



# SALAT

*The Ritual*

*Prayers*

DAR RAHE HAQ FOUNDATION.

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# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## **ALLAHU AKBAR**

With the "Glorification of Allah", the Almighty, we begin our ritual prayers. The commencement of ritual prayers with *takbir* carries the soul of the worshipper to the point where every power and grandeur, other than Allah Almighty, becomes negligible and meaningless. Every eye-catching object or deafening speech, all desires and ambitions, possessions and desirable things, wealth and collections, every influence and privilege, oppression and usurpation, every display of power and act of arrogance loses its splendour when the heart of a believer is enlightened with the illustrious call of *Allahu Akbar* i.e God is greater than anything that can be described. They appear worthless and trivial. They are rendered non-existent, and nothing but Allah Almighty's reverencing essence prevails. This is truly the inseparable attribute of God. He is greater than all the things. *Allahu Akbar.....!* And the believer commences his prayers, in the sphere of his reflections and ideals, with the glorification of Allah, the Almighty, creates a bond between him and his creator. This spirit, embodied by the *takbir*, is the cause of the fears of our enemies, who are backed by the arrogant powers, from the *takbir* of the believers.

## THE NEED FOR PRAYERS

"I am the only God (while) there is no other God. Worship me and establish the ritual prayers (in order to)remember me."<sup>1</sup>

Life is a struggle against hardship and misfortunes. A man needs a refuge, during all his life, which would enable him to face all these problems and give comfort to his heart. This refuge cannot be other than God, the Almighty.

God does not need our prayers and it is we who are in need of God. The ritual prayers are a source of nearness to Allah Almighty. This connection with the source of all benevolence gives strenght and forbearance to the person who is surrounded by difficulties.

The ritual prayer is a connection between the creator and his creatures. Man derives spiritual pleasure and delight only through his supplications to the Sacred Essence. The ritual prayer is the best means of connection with God. This is because all the elements and characteristics of the ritual prayers from *-niyyat-* intention, *-takbir-* the glorification of God, *surah al-Hamd*, another complete *surah* to *-ruku-* bending forward, *-sujud-* prostration, *-tashahhud-* bearing witness, *-salam-* salutations, and other preliminaries of the ritual prayers are such that the heart is directed towards the Almighty and even the physical and corporeal being of the worshipper is enveloped by a Godly deed. In this way, a believer directs his attention five times a day, towards his creator and just as a compass guides a ship towards its destination, the ritual prayers also accompany the believer to reach his ultimate goal which is '*liqau Allah*' or the meeting with Allah Almighty.

The eighth divine leader and Imam, 'Ali ibn Musa (A.S.), in one of his noble letters stressed upon the reason for the ritual prayers being obligatory as:

"..... the necessity for being steadfast in remembrance of God Almighty, day and night, is for the fact that the human being

should not become forgetful of his creator nor rebellious (against his Lord). The remembrance of Allah Almighty and standing upright in His presence restrains the worshipper from indulging in sins and various kinds of evils."<sup>2</sup>

The Last Apostle of God declared:

"When the worshipper stands up to perform his ritual prayers, God Almighty bestows His benevolence and blessings shower upon him from the skies. Angels gather above him upto the sky and Allah Almighty appoints an angel who stands over him and declares:

'O worshipper! If you come to know who observes you and with whom you supplicate, surely you will not depart from your place or direct your attention?'"<sup>3</sup>

In another tradition we find:

"If the person offering his ritual prayers finds out, upto one extent, the greatness of Allah, the Almighty, encompasses him, he will not be enclined to lift his head from the state of prostration."<sup>4</sup>

The holy Prophet, (S.) in reply to the person who inquired about the ritual prayers said:

"Ritual prayer is one of the paths of religion, the practice of the prophets, and the source of Allah's pleasure. By ritual prayers a believer gains friendship with the angels, it is a source of guidance and strong faith, a cause for the attainment of Allah's nearness, a device for increase in sustenance, for achievement of physical comfort and for displeasure of Satan. It is a kind of weapon against the infidels, the means for the acquisition of desires and acceptance of all good deeds. Ritual prayers form a provision for the Hereafter and a means of intercession at the moment of departure. The ritual prayer is a companion in the grave, a bed for its owner and an answer to the angels who will question him there. For any believer the ritual prayer is a saviour on the Day of Judgement, a light emitting from his face and a

covering for himself. It is a partition between him and the hell, a witness between him and his nourisher, a means of his deliverance from the hell-fire, a permit for crossing over the narrow bridge (*sirat*), the key to Paradise, a marriage portion of the fair ones (*houris*) and the price for the eternal heavens. *Salat* is a divine source of spiritual ascension since it is nothing except a composition of Extollments, Glorifications, praises (of The Exalted), expressions of His being above all faults and imperfections, declaration of His Exaltedness, remembrance of His Essence and a mention of one's desires."<sup>5</sup>

In principle, *salat* is an expression of one's gratitude and gratefulness in the presence of Allah Almighty. Every phenomena and occurrence can be traced back to His Sacred Self and the existence of all creatures originates from His Glorious Being. His bountiful favours exceed all limits, while ritual prayer is only a valueless and worthless expression of thankfulness with regard to the invaluable favours of God. Therefore, one must not be ungrateful.

The fourth Imam Hazrat Zain-ul Abedeen, peace be upon him, stated:

"My grandfather, the Prophet of God, (S.), endeavoured considerably in worshipping and offering prayers to the extent that his feet became swollen due to standing too much. Once he was asked: Why do you take so much pains when God has forgiven all your past and future? The holy Prophet replied: Should I not be thankful to my Master ?!"<sup>6</sup>

Only God deserves worship and the commander of the faithful Ali (A.S) entreats humbly in one of his supplications. " O Lord! I do not worship you for fear of hell or lust for paradise, (instead) I found you most fitted and eligible to worship and thus I worshiped you."<sup>7</sup>



### **The IMPORTANCE OF THE RITUAL PRAYER**

*Salat* is one of the most significant and essential duties and obligations in Islam and is incumbent on every person who is sane and has attained puberty in all circumstances, even when he is engaged in a fierce battle or is endangered with drowning in sea. Although in such extraordinary cases, the ritual prayers are offered in a particular and shortened way. The various spiritual effects of *salat* are such that the holy vicegerents of the Last Prophet have named it as the "Pillar of Religion. If a person deliberately fails to pray, he has demolished the structure of his religion."<sup>8</sup>

Imam Sadiq, peace be upon him, was asked:

"Which is the dearest and most effective means of nearness to God?"

