

Whispered Conversations with Allah

One of the greatest forms of pleasure and tranquility for a human being is closeness to the Almighty. There is nothing that can set a human being at rest like the remembrance of Allah. As stated in the Holy Qur'an, *Surely in the remembrance of Allah do the hearts find rest (13:28)* Remembrance of Allah can take many forms. Salat, Dua, Dhikr, Tasbeeh, are some of its various forms. Each has their own etiquette and effects.

Munajaat is a form of Dua that is distinguished by the closeness and intimacy it creates between the reciter and Allah. It is a secret conversation with the Almighty, often referred to as a whispered prayer. A *Munajaat* is a deep expression of the connection that a believer has with Allah, and it conveys the innermost feelings and yearnings of the human being. Its effect is profound, and brings immense pleasure and joy to a believer. In Hadith al-Qudsi, Almighty Allah tells Prophet Dawood (a), *O Dawood, With Me (as your Lord) be happy, and through My Remembrance seek pleasure, and through My Munajaat find joy.*

Etiquette of Munajaat

The following are some important qualities of a Munajaat .

Solitude. According to Hadith munajaat is done in private, away from other people. When a believer is alone, with none to witness him and hear him, he is most sincere. What he says and does is only for the pleasure of Allah. There is no chance of being affected by the desire to look good in the eyes of others. Also, he is not afraid to humble himself and weep. There is great pleasure to be derived from a secret conversation with Allah. Imam Ali (a) says: *Whoever seeks privacy with his Lord, he will achieve a warmth that helps him resist evil, and a life that is deeply gratifying.*

Night-time The night is the best time for worship and praying to Allah. According to Hadith al-Qudsi, whoever says he loves Allah but sleeps the entire night without worshipping Allah, has lied. The night is a time when people need to sleep to refresh themselves from the labor of the day. But those who love Allah forego part of their sleep and use that time to talk to Allah. Imam Ali Zaynul Abidin (a) says in a dua he used to recite before Salat Layl: *O Allah, the eyes are sleeping, and the stars have set, and You are the Ever Living, the Self subsisting. The kings have closed their door, and the guards have stood outside them (to forbid entry), but Your door is open for those who ask. I have come to You so You look at me with mercy, O most merciful.*

Allah is greatly pleased with the one who calls to Him in the middle of the night when most people are asleep. A hadith of the Holy Prophet (s) says; *Whoever talks to his Lord privately in the darkness of the middle of the night, and whispers to Him, Allah establishes His light in his heart. When he says O my Lord, Allah answers him and says, Labbaik O my servant, ask me and I will give you, rely on me and I will be sufficient for you. Then Allah turns to His angels and says; O my angels look at My servant. He has turned to Me in the middle of the dark night, while the idle ones are playing and the heedless ones are sleeping. Bear witness that I have forgiven him.*

Emotion A munajat is a conversation that is very special. It comes from the depth of the heart and makes the reciter open his heart to His Lord. A mixture of deep emotions is felt by the reciter as he talks to Allah.

These emotions could include:

- a) **Grief at his sins.** *My God, offenses have clothed me in the garment of lowliness, separation from You has wrapped me in the clothing of my misery, my dreadful crimes have deadened my heart . . . I ask of You O Forgiver of great sins . . . to overlook my ruinous misdeeds and cover my disgraceful secret thoughts.* (Munajaat of the Repenters)
- b) **Yearning for the pleasure of Allah.** *You are my object, none other . . . meeting You is the gladness of my eye, joining You is the wish of my soul, towards You is my yearning, in love for You my passionate longing, in inclining towards You my fervent craving . . . in whispered prayer to You I find my repose and ease.* (Munajaat of the Devotees)
- c) **Love for Allah.** *My God who can have tasted the sweetness of Your love then wanted another in place of You, who can have become intimate with Your closeness, then sought removal from You? (Munajaat of those who love Allah)*
- d) **Fear of his Fate.** *My God, Will You punish me after my faith in You, drive me far away after my love for You, deprive me while I hope for Your mercy . . . would that I knew.* (Munajaat of the Fearful)
- e) **Hope in the mercy of Allah.** *My God; I have fastened my hand to the skirt of Your generosity, I have stretched forth my expectation towards reaching Your gifts . . . O He who is the asylum of every flier, the hope of every seeker.* (Munajat of the Hopeful)
- f) **Anger at himself for straying** *My God, to You I complain of a soul that commands towards evil, rushes towards wrong, is eager to disobey You. . . . My God to You I complain of a heart that is hard . . . and of an eye that is too indifferent to weep in fear of You.* (Munajaat of the Complainers)

An excellent source of Munajaat is the fifteen Munajaat in Sahifa as-Sajjadiyyah. These can be found towards the end of the book, and are highly inspirational. When read with understanding and attention, the Munajaat cannot fail to affect the reciter and increase spirituality and love of Allah. The above excerpts of Munajaat are from this collection.

May the Almighty help us to do Munajaat with Him during this holy month.

