

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Power of Prayer

"If Prayer were available in pill form, no pharmacy could stock enough of it." Dr. Dale Matthews of Georgetown University

Dr. Matthews relates a humorous story: "A vivacious--and vexing--lady visited my medical office often, armed with a beguiling smile, a steel wit, and intractable pain from arthritis. Each visit brought forth a languorous litany of incurable woe: She had sampled every painkiller in the pharmacopoeia, with scant success. "Is there anything that does help you?" I asked one day, in desperation.

"Faith and prayer!" she exclaimed. "And singing in the church choir!" Faith, prayer...and singing? Are these listed in the Physician's Desk Reference? Should they be? Karl Marx dismissed religion as "the opiate of the people." Is religion,

like codeine and other opiates, an effective "drug" for pain and other disorders? What's the proper dose? Are there side effects?"

We know prayer is important. If it wasn't, it wouldn't be prescribed for the believers five times every day by God in the Quran. Just as modern science has confirmed so many other miracles from scripture, scientific studies are now showing the overwhelming power of prayer in regards to health and medicine. While the results of studies dealing with intercessory prayer - groups of people praying for patients - have had very mixed results, studies looking at individual prayer have overwhelmingly proven the power that prayer and a strong religious faith have regarding one's health and longevity.

- A 6-year Duke University study of 4,000 people (of different

faiths) over 64 years old found that the relative risk of dying was 46% lower for those who frequently attended religious services. The same study showed that those who prayed regularly had significantly lower blood pressure than the less religious. Also, those who attended services regularly had healthier immune systems.

- At Dartmouth Medical Center, they have found that the best predictor of survival among 232 heart surgery patients was the degree to which they drew comfort and strength from religious faith and prayer.

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- **The Prayer**

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became long-term survivors were more likely to be those involved in

religious practices and volunteer work.

- In another study overseen by Duke University researchers, subjects who both attended worship services and regularly prayed had lower blood pressure than a control group. In another study, women in a risk group for various complications of pregnancy were less likely to suffer problems, such as low-birth-weight babies, if they prayed.
- It is been shown in medical studies conducted all over that prayer and faith have been shown to speed recovery from depression, alcoholism, hip surgery, drug addiction, stroke, rheumatoid arthritis, heart attacks and bypass surgery.

As illustrated in these studies, all conducted by highly regarded medical institutions, petitionary prayer (praying for yourself), continually shows tangible benefits. The most dramatic statistics showing the benefits of prayer have to do with a person's mental health, and more specifically, depression. Prayer helps with everyday depression, depression related to an illness, depression related to growing old, depression related to loss, etc.

For instance, one study of 1,000 seriously ill men in Veterans Administration hospitals found that "religious coping," including prayer, decreased depression, even though it did not prolong life span. A study of self-described Christian patients found that prayer accelerated recovery from depression caused by illness; a study of self-described Muslims found that prayer accelerated recovery from "anxiety disorder," a mild form of clinical depression suffered by many people. Numerous other academic studies have also found that prayer reduces depression.

The fact that prayer can have health benefits now appears sufficiently well supported by research data that the American Cancer Society recently declared, "Sometimes answers come from prayer when medical science has none." Some

physicians and academics protested when the American Cancer Society made that statement. With the ever-growing body of evidence that prayer is good medicine, however, they are finding it harder and harder to argue. Studies by Dr. Herbert Benson of Harvard University have shown that inducing a relaxed, prayerful state of mind is good both for health and immune system response. He says, "I view the benefits of prayer mainly as psychological or social, not as a supernatural effect, though of course the research can't rule that out. All the research can show is that prayer sometimes really does confer benefits." Again, this shows that even skeptics or doctors and researchers who may not be religious themselves cannot ignore the scientific data that has been collected regarding the power of prayer.

Martin Seligman, a former president of the American Psychological Association, has suggested that prayer helps recovery from illness and depression by focusing the mind on things to be grateful for in life. God tells us over and over in the Quran to be grateful for all of the amazing gifts He has given us. Being appreciative and thanking God not only pleases God, but makes us realize how lucky we all are, AND it has health benefits!

OK, so besides all the clinical studies proving the importance of prayer, why should we do it? Because God says so! If we look to the Quran, we are told to implore God, to pray, to be grateful for His gifts. We are given examples of those who have implored God and who have been saved. We see the example of Noah, who *"called and we responded to him. We saved him and his family from the great disaster."* (21:76). Later Job turned to God and, *"he called upon his Lord, 'the devil has afflicted me with hardship and pain'"* God responded to his prayer with *"Strike the ground with your foot. A spring will give you healing and a drink."* (38:41-42).