The Imam, peace be upon him, replied: "Next to the faith in God, I believe, nothing overshadows the *salat*."<sup>9</sup>

Similarly it has been narrated from him that on the day of Resurrection, every person will be questioned about his prayers more than anything else. If one's ritual prayers are accepted, the rest of his deeds will also be recognized and if his prayers are disapproved the remaining deeds will also be rejected."<sup>10</sup>

In the presence of Imam Baqir, peace be upon him, a person was spoken of in such a manner:

"He commits what is forbidden, despises what is incumbent and has even ceased to pray."

The Imam sat straight from his leaning position and exclaimed:

"*Subhan Allah!* Has he actually given up praying?! Verily Allah Almighty considers such an act a very serious offense."<sup>11</sup>

Imam Sadiq (A.S), in his last moments, gathered the members of his family, and announced:

"He who belittles prayers shall be deprived of our intercession."<sup>12</sup>

*Salat* is one of the earliest as well as foremost duties of Islam which was made incumbent in the very first days of the Holy

Prophet's mission.

The Holy Prophet (S.) used to preform the ritual prayers alongwith Ali Ibn Abi Talib ( A.S.)a ten-year old boy at the time, and his devoted wife Khadijeh (A.S.) near Kabah, the house of God.<sup>13</sup>

The importance of ritual prayers is so great that when the people of Taif<sup>14</sup> put forward their conditions for accepting Islam, and asked the Prophet (S.) to exempt them from offering *salat*, the Holy Prophet replied:

"As for *salat*, a religion without ritual prayers is devoid of any benefit."<sup>15</sup>

The Holy Quran gives a lot of importance to the prayers. At fourteen places, it is commanded and advised the believers to perform their prayers. In addition to that, the performance of *salat* has been described as one of the noble attributes of worshippers.

In some other Quranic verses we find that Allah Almighty has given glad tidings to the humble ones, who remain steadfast in performing the prayers.<sup>16</sup>

Also, worshippers are described as one of those whose dealings with their Lord are neither doomed to failure nor suffer any losses.<sup>17</sup> And finally, it considers beleivers as those who perform their prayers, pay the poor-due and believe in the Thereafter.<sup>18</sup>

## LESSONS REGARDING THE RITUAL PRAYERS

### IN THE LIFE OF THE DIVINE LEADERS

Ma'mun, the ruthless caliph of the Abbassides, according to his prefabricated plans, invited the learned men and scholars well versed in the art of debate and argumentation, and confronted them with Imam Ali ibn Musa (A.S.), by organizing a discussion and debate with the intention of injuring the magnificence and splendour of the Imam's personality. The Imam answered their

objections single-handed, and raised counter objections with his illuminary speech and distinct expressions, thus causing their submission to his arguments, acceptance of truth and acknowledgement of Imams' intellectual grandeur.

In such an important session, the Imam, amidst a discussion turned towards Ma'mun and said:

"It is time for prayers"

Imran, one of the scholars debating with the Imam, urged:

"O master! (please) do not leave your reply unfinished, as my heart has softened and is fully prepared for submission...."

The Imam, replied:

"We will offer our prayers, and return...."

With this the Imam rose up, and others followed him.<sup>19</sup>

For four days, from early morning till midday, Imam Sadiq delivered special lessons on unity of God to one of his disciples, Mufaddal ibn Umar and whenever the time for prayears would arrive, he would discontinue his exposition and rise up to perform the ritual prayers.<sup>20</sup>

The commander of the faithful, Imam Ali (A.S.), performed his approved night prayer even at *lailat al-Harrir'* (one of the bloodiest nights in the battle of *siffin* in which both the warring parties were engaged in combat till morning), when the darkness of the night and the violent uproar of the battle provided no internal or pause to the combatants, although Imam Ali (A.S.) fought more courageously than the others.

In one of the days of *siffin*, Abdullah ibn Abbas saw him amidst a tumultous fight between the two sides, watching the sun. He got closer to the Imam, and asked what he was doing. The Imam replied, "I am observing the sun, for if the time is ripe I should perform my paryers". Abdullah exclaimed:

"Is it possible to stand for *salat* in the middle of this turmoil?!

The war has seized every opportunity of praying."

Imam replied with astonishment:

\*What is our reason for confronting them? .....We are fighting for the sake of prayers."<sup>21</sup>

The sun of Ashura had reached its peak in the sky, and the heroes of the bloody battle of *Kerbala* were engaged, since early in the morning, in an unequal and frightening combat with the followers of false deities. Till that moment, some of them had been martyred, and the remaining companions with the leader of the freedom, Imam Husayin (A.S.), were combatting with all their might and defending the Imam, and the camps from all sides. Abu Thumamat al-Saydawi, one of the devotees of Imam, came near him and said:

"May I be your ransom.....the enemy has closed in on us, and you will not be martyred before I get killed. I would like to offer my noon ritual prayers with you before meeting my Lord..."

The Imam looked up, looked at the sun and replied:

"You have remembered *salat*, May God place you among the performers of ritual prayers.....surely, it is time for prayers. Ask the enemy to let us offer our prayers."

But the enemy did not comply with this request, and the Imam with a group of those who had survived from among his disciples performed the special ritual prayers of wartime. A company of Imam's followers stood to face the enemy and shielded the Imam with their bodies while the other party offered their prayers behind the Imam. Then the two teams changed places to offer the prayers while protecting the others respectively.<sup>22</sup>

Presently, we will discuss what part is played by the ritual prayers which have such significance and importance and produce everlasting effects in the spiritual upliftment of the people? What esteem does it have in our eyes and how much do we regard it?

Before the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the arrogant Pahlavi regime used to exhaust the national wealth and resources to safeguard the interests of the foreign exploiters and used to play

with the religious precepts and Islamic tenets which constituted a barrier in defiance of the objectives of the enemies. This suppression reached such heights that *salat*, the pillar of the religion, was deprived of its due respect and significance. In government offices and other centers, time was allocated for all kinds of activities but *salat* which was trifled with in all possible ways.

With the help of Allah Almighty and due to victory of blood over the sword the grand Islamic Revolution bore its fruit presently, we are witnessing the all-out reconstruction efforts underway in all the fields. It is anticipated that by the will and advocacy of an overwhelming Muslim majority, together with the approval and guidance of the grand jurists who are the guardians of Islam, and inspired by the teachings of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, the complete implementation of Islamic laws will be carried out, and *salat* will also regain its rightful position. It is hoped that in all offices, educational institutions, military centers, etc, special places will be assigned for the performance of this great Islamic duty. Muslims, active in all walks of life, with the spirit of Islamic cooperation, at prayer time should discontinue their work and offer their prayers to consolidate and renew their relationship with their creator.

