Why Do Our Prayers Go Unanswered? March 6, 2026

wa-iy yamsaskal-lahu biḍurrin falā kāshife lahuu illāhu. wa-iy yamsaska bikhayrin fahuwa ʿalā kulli shayin qadīr. Surah Al-An'am 6:17

And if God should touch you with misfortune, there is none who could remove it but He; and if He should touch you with good fortune none can take it away. It is He who has the power to will anything

We often find ourselves wondering why our prayers seem to go unanswered. As we witness the suffering of the innocent and see aggressors continuously destroy lives with apparent impunity, we cry out to Allah-u Ta'ala for justice. In the face of atrocities, our hearts naturally seek divine intervention for the wrongs being committed.

As we face oppression and we struggle to defend the innocent, and as we go over the same cycle of trials over and over again, we are forced to confront a difficult question. Why, despite Allah's promises to answer our prayers, do our prayers seem to go unanswered, and why does our condition seem to remain unchanged? Is it a lack of ritual devotion, or have we been heedless of our broader responsibilities? When we look inside we awaken to a sobering truth: we have reduced our religion to mere rituals and forgotten our social responsibilities. When we refuse to act to fulfill the needs of one another—when we have the power to do so—how can we expect Him to manifest His miracles that lie within His infinite power? Divine help is often waiting for our own hands to move first. Divine assistance does not replace human effort; it is often the response to it.

As sad as it sounds, as Rasulallah (saws) predicted, we have become like straws floating on water: always divided and pushed around by the smallest currents. We do not choose to swim together. Even the smallest differences separate us from each other so that we are like drifting straws. We must understand that we do not have the luxury of fighting over small differences anymore; we need to eliminate them. We must stop looking for reasons to accuse one another, and start looking for reasons to forgive and unite. We are always proud of our numbers around the world. Being a population of 2 billion is nothing without a common heartbeat. Numbers mean nothing without unity.

Faithful ones do not doubt that Allah listens to our prayers. In Surah Baqarah, He says: "I respond to the prayer of every supplicant when they call on Me." He adds, "Let them also, willingly, respond to my call, and believe in me so that they are guided" (2:186). Are we responding to His call to unite? We must know that His response is guaranteed not in the way we chose, but in the way He chooses, not at the moment we desire but at the moment He desires. We must learn how to submit to His timeline and

never stop praying. There is no other direction to turn to. Do not be like the ones who stop praying just before they would receive an answer.

There was once a wise man who wanted to leave his children with a final, lasting lesson. He asked each of them to bring a single branch from the garden. One by one, he took the sticks and snapped them without any difficulty. Even when they brought the sturdiest branches they could find, he broke them just as effortlessly. Finally, he gathered a dozen branches and bound them tightly with a rope. He handed the bundle to his children and challenged them to break it; even their combined strength had no effect. He then shared the lesson of a lifetime: “As long as you are bound together, you are unbreakable. But the moment you stand alone, you will be snapped like a single branch.”

Our faith is defined by the six pillars: belief in Allah, the Angels, the Scriptures, the Messengers, the Last Day, and the Divine Decree. However, we must not ignore a critical condition of faith emphasized by the Messenger of Allah (saws). He swore by the One who holds his soul, stating that we cannot truly believe, and thus cannot enter Jannah, until we love one another. Our belief is incomplete without the mercy we show to each other. We fail to love each other.

At its core, Islam is the religion of brotherhood. We must cultivate the ability to love one another truly for the sake of Allah. In Surah Al-Hujurat, Allah-u Ta’ala commands us: “The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy”(49:10). Mercy from our Creator is directly tied to the peace we broker between ourselves.

One day, a man went to visit his friend in a village. On the way, Allah sent him an angel. The angel asked him: “Where are you going?” The man answered: “I am going to visit a brother in this village.” The angel asked: “Do you want any interest or benefit from him? Do you have any business with him?” He answered: “No, I just love him for the sake of Allah.” The angel said: “I brought a message from Allah to you. Allah loves you as you love your brother.” Loving each other for Allah’s sake is the way to attract His love. It is the way to receive the response we have been waiting for.

Success comes from Allah alone, yet He has made our effort a prerequisite for His help. The Divine Law is clear: change begins from within (Surah ar-R’ad 13:11). If we desire His guidance, we must be among those who “strive in His path” (Surah al-Ankabut 29:69). According to the Qur’an, the formula for success requires more than just hope; it demands both “belief and sincere exertion” (Surah al-Isra 17:19). We cannot expect a change in our external world without first changing our internal state.

To receive from Allah, we must first move toward Him. The success that He will offer to us as a result of our effort is incomparable. The reward of every little effort is provided abundantly.

Allah the Almighty said: “I am as My servant thinks of Me...If he draws near to Me a handspan, I draw near to him an arm's length. If he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw closer to him by two arms’s length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running.” (Hadith Qudsi)

All Allah is asking is for us to make the effort, and then, the support and guidance toward success will follow. Allah is not distant. He is closer to us than our jugular vein and is waiting for His servant to turn to Him, to make the effort.

Yurdaer Al Latif Al Jerrahi