36902 - How to Make Du’a

the question

What is the etiquette of making du’a and what are the obligatory duties and Sunnahs thereof? How should it start and how should it end? Can we ask for worldly things before asking with regard to the Hereafter?
How correct is it to raise the hands when making du’a, and how should it be done if it is correct?

Summary of answer

This is how to make du’a:
1. Believing in Tawhid.
2. Sincerity towards Allah Alone in making du’a.
3. Ask of Allah by His most beautiful names.
4. Praising Allah as He deserves.
5. Sending blessings upon the Prophet.
6. Facing the qiblah.
7. Raising the hands.
8. Asking frequently.
9. Having certain faith that Allah will respond.
10. Saying du’a three times.
11. Ensuring that one’s food and clothing are good/lawful.
12. Saying du’a silently.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Du’a is worship

Allah loves to be asked, and He encourages that in all things. He is angry with the one who does not ask of Him and He encourages His slaves to ask of Him. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And your Lord said: “Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation).” [Ghafir 40:60]

Du’a is very important in Islam , so much so that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Du’a is worship.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3372; Abu Dawud, 1479; Ibn Majah, 3828; classed as sahih by al-Albani in Sahih al-Tirmidhi, 2590)

The etiquette of du’a

1. The one who is making du’a should believe in Tawhid with regard to the divinity, Lordship, names and attributes of Allah. His heart should be filled with Tawhid. In order for Allah to respond to the du’a, it is essential that the person should be responding to his Lord by obeying Him and not disobeying Him. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright.” [al-Baqarah 2:186]

2. Sincerity towards Allah Alone in making du’a . Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him).” [al-Bayyinah 98:5]

Du’a is worship, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, so sincerity (ikhlas) is a condition of its being accepted.

3. We should ask of Allah by His most beautiful names . Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names.” [al-A’raf 7:180]

4. We should praise Allah as He deserves before we call upon Him. Al-Tirmidhi (3476) narrated that Fadalah ibn ‘Ubayd (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Whilst the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sitting, a man came in and prayed and said, “O Allah, forgive me and have mercy on me.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “You have been too hasty, O worshipper. When you have prayed and are sitting, praise Allah as He deserves to be praised, and send blessings upon me, then call upon Him.” According to another version (3477): “When one of you prays, let him start with praise of Allah, then let him send blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), then let him ask whatever he likes after that.” Then another man prayed after that, and he praised Allah and sent blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “O worshipper, ask and you will be answered.” (Classed as sahih by al-Albani in Sahih al-Tirmidhi, 2765, 2767)

5. Sending blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Every du’a is kept back until you send blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).” Narrated by al-Tabarani in al-Awsat, 1/220; classed as sahٍh by al-Albani in Sahih al-Jami’, 4399.

6. Facing towards the qiblah. Muslim (1763) narrated that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: On the day of Badr, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) looked at the mushrikin, who were one thousand strong, and his Companions numbered three hundred and nineteen. Then the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) turned to face the qiblah, then he stretched forth his hands and started to cry out to his Lord: “O Allah, grant me what You have promised me, O Allah, give me what You have promised me. O Allah, if this small band of Muslims perishes, You will not be worshipped on earth.” He kept on crying out to his Lord, stretching forth his hands, facing towards the qiblah, until his cloak fell

from his shoulders…

Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Sharh Muslim: This shows that it is mustahabb to face towards the qiblah when making du'a, and to raise the hands.

7. Raising the hands . Abu Dawud (1488) narrated that Salman (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Your Lord, may He be blessed and exalted, is Kind and Most Generous, and He is too kind to let His slave, if he raises his hands to Him, bring them back empty." Classed as sahih by Shaykh al-Albani in Sahih Abi Dawud, 1320.

The palm of the hand should be raised heavenwards, in the manner of a humble beggar who hopes to be given something. Abu Dawud (1486) narrated from Malik ibn Yasar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "When you ask of Allah, ask of Him with the palms of your hands, not with the backs of them." Classed as sahih by Shaykh al-Albani in Sahih Abi Dawud, 1318.

Should the hands be held together when raising them or should there be a gap between them?

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) stated in al-Sharh al-Mumti' (4/25) that they should be held together. What he said is: "As for separating them and holding them far apart from one another, there is no basis for that in the Sunnah or in the words of the scholars." End quote.