How sweet and life-giving the teachings of Islam are, that, while taking into consideration the material and spiritual aspects of the human beings, and their needs, have assigned duties for them.

Unfortunately, the Muslim nations of the world have been weak in putting into effect the Islamic laws, and were, therefore, deprived of the perfect and complete code of life. On the other hand, the arrogant superpowers have endeavoured constantly in restraining the Muslim masses from pondering over the spiritual aspects of their religion and directing their thoughts towards materialism. Regrettably, the muslim nations followed and took

up even the western materialistic values and traditions abandoning their own. As a result, countless groups of Muslims lost this world and the Hereafter, and were betrayed at the hands of their adversaries and their evil designs.

The global antagonist powers filled the thoughts of the Muslims with material and lustful desires in great measures, to render the Muslims unable to discover the secrets and benefits of *salat*, the great means of worship, and to know its philosophy. Even more regretful is that as a result of propagandistic activities, and the misleading ideas spread around by the enemies, many people have considered *salat* as merely a daily ceremonial rite.

The glorious Islamic Revolution turned back the dark pages of the history of unjust rulers, which was spread over a period of a few thousand years, and revealed their multifarious plots. It taught the world that the principles and tenets of the Quran are the invaluable and priceless treasure which the arrogant internal rulers and the global powers did not like to be discovered by the Muslim nations. We saw that the Muslim people of Iran, inspired by the spirit of religion, stood up with the cry of *Allahu Akbar* and ruined the palaces of the oppressors. The people, with bare hands pulled down the followers of false deities from their throne, and created the most outstanding event and the drastic overthrow of the century before the bewildered eyes of the superpowers.

It is for us, as Muslims, to be cautious and beware by not providing any opportunities to the enemies for propagating their poisonous ideas and for trivialising the religious rites and practices. In spite of our enemies' designs we must regard the religious laws and Islamic teachings with utmost respect. We must not forget that only in the shadow of Islam can we regain our former prestige and honour, and it is for us to acknowledge that *salat* is not merely a dry ceremonial rite, instead it contains innumerable individual, and social advantages, and a strong

reformatory power. *Salat* stimulates the body, the soul and the thoughts to action and struggle for the spiritual development and well-being of a person. We must strive hard to perform our prayers with meditation, sincerity and presence of heart: The Holy prophet (S) once said to Abudhar:

"Two cycles of *salat*, which are briefs (but) performed with deep thinking are worthier than the night-long prayers with no concentration."<sup>23</sup>

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (A.S.) said: "When you stand up for *salat*, it is upon you, to be humble and offer your prayers with concentration. Verily, God Almighty has praised the believers in these words:

"Believers....are those who are modest in their prayers."<sup>24</sup>

The leader of the Faithful, Imam Ali (A.S.) said:

"None of you should be slumberous and sleepy while standing for *salat* and should not go into his thoughts since he is placed before God. Surely, the share which a servant of God derives from his *salat* is equal to his concentration and presence of heart."<sup>25</sup>

Again, he proclaims:

"One must offer his prayers in a state of humility because if someone's heart is inspired with awe before his Lord, his body and its organs will also become modest. As a result he will not indulge in useless deeds."<sup>26</sup>

One of the visible effects of *salat* is that it keeps one away from indecent acts. The Quran clearly speaks of it as:

".....وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ....."

"....and establish worship Lo! *Salat* preserves from lewdness and iniquity but verily remembrance of Allah is more important."<sup>27</sup>

It is related that once a man eyed up a woman who informed her husband about it. Her husband asked her to tell that man that she will submit to his wishes on condition that he attends the morning congregational prayers behind her husband for forty days. The man consented, and came to offer his prayer for a few consecutive days after which he sent her a message saying that he had repented, asked for God's forgiveness and desired her no more.

The woman related this incident to her husband who replied:  
"I knew that *salat* would reform him. Allah has said:

ان الصلوة تنهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر

Verily, *salat* prevents from lewdness and iniquity."<sup>28</sup>

Those who are lacking in wisdom may argue that if such are its effects, then why do some people pray and yet indulge in unlawful acts and sins?!

In reply it should be understood that the medical treatments and the effectiveness of drugs with respect to the human body is not tied to one's intentions or inclinations. For instance, an injection containing a certain vitamin or a pain-killer, when injected, will have its effect, in all circumstances whether the patient is asleep or awake, whether he wills it or not, and even if there is a difference, it is negligible.... On the contrary, the ritual prayer which treats the spiritual and inner diseases has a close connection with intention, desire, manner of thinking and behavior of a human being. The proper observance of *salat* and the carefulness of its performer plays an important role in its effectiveness in the light of the aforementioned tradition from the Holy Prophet, i.e. two cycles of *salat* though brief, but performed with deep meditation are far better than the night-long prayer devoid of concentration, the *salat* of those who commit sins and iniquities is a mere physical exercise unexpected



of producing any amazing effects.... The *salat* which cleanses the soul from the evil deeds is the one in which the whole self is engrossed in concentration towards the Almighty, and it is unimaginable that there may exist a person who turns towards his Lord five times a day, supplicates Him devotedly and with the sensational feeling of being face to face with his Lord during the whole span of worship, for days and weeks onwards, and yet indulges in wicked and lewd deeds.

You will never find a person who is contaminated with sins and gone astray, while still insisting upon this way of life without intending to reform himself but at the same time prays with deepest concentration and most sincere devotion. Similarly, it is impossible to find a person who has repented from his sins, taken refuge in *salat* and with his heart and soul stands in the presence of Almighty, but still remains indulged in his sinfulness and wickedness.

*Salat* is an educational and reformatory commandment intended to provide a constant relationship with the Creator and unlike a medicine, its specified usage does not compel a man to forsake sins, in the sense that, it does not render the human being weak and powerless creature incapable of doing wrong. *Salat* if performed with meditation, is a kind of preparedness and spiritual enlightenment which makes him interested and engaged in good deeds and also refrains him from the bad ones. But the forsaker of *salat* cannot acquire this particular attachment to doing good deeds and the capability of refraining from bad ones. Apart from the fact that abandonment of *salat* is itself a great sin resulting in religious lapse.

The Quran describes the questioning of the criminals on the Day of Judgement in these words:

"What has brought you to this burning? They will answer: We were not of those who prayed."<sup>29</sup>

*Salat* reinforces the piety and advances the righteousness just as

the forsaking of *salat* (for a sinner) is a source of aggregation to sins and projection into darkness and wickedness until it pushes him towards his descend into Hell.

