just now? Why not certainly? Akbar, the Emperor of India said, I was asking from Allah (SWT) help in solving many difficulties that I face while ruling my great empire, and for His aid in keeping my kingdom in peace.

Peasant said: Thank you very much, O mighty Emperor. Now, I seek your permission to travel back to my village. The Emperor was astonished at the reply of the peasant. He said, why? What's the matter? He exclaimed. Did you not come here to ask for my help?

The Peasant answered him politely, but in a determined manner: O mighty Emperor of India, I have learnt a great lesson today! I will beg at the same door as the One before which you were begging. For my Lord, though you are the greatest among all the kings of India, I find that you are a poor beggar. And, for me to beg favors from a beggar would bring me disgrace from the Almighty who is the Emperor of all emperors on this earth.

Moral of the Story: If you ask in Prayer, ask only from Allah (SWT), and if you seek help, seek it only from Allah (SWT).

Conclusion

In the end, it has to be said that the so called ups and downs are a necessary part of our lives, which are blessings in disguise; for they can help us earn greater rewards in the Hereafter. Man on the contrary puts up a shameful performance:

"And as for man, when his Lord tries him, then treats him with honor and makes him lead an easy life, he says: My Lord honors me. But when He tries him (differently), then straitens to him his means of subsistence, he says: My Lord has disgraced me." (The holy Qur'an, 89: 15-16)

We do not have to think as to what we should do in times of difficulty (or in times of joy for that matter). The holy Qur'an has already done the job of identifying a path for us; we merely have to realize what it is and then tread that path:

"Truly man was created very impatient. Fretful when evil touches him. And niggardly when good reaches him. Not so those devoted to Prayer. Those who remain steadfast on their prayer." (The holy Qur'an, 70: 19-23)

Also:

"O you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer; for God is with those who patiently persevere." (The holy Qur'an 2: 153)

Finally, imaging our Solar system and comparing different planets of it make us understand how small and insignificant we really are in the overall scheme of things. Certainly puts the Creator on a different level!