As we know and can see from such examples, God responds to prayers. Even when it may seem like

your prayers are being ignored, they are not. God knows what is best and is in control of everything. By praying to God, even if you are praying for something other than what He has planned for you, you are acknowledging that God is the one who controls all things. God knows what we do not.

When My servants ask you about Me, I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me. The people shall respond to Me and believe in Me, in order to be guided. (2:186)

Karinya

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The Gift

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted. As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautifully wrapped gift box. Curious, but somewhat disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible, with the young man's name embossed in gold. Angry, he raised his voice to his father and said, "With all your money you give me a Bible?" and stormed out of the house, leaving the Bible.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go to him. He had not seen him since that graduation day.

Before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away, and willed all of his possessions to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care of things. When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search through his father's important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago.

With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. His father had carefully underlined a verse, Matt. 7:11, "*And if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father which is in Heaven, give to those who ask Him?*" As he read those words, a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words PAID IN FULL.

How many times do we miss God's blessings because they are not packaged as we expected? Walk in Peace, look for the blessings in all.

Anonymous

[Quran 14:34] *And He gives you all kinds of things that you implore Him for. If you count GOD's blessings, you can never encompass them. Indeed, the human being is transgressing, unappreciative.*

Psalms 1

1 Happy is the man who has not followed the counsel of the wicked,
or taken the path of sinners, or joined the company of the insolent;

2 rather, the teaching of the Lord is his delight, and he studies that teaching day and night.

3 He is like a tree planted beside streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season, whose foliage never fades, and whatever it produces thrives,

4 Not so the wicked; rather, they are like chaff that wind blows away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not survive judgment, nor will sinners, in the assembly of the righteous.

6 For the Lord cherishes the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked is doomed.

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Comments from an incarcerated Brother

As-salamu Alaykum!

I seek refuge in Allah from Shaytaanir rajiyim [*Satan the rejected*], I seek refuge in Allah from being misleading and from being misled.

Glory to be Allah Most High, full of Grace and mercy, who created Humanity (both male and female) and gave them intelligence.

Alhamdulillah [*praise God*] I am receiving your bulletin, Submitters Perspective. Brothers and sisters at Masjid Tucson.

My concern is thus: I come to Islam through many different venues. My journey began with the Nation of Islam, then to the Lost and Found Nation of Islam. The fast talking, quick tongue and whimsical language of the Five Percenters dazzled and attracted me, holding my attention until seemingly in depth and well researched information circulated by The Anaaru Allah Community directed my attention back to the scriptures. Alhamdulillah it was the challenge issued by the leader of his group to prove them superficial by using the scriptures that exposed them as having no substance, nothing really concrete to stand on outside what he borrowed and plagiarized from others. I skipped through Bawa

Muhayyadiyn and Sufism with only a sideward glance. I believe that spiritualism and mysticism are not the same and my search is for spiritualism.

Finally I came to Sunni Islam where I spent the most time learning about the Quran, *Sunnah* for the Prophet, History, *Shari'ah*, *Qiyas*, *Fiqh*, etc. But once again I was unmoored because I was realizing that in too many instances ahadith, which ironically the Prophet supposedly instructed his companions not to keep but were kept anyway, were being consulted and adhered to more than the Quran, even where the Quran gave explicit instructions. Thus again my journey resumes, only this time with a new twist.

I am in the habit of reading negativity, not any more, nor everything with a flashy title. Once I ridded my mind of all the trash that I had taken in I sought to fill in certain areas with good, solid information.... In my search for a True Islam, a guide to lift me outside the core of my physical existence and allow my spiritual to reach and engulf the totality of its purpose what does pursuing this line of thinking to do my faith in Islam?

To switch gears for a moment, I enjoyed the latest issue of Submitters Perspective entitled "Feeling Faith"

by Amir Kia. Alhamdulillah, it touched inside areas dealing directly with my present disposition and struggle for equilibrium. Thus my concerns remain: Where am I to anchor and be assured that I will not become once again unmoored? Alhamdulillah, Islam is definitely the system of life for me but there are so many sects and ideologies, and with the different so-called schools of thought, and the many different translations of the Quran, who can be sure that what he is following is rightly guided?

Alhamdulillah, I have heard nothing but good about the community in Tucson, Arizona, but as a young Muslim I aspire to learn more. As mentioned in my previous letter I would greatly appreciate a copy of Rashad Khalifa's translation of the Quran. InshaAllah maybe there is someone in the community who has one they can donate or a used one the community could donate... InshaAllah you will be able to assist me. I pray Allah to bestow upon you a look that is merciful.

As-salamu Alaykum!

Andre W.