The preventive aspect of *salat* has different levels that depend upon the degree of faith and devoutness of the worshippers. The stronger the faith and concentration, the more will be the preventiveness.

We see that the Holy Prophet (S.) and the Imams (A.S.) who prayed with great attention, attachment and humility were free from all kinds of sins and wickedness. Those grand personalities endeavoured considerably, not only in regular obligatory prayers but also in their recommended prayers. Allah Almighty advises the Holy prophet regarding the performance of the recommended prayers:

"And some part of the night you must awake to worship, a largess for you. It may be that your Lord will raise you to a praised station."<sup>30</sup>

The Holy Prophet once said to Abudhar:

"God has set the light of my eyes in *salat* and made it the most desirable thing for me, like the food for the hungry and water for the thirsty. The hungry is contented after meal and the thirsty is satisfied after drinking water, but, my thirst for *salat* is never quenched."<sup>31</sup>

The various rules and formalities of *salat* have a deep impact on the life of an individual and the society. Its performer knows that the *salat* at an illegitimate place or in unlawful clothes is invalid, even the water for Ablution and the ceremonial bath, the water used for these purposes, and the earth for dry Ablution have to be pure and lawful. Therefore, the worshipper is compelled to abstain from transgression and usurpation, and is made to respect other peoples' rights.

Punctuality in the performance of ritual prayers, and the necessity of maintaining the order of its elements, can be an

exercise of discipline for the worshipper. Standing upright before Bending forward, Bending forward before prostration, Glorification of God while commencing and salutations while ending the prayers, etc....each must be performed in its specified place or else, *salat* will be rendered invalid, enables him to arrange his affairs and concerns in an orderly form.

*Salat* is an embodiment of devotion, humbleness and servitude for God Almighty, and guides the person towards loyalty and faithfulness. It cleanses him of haughtiness, jealousy, egoism and other mean qualities.

Imam Ali (A.S.) has said:

فرض الله الايمان تطهيراً من الشرك ....

"Allah Almighty has ordained compulsion of faith for the purification from polytheism and the obligation of *salat* for refraining from pride and arrogance."<sup>32</sup>

## SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EFFECTS OF PRAYERS

*Salat*, performed in congregation produces vast social impacts. It is a sign of unity and brotherhood of the Muslim world. It eliminates all distinctions of caste and creed. In the orderly rows of *salat*, Muslims of every caste and colour, are equal. They stand shoulder to shoulder with synchronized tones and feelings to praise the Lord of the worlds, together they prostrate, together they rise....congregational prayer is the best opportunity for exchanging views and to be acquainted with each others' difficulties, particularly, the Friday prayer constitutes political benefits and consolidates the Muslim ranks. Its two sermons expound the precepts of Islam for the listeners and provide a guidance for safeguarding piety and faith, remembering and

preparing for the Hereafter. They keep the society in touch with the political and social affairs, and have proved to be a sharp weapon against the enemies of Islam. The late Imam Khomayni had rightly said:

"Friday prayer which is an exhibition of political and social power of Islam and must be held in utmost magnificence and grandeur. Our nation should not think that the Friday prayer is an ordinary worship, the splendour which it contains is a strong backing for our young movement and a great source for the advancement of our revolution."<sup>33</sup>

### RITUAL PRAYER AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

The Holy Prophet (S.) has said:

"If one of you has a stream running through his house and he washes himself in it five times a day, do any impurities stay on his body?"

The reply was negative. He continued:

"*Salat* is like a running stream, whenever a person offers his prayers, he is cleansed of his sins."<sup>34</sup>

The purity and cleanliness in prayers is mostly concerned with the spiritual and inner self of a human being.

But keeping in view the preliminaries of *salat* like ablution, ceremonial bath and a clean body and dress, the worshipper's body is made externally clean as well which improves his health and hygienes.

### SALAT BUILDS A LIBERATED AND HARD-WORKIN MAN

One who stands repeatedly in his Lord's sanctuary evrey day, turns his back on everything except Him, directs his attention straight towards Kabah, the birthplace of Islam and the heart of Monotheism, his spirit illuminated by the intention (of

prayers)migrates from what is apart from God, towards Him...*Allahu Akbar*-Allah is greater than anything that can be described....This acknowledgement is uttered by the monotheists in the beginning of every ritual prayer and with the recitation of *surat al-Fatihah* they stand to praise the Lord of the worlds ten times a day, leaving no possibility for the worldly, flimsy powers to attain any weight or esteem in his thoughts. Such a worshipper fears no impediments for the achievement of his humane objectives, performs all his works with his Lord's name only and refrains from every form of polytheism and flattery. Undoubtedly, *salat*, accompanied by humility and concentration, builds a hardworking person and one who is free from every bondages, one who does not bow before anybody but God, who is patient and resilient, and one who is firm as a rock in times of trouble, examples of which are numerous in the history of Islam. *Surat al-Fatiha* which is recited in each prayer, is a summary of the chief principles of Islam:

Faith in the absolute authority of God and His wise management of affairs; Beauty of God's works; Hereafter and the reckoning of deeds; Doctrine of Mercy of Allah for His creatures especially man; Oneness of God and negation of polytheism; to abide by the straight path and to be steadfast on it; Abstinence from every form of aberration and deviation. All these issues have been listed in *surat al-Fatiha* and the worshipper is bound to repeat them in each prayer in order to program his life in accordance with these principles. Here we would glance at these words:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We always recall the name of the Compassionate and the Merciful while starting our activities and inspired by the Qurainic verse:

"Praise the name of your Lord the Most High"

We refrain from associating or combining God's name with that of any other being.

This is because if we name any other person or object while commencing our work it will be polytheism.

الحمد لله رب العالمين

All praise be to Him, who has created the world and all creations and has provided the world and all beings with proper guidance for their gradual perfection. All exist and develop under His fostering and nurturing, whatever He does is good and every goodness perceived here and there is from Him.

الرحمن الرحيم

Everyone and everything enjoys the showering of His Mercy and His Beneficence, His special Mercy encompasses the human beings especially the pure ones.

مالك يوم الدين

Allah is the owner of the Day of Judgement and only He owns absolute authority. Man will not be perished eternally and will be required to answer his Lord's justice on the Day of Judgement when there is no ruler save Him and there he will face the result of his deeds. The worshipper recalls this doctrine every time he prays, believes in it and thus refrains from sins.