8. Having certain faith that Allah will respond, and focusing with proper presence of mind, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Call upon Allah while you are certain of a response, and remember that Allah will not answer a du'a that comes from a negligent and heedless heart." Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3479; classed as hasan by Shaykh al-Albani in Sahih al-Tirmidhi, 2766.

9. Asking frequently. A person should ask his Lord for whatever he wants of the good things in this world and the Hereafter, and he should beseech Allah in du'a, and not seek a hasty response, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The slave will receive a

response so long as his du’a does not involve sin or severing of family ties, and so long as he is not hasty.” It was said, “What does being hasty mean?” He said: “When he says, ‘I made du’a and I made du’a, and I have not seen any response,’ and he gets frustrated and stops making du’a.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6340; Muslim, 2735.

10. He should be firm in his du’a, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “No one of you should say, ‘O Allah, forgive me if You wish, O Allah, have mercy on me if You wish’; he should be firm in his asking, for Allah cannot be compelled.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6339; Muslim, 2679.

11. Beseeching, humility, hope and fear. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret.” [al-A'raf 7:55]

“Verily, they used to hasten to do good deeds, and they used to call on Us with hope and fear, and used to humble themselves before Us.” [al-Anbiya’ 21:90]

“And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear and without loudness in words in the mornings and in the afternoons.” [al-A'raf 7:205]

12. Saying du’as three times. Al-Bukhari (240) and Muslim (1794) narrated that ‘Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Whilst the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was praying at the Ka’bah, Abu Jahl and his companions were sitting nearby. They had slaughtered a camel the previous day, and Abu Jahl said: “Which of you will go and get the abdominal contents of the camel of Banu So and So and put it on the back of Muhammad when he prostrates?” The worst of the people went and got it, and when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prostrated, he placed it between his shoulders. They started laughing, leaning against one another. I was standing there watching, and if I had had any power, I would have lifted it from the back of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) remained in prostration, not lifting his head, until someone went and told Fatimah. She came with Juwayriyah, and lifted it from him, then she turned to them and rebuked them. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) had finished his prayer, he raised his voice and prayed against them – and when he made du’a or asked of Allah he would repeat it three times – and he said: “O Allah, punish Quraysh” three times. When they heard his voice, they stopped laughing and were afraid because of his du’a. Then he said, “O Allah, punish Abu Jahl ibn Hisham, ‘Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and ‘Uqbah ibn Abu Mu’ayt,” and he mentioned the seventh but I cannot remember who it was. By the One Who sent Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the truth, I saw those whom he had named slain on the day of Badr, then they were dragged and thrown into the well, the well of Badr.

13. Ensuring that one’s food and clothing are good (i.e., halal). Muslim (1015) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “O people, Allah is Good and does not accept anything but that which is good. Allah enjoins upon the believers the same as He enjoined upon the Messengers. He says (interpretation of the meaning):

‘O (you) Messengers! Eat of the Tayyibat [all kinds of Halal (lawful) foods which Allah has made lawful (meat of slaughtered eatable animals, milk products, fats, vegetables, fruits)] and do righteous deeds. Verily, I am Well-Acquainted with what you do.’ [al-Muminun 23:51]

‘O you who believe (in the Oneness of Allah — Islamic Monotheism)! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with.’ [al-Baqarah 2:172]

Then he mentioned a man who travels for a long distance and is disheveled and dusty, and he stretches forth his hands towards heaven saying, ‘O Lord, O Lord,’ but his food is haram, his drink is haram, his clothing is haram, he has been nourished with haram, so how can he be responded to?

Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Ensuring that one’s food, drink and clothing are halal, and that one is nourished with halal, is a means of having one’s du’a answered. End quote.

14. Saying du’a silently and not out loud. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret.” [al-A'raf 7:55]

And Allah praised His slave Zakariyya (peace be upon him) by saying (interpretation of the meaning):

“When he called to his Lord (Allah) a call in secret.” [Maryam 19:3]

We have also discussed du’a and specific means by which a person may receive a response, as well as the etiquette of du’a and the times and places when a response may be hoped for, the state in which a person should be when making du’a, impediments to a response to du’a and the types of response. All of that may be found in the answer to question no. 5113 .

And Allah knows best.