اياك نعبد و اياك نستعين

You alone we worship and from you alone, being the greatest powers we, seek help, i.e. our servitude and worship is only for God Almighty.

### اهدنا الصراط المستقيم

Show us the right path. One who asks God in every prayer to show him the right way will not choose any deviated path, will have no inclinations towards east or west, select straight path without going to any extremes since any perversion of this kind leads to total descent and annihilation.

The need most vital to every human being is the guidance to the straight path. We humbly entreat God Almighty several times a day to grant us steadfastness in following the right path. To eliminate the possibility of any false interpretations regarding the straight path and to distinguish those following it from the fake ones, this Quranic surah mentions certain characteristics of *al-sirat al-mustaqim* (straight path) as:

### صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم

"The path of those whom you have favoured"

The Glorious Quran, in other verses (*surah Maryam*, 58 and *surah Nisa*, 69) has described the ones favoured by Him as the prophets and *siddiqin* (those who were truthful in what they said and honest in what they did); so the way (desired by us from God) we beseech Allah Almighty for salvation is that of prophets and *siddiqin*.

### غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين

"Not (the path) of those who earn your anger nor of those who go astray."

The worshipper strives to become one of the wayfarers of the prophets' path and not one of those who stood against the prophets and men of God, who were misguided themselves and led the people astray.

Our age is that of the ultimate victory of the sacred Islamic Revolution; the worshippers are in urgent need of this guidance. There is a class of irreverent people, hostile to sacred matters, who are bent upon trampling the rights of the deprived nations to preserve the interests of the enemies of Islam. While there are those who are deceived themselves and have fallen prey to perverse elements. In the name of Islam they suppress the truth by their misconceptions and false ideas regarding Islam and attract our young class towards their ideas. It is our duty to remain alert and with inspiration from *salat*, this divine obligation, we must strive to move on the straight path, taught to us by the ritual prayers and the Quran. In this way we will attain our final victory which is a true government based on Islamic justice on the earth....We must have faith in the fact that except the way of the prophets and *siddiqin* every other path will lead us to destruction and loss of everything, the honour and the well-being in this world and the deliverance in the Hereafter. It is upon the worshipper to read one of the *surats* of the Quran after the recitation of *surat al-Fatihah* so that they may not remain unfamiliar and out of touch with the Quran which is a complete code of life. At this stage he bows forward with his palms over his knees, in front of the over-powering Greatness of his Lord, and says:

سبحان ربي العظيم و بحمده

"Glory be to my Lord, the Greatest and I praise Him."  
And for further expression of humbleness he prostrates:

سبحان ربي الأعلى و بحمده

"Glory be to my Lord, the Highest and I praise Him."  
And in this way while bowing and prostrating, he declares his



Lord free from and beyond every defect and fault....Bending forward is a sign of humility in front of a power beyond the reach of every other might. Prostration is extreme state of humbleness and servitude in His presence. That is why he rests his forehead on clay with the intention of worshipping and praising his Lord. He reserves this act for God alone and considers prostration for someone other than God as unadmissable. When in prostration, he finds himself sunk in the Greatness of the Almighty, his tongue engaged in his Lord's praise....



Can the ritual prayer, with characteristics such as these be a stupefying agent or a cause of stagnation?

In fact, contrary to what the ignorant enemies of religion have mentioned, the praising of a power that exceeds all boundaries and the servitude for the Greatness of Lord of the worlds incites such energy and strength in the worshipper that he fears nobody but Allah Almighty, strives to observe the correct path. *Salat* is the factor which lightens his way and stimulates him. It is the means by which piety and obstinance from sins is achieved:

انَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

The Prophet of Islam (S.), the Imams (A.S.) and their true followers used to acquire purity of soul through ritual prayers and other religious rites and practices. Even in hard times they were never neglectful of it, getting assistance from this helpful companion in difficulties.

With the hope that all Muslims, particularly the youth, will always cling to this source of continued relationship with God Almighty, always trying hard to enhance their sincerity and

presence heart. It is anticipated that they will benefit from the growing light of this bountiful favour of Allah Almighty which is truly the pillar of Islam.

And now we will entreat our Lord through the utterance of the renowned monotheist and demolisher of idols, Ibrahim, to grant us success in the performance of *salat*, as follows:

«رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مَقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمَنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبِلْ دُعَاءً...»

"My Lord! make me steadfast in offering *salat*, and my offspring, and our Lord! accept my supplications."<sup>35</sup>

آمين رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



## PART II

### A SUMMARY OF THE RULES OF SALAT:

"Salat is the means of nearness for every pious (to Allah Almighty)."<sup>26</sup>

Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (A.S.)

#### How to perform our prayers?

In the previous part we discussed the need for *salat*, its constructive and positive effects, and its importance briefly. We mentioned that the fruits of this worship are enjoyed only when its rules and regulations are observed completely.

#### The presence of Heart

*Salat* is like a meeting and discourse with Allah Almighty. It is, therefore, necessary that the etiquettes and manners involved therein are fully practiced; the presence of heart as an essential element must be maintained throughout the prayers, and carelessness should never overcome the worshipper.

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (A.S.) said:

"By Allah! It is quite possible that a person lives for fifty years and not even a single prayer of his is accepted; is there anything harder and more painful than this? By God! There are some people among your neighbours and friends whose prayers, if they offer in your presence, will not be accepted by you since they

belittle *salat*, while nothing but good is admissible to Allah Almighty, how can Allah accept that which is considered to be of little worth?"<sup>37</sup>

Imam Ali (A.S.) has said:

"The Holy Prophet saw a man who was playing with his beard in his prayers. He remarked that if his heart had been humbled, his body and organs would have been alike."<sup>38</sup>

A man entered the mosque while the Holy Prophet was present and engaged himself in prayer, prostrating hurriedly and improperly. The Prophet (S.A.) observed:

"Instead of prostrating he strikes his beak on the ground like a crow; if such a person dies, he would not be on Muhammad's (S.A.) religion."<sup>39</sup>

Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (A.S.) once said:

"When you are praying, avoid being drowsy, slumberous, playing and hurried; pray with solemnity, gravity and soberness. It is upon you to remain attentive, humble and submitting in Allah's presence....stand in front of your Lord as a slave appears before his master. Keep your feet in order and your stature firm. Do not look here and there. Be as if you could see Him; if you do not see Him, He sees you."<sup>40</sup>

## PUNCTUALITY IN PRAYER TIMINGS

"Nothing is dearer to God Almighty than *salat*; worldly affairs must not detract you from the prayer timings."<sup>41</sup>

"You must keep in mind that all your affairs depend upon your *salat*. One who loses *salat*, loses other works more."<sup>42</sup>

"Do not delay your prayers (from their described timings) for no reason. Always perform your *salat* on its best time."<sup>43</sup>

The Holy Prophet and the Imams have stressed considerably on the importance, etiquettes and formalities of *salat*. As we took the opportunity to mention a few of these in the first part of this presentation, we will thus content ourselves with the ones related

above.

Now, we must learn how to pray. Here, we will describe briefly the basic rules of *salat* and for the details the reader will be referred to other sources. Our objective is to present the fundamental rules of *salat* for every body and in places where different views exist, we will propose a way that will suffice for all.

### TYPES OF OBLIGATORY PRAYERS

1. Daily prayers.
2. The *salat* of special signs.
3. The lapsed ritual prayers.
4. The *salat* of the circumambulation.
5. The *salat* for the dead body.
6. The *salat* of the vow, etc.
7. The lapsed ritual prayers of one's father (and mother) to be performed by the eldest son.<sup>44</sup>

The daily prayers are seventeen cycles in all, the dawn prayers being two cycles, the noon ritual prayer four cycles, the afternoon prayer four cycles, the dusk ritual prayer three cycles and the night ritual prayer four cycles.

In journeys the distances of which are forty-four kilometres, the four-cycle ritual prayers become two-cycle ritual prayers. This edict applies when a traveller intends to go to a specified destination not less than twenty-two kilometres away and then return to his starting point. However some jurists add another condition that the returning should also be at least twenty-two and a half kilometres.

### PRELIMINARIES OF SALAT

Before performing *salat* it is necessary for the person to meet the following conditions:

1. The body, clothes and place of the person offering the ritual

prayers must be clean of ritual impurities (except in rare cases mentioned in the treatise of *Maraji*).

2. The person must perform ablution and if he is in a ritually impurified state he must take a ceremonial bath (greater ablution).<sup>45</sup> But in case he cannot perform ablution or greater ablution due to lack of water or a wound on his body, for instance, then he must perform dry ablution.

3. If the worshipper is a man, he must cover his private parts; in *salat* it is better that he should cover himself at least from navel to his knee. If the person is a woman she must cover her whole body including her head and hair; but it is not necessary to cover the area of her face which she has to wash in ablution, her hands upto the wrists and the top of her feet. Therefore, even the smallest part of the body or hair, if left uncovered, will be enough to invalidate the *salat*.

4. The clothes of the person performing the ritual prayer must also be legitimate, wearing that they should not be confiscated ones. Also they should not be made from the hide or other parts of animals which are forbidden to eat or allowed but have not been slaughtered in an Islamic way. Apart from these, if the worshipper is a man, his clothes must not be of pure silk or gold.<sup>46</sup>

5. *Salat* must be performed facing the *Qiblah*.

6. The place where *salat* is being performed should not be unlawful (ie one must have the right or permission to use it), moving or rickety. The place of standing should be in level with respect to the point of prostration or in case of a slope, the tilt should not be more than four closed fingers.

7. Every *salat* must be performed on its specified time; dawn prayer from the first light of morning until the sunrise; noon ritual prayer from midday until the time it takes to perform the afternoon ritual prayer just before sunset; afternoon prayer from the time it takes to perform the noon prayer just after midday

until sunset<sup>47</sup> and the time for dusk and night ritual prayer is from *al-Maghrib al-shari* till midnight.<sup>48</sup>

### THE VIRTUE OF PRAYING EARLY

Although it is permissible to offer each *salat* at any moment from the beginning till the end of its specified time but it is highly virtuous to pray in the first portion of its time. In this respect we will cite a few traditions:

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (A.S.) has said:

"The virtue of praying early for a believer is better than his wealth and children."<sup>49</sup>

Also, from him:

"The superiority of *salat* performed in the earliest moments over the one offered in the last moments of its specified time is the same as the superiority of the Hereafter over this world."<sup>50</sup>

Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida stressed upon praying early as:

"When it is time for *salat*, perform your prayers; you never know what will happen afterwards."<sup>51</sup>



Now, we will present a glimpse of a few preliminaries of *salat*, explaining them briefly, those desiring to know all the details are requested, as mentioned earlier, to refer to their respective *Maraji*.

### RITUAL PURITY

Ritual purity implies that the person intending to offer *salat* must have performed ablution, ceremonial bath or dry ablution; this ritual purity, in addition to being a prerequisite for *salat*, is a form of worship and brings nearness to Allah Almighty.

Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (A.S.) described ablution as:

"Ablution before worship is for the reason that a servant of God

should stand pure in supplication before his Lord, (for) he becomes loyal and obedient to his Master and is cleansed of impurities. Ablution removes slumber and sleep while preparing and purifying the heart for worship."<sup>52</sup>

### HOW TO PERFORM ABLUTION?

Ablution involves the performance of the following acts in the given order:

1. The intention must be made: For the sake of obeying Allah's commands one is performing his ablution.
2. The face must be washed from the top of the forehead (where the hair normally begins to grow) to the tip of the chin and in width, the area covered by the tip of the middle finger and thumb (wide open) while washing one's face.
3. Then the right arm must be washed from above the elbow upto the tips of the fingers and it must be washed downwards.
4. The left arm must then be washed in the same way.
5. After washing the arms the top of the head must be wiped by the right hand with the wetness of the ablution which has remained on the hand.
6. Then, the upper part of the right foot must be wiped by the right hand with the wetness remaining on the hand from washing, moving from the tips of the toes to the mound between the toes and the point of the leg.
7. The left foot then must be wiped by the left hand in a similar manner.<sup>53</sup>
8. It is obligatory to observe the order of these acts, that is first the face, then the right hand, then the left hand then the head, then the right foot and then the left foot.
9. It is also obligatory to perform all these acts one after another without long intervals between them and before the washed or wiped parts get dried.

Before ablution there are certain recommended actions as well



whose performance is most beneficial; like washing both hands upto the wrists, brushing the teeth, rinsing the mouth thrice with pure water and drawing up pure water through the nostril, thrice.

### HOW TO PERFORM THE GREATER ABLUTION

1. Intention.
  2. Washing the whole head, face and neck.
  3. Washing the whole right side of the body, ie from the shoulders upto the toes of the right foot.
  4. Washing the whole left side of the body in the same manner.
- (This style of performing the ceremonial bath is called *al-Ghusl ul-Tartibi* ie, the greater ablution in sequence.)

#### NOTE:

In the above form of greater ablution each part of the body must be washed in a manner through which it is assured that no part has remained unwashed. Therefore, the right side of the body is to include a little more from the left side and the neck, the left side of the body is to include a little more from right side and the neck. The navel and the private parts are washed with both sides.

The greater ablution can also be performed in streams, pools, ponds, lakes, etc by immersing the whole body in water and the water must reach all parts of the body momentarily. This type of ceremonial bath is called *al-ghusl ul-Irtimasi*.

There are many causes that make the ceremonial bath obligatory like *Janabah*, touching a dead body, regular bleeding of women, etc. It is only in case of *Janabah* that ablution is not necessary for *salat*; but in case of other causes of greater ablution, the opinions differ among the jurists and every person is required to consult his respective *Marji's* treatise of Islamic acts.

### THE DRY ABLUTION

Under the following conditions and their like, dry ablution becomes obligatory in place of ordinary ablution or greater ablution:

When there is no water, or the water available is impure or usurped or its container is usurped or the vessel is made of gold or silver or the use of water is harmful for the person like when he is sick or wounded and must not wet his body or when the time left for *salat* is so short that if he engages himself in ablution or bath he will miss the *salat* or the water is for drinking and if used elsewhere he will remain thirsty or when another honourable soul is thirsty and it must be given water, etc.

The dry ablution is performed in the following manner:

1. Making the proper intention.
2. Both palms of hands are to be struck simultaneously on clean earth (soil sand, stones, etc) although it is better to use soil.
3. Then, the whole of both palms are drawn together across the whole of forehead upto the temples ie from where the hair normally grows to the eyebrows and top of the nose.
4. Then the whole of the left palm is drawn across the whole of the back of the right hand from the wrist to the tip of the fingers.
5. Similary, the whole of the right palm is drawn across the whole of the back of the left hand from the wrist to the tip of the fingers.

Some jurisprudents consider it necessary that in the dry ablution

which is in place of the greater ablution, the palms must be struck once more on the earth and the act of drawing the palms must also be repeated. They have also proclaimed that in dry ablution which is in place of ablution it is better to do the same.

### ACTS WHICH INVALIDATE THE ABLUTION

1. Urinating
2. Passing of faeces
3. Passing of intestinal wind
4. Complete sleep that renders the eyes and ears senseless
5. Insanity
6. Intoxication
7. Unconsciousness
8. *Janabah*
9. Touching a dead body, ie any part of one's body coming in contact with any part of the dead body.
10. Regular bleeding, irregular bleeding and bleeding after delivery experienced by women.



### THE CALL TO RITUAL PRAYER

#### (*ADHAN AND IQAMAH*)

*Adhan* is the general announcement of *salat* which is followed by *Iqamah*. The former is of two kinds:

1. The recommended *Adhan* which is said at dawn, noon and dusk to announce the prayer timings.

It is one of the great signs of religion and bears special significance.

Jabir ibn Abdullah has narrated the Holy Prophet (S.) as saying thrice:

"O God! Forgive those who chant *Adhan*"

I inquired: "O the Prophet of Allah! we fight with our swords to establish *Adhan* and you prayed in such a way for them but not for us?"

The Prophet exclaimed:

"O Jabir! shortly a time will come when the *Adhan* be given over to the weak ones. Indeed, there are those who are in peace, from Hell; they are the ones who chant *Adhan*."<sup>54</sup>

2. The recommended *Adhan* and *Iqamah* when one stands to pray; if he does not recite both of them before every *salat*, then at least he should say the latter for every *salat*. The former has been recommended more for dawn and dusk prayers.

The phrases of *Adhan* are as follows:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

(Allah is greater than anything that can be described).

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

(I bear witness that there is no god but Allah)

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

(I bear witness that Muhammad (S.) is the Messenger of Allah)

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ عَلِيًّا وَلِيُّ اللَّهِ

(I bear witness that Ali has been endowed with the office of Imamate by Allah).

This phrase is not an ingredient of *Adhan* and is said only for the assertion of the authority of Ali and submission to the Holy Prophet's decree regarding the Imamate of Ali which in fact was pronounced according to Allah's command.

حَيِّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ

(Hasten to offer *salat*)

حَيِّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

(Hasten to attain salvation)

حَيِّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ

(Hasten to the best of deeds)

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

(Allah is greater than anything that can be described)

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

(There is no god but Allah)

*Iqamah* is almost the same as above except that in the beginning *اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ* is said only twice and in the end *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* is said only once. And after saying *حَيِّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ* the phrase,

قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلَاةُ

(The prayer has been established) must be said twice.

### HOW TO PERFORM THE SALAT?

The worshipper stands, facing the *Qiblah* <sup>55</sup> and after *Adhan* and *Iqamah* he performs the *salat* in the following manner:

1. He makes a proper intention like, I offer my dawn prayer for the sake of closeness to Allah; although it is not necessary to say or utter these words.

2. He says *Allahu Akbar* which is the beginning of *salat* and is known as *Takbiratul-Ihram*. It is recommended that while saying *Takbir* both hands should be raised near one's ears. Similarly, in all the recommended cases of *Takbir* in *salat* like the one before bending forward and the ones before and after prostrating, the hands should be raised.

3. Standing upright: It is incumbent upon every person offering *salat* to stand upright (who is able to stand) while saying *Takbiatul-Ihram*, and during the recitation of *surat al-Fatihah*, another complete *surah* and the Four Extollments.

4. Recitation: It is obligatory for the worshipper to recite *surah al-Fatihah* (the first Quranic *surah*) and then another complete *surah* in the first two cycles.

### **SURAT AL-FATIHAH**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Praise belongs to Allah, who is the Nourisher of the worlds.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Compassionate, the Merciful.

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

Master of the Day of Judgement.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

You alone we worship and from you alone we seek help.

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us on the straight path.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

Path of those whom you have favoured.

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Not the path of those upon whom is your wrath nor of those who go astray.

After the recitation of *surat al-Fatihah* as mentioned earlier, the worshipper must recite any other *surah* of the Quran; here we will present the meaning of *surat al-Ikhlās* which is recited mostly.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

Say, He is Allah, the One

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

Allah, the eternally Besought of all!

لم يلد ولم يولد

He has not begotten nor was He begotten.

ولم يكن له كفواً أحد

And there is none comparable unto Him.

5. Bending Forward: After the recitation of the *surah* in the first two cycles and after four extollments in the third and fourth cycles the person offering *salat* must bend forward and bow to the extent that the palms reach the knees; when in this state his body becomes still he must say at least once:

سبحان ربي العظيم وبحمده

(Glory and praise be to my Lord, the Magnificent) or thrice say:

سبحان الله

(Glory be to my Lord)

It is obligatory that one must not utter these phrases before the body becomes still and one must not lift his head before their recitation ends. After finishing the recital, he should raise his head and stand upright. In this state, it is recommended to say:

سمع الله لمن حمده

(Allah hears the one who praises Him) and then say *Allahu Akbar* after which one must prostrate.

6. In every cycle, after bowing, it is obligatory to perform two prostrations. In the state of prostration, one must rest upon seven parts of the body (forehead, both palms, both knees and the two tips of the big toes). It is obligatory that the forehead



should rest on a material which is not edible, wearable or mineral.<sup>56</sup>

Earth is the best material for prostration since it is an embodiment of utmost humility before the Creator.

Since mosques and prayer areas are usually carpeted, the *Shiahs*, in order to ensure the presence of earth and sand, have moulded them into small tablets and prostrate upon them. The best kind of earth is that of Imam Husain (A.S.)'s grave from which the soul smells the odour of sacrifice and selflessness and *salat* with this sand possesses extraordinary and superiority.

Regretably, some of our *Sunni* brethren inconsiderate of this fact, criticize us under the pretext that such an act is, God forbid, a manifestation of polytheism!

On the contrary; this action, far from being against monotheism, is an educative and reformative deed since placing the forehead on Imam Husain (A.S.)'s sand to worship Allah Almighty is a mode of defending monotheism, for which the noble Imam had fought and given his blood. The prostration for Allah Almighty on the dust of a martyr like Husain (A.S.) is the heartiest encouragement offered by the worshipper to those who, following by the footsteps of Imam Husain (A.S.), strive for their just cause and fight against falsehood without fearing death. The prostration on the dust of such a distinguished martyr is totally opposite of polytheism and the purest sign of monotheism, it makes every respectable Muslim familiar with course of the martyrs and strengthens him in following their footsteps.

The Shi'ite school of thought is the course of true Islam which is associated with the epics of self-sacrifice and martyrdom in Allah's path and every *shiah* is proud of his leaders who never bowed before those following the false deities; Imam Husain (A.S.) is undoubtedly the most outstanding symbol of sacrifice and devotedness of this school. It is for this reason that the visiting of Imam Husain (A.S.)'s shrine has been strongly

emphasized in Shi'ite teachings and the sand of Karbala has been assigned a particular place like that of its use in prostration, etc. The worshipper in the state of prostration must say:

سبحان ربِّي الاعلىٰ و بحمده

(Glory and praise be to my Lord, the Highest) or thrice say:

سبحان الله

After saying these, the person should lift his head and sit properly; here, it is recommended to say:

الله أكبر

Then ask for Allah's forgiveness as:

استغفر الله ربِّي و أتوب اليه

and then repeat الله أكبر

He should prostrate again in the way he had done previously and then sit again and say *Allahu Akbar* which is recommended.

He must then rise up for the next cycle and it is recommended to say (while in motion):

بحول الله وقوته أقوم وأقعد

(With strength from God and power from Him, I stand and sit)  
The second cycle is similar to the first. It is recommended to recite *Qunut* (the special prayer) after finishing the *surah* and before bending forward.

*Qunut*: for recital of *Qunut*, the hands recommended to be raised together before the face open facing the sky, he should

supplicate to God as, for instance:

ربنا آتنا في الدنيا حسنة وفي الآخرة حسنة وقنا عذاب النار

Our Lord! Give into us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good and guard us from the doom of Fire.

Then the person offering *salat* must lower his hands, perform the act of bending forward and then prostrate twice for the second cycle and then while sitting say the *Tashahhud* (bearing witness).

7. *Tashahhud*: In a ritual prayer of two cycles like the dawn prayer, the *Tashahhud* is obligatory only once after completing the second cycle ie after its two prostrations, while in the three-cycle and four-cycle prayers, *Tashahhud* must be repeated in the last cycle (after the two prostrations).

For *Tashahhud*, while seated, one must say the following:

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له و أشهد أن محمداً عبده و  
رسوله اللهم صل على محمد و آل محمد

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. There is no partner equal to Him, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and prophet of God. O God! May your blessings be upon Muhammad and Muhammad's family.

8. Salutations: In *salat* consisting of two cycles after its only *Tashahhud* and in *salat* of three or four-cycles after the second *Tashahhud* while the person is seated, the salutations must be pronounced as under:

السَّلام عليك أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ ورحمة الله وبركاته السَّلام علينا و على عباد  
الله الصالحين السَّلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

(Peace be upon you, O the Prophet and God's Mercy and Blessing.

Peace be upon us and the righteous servants of God.

Peace be upon all of you and God's Mercy and His blessings).

### THE FOUR EXTOLLMENTS

In the third and fourth cycles of three or four-cycle *salat* only the *surat al-Fatihah* is recited. Furthermore, instead of *surat al-Fatihah*, the following phrase can be recited thrice according to caution:

سبحان الله والحمد لله ولا إله إلا الله والله أكبر

Glory be to God, praise be to God, there is no god but Allah and God is greater.

#### Note:

a) Men in the dawn, dusk and night prayers must recite *surat al-Fatihah* and other *surahs* of the first two cycles in an audible voice.

b) Men and women in the noon and afternoon prayers must recite the Quranic verses inaudibly. It is recommended only for men to say *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ* audibly.

9. The acts of a ritual prayer must be observed in their particular order, and in sequence, without long intervals.

## THINGS THAT INVALIDATE THE RITUAL PRAYER

1. Talking intentionally except for a reply to *salam*, ie the Islamic greeting.

If someone greets the worshipper with the proper expression of *salam*, the person offering *salat* must answer the greeting with the same expression. For example, if the person says **السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ** then the worshipper must reply as **السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ**. If, however, the latter does not answer, the *salat* is valid and correct although he has committed a sin.

2. Laughing whether controllable or not.

3. Crying loudly for the sake of worldly affairs whether the act is controllable or not, but if one cries due to fear of God's wrath or for the love of Allah's mercy, such an act is most desirable and praiseworthy and does not invalidate the *salat*.

4. Eating and drinking.

5. Any action which disrupts the state and form of *salat*, like clapping, shaking the body or jumping.

6. Things which invalidate the ablution.

7. Deviation from the direction of *Qiblah*, ie to turn one's back towards *Qiblah* or to turn towards right or left.

8. Placing one hand on the other intentionally.

9. Uttering the word *Amin* intentionally after *surat al-Fatihah*.

10. Doubts in the number of cycle of obligatory *salat* that consist of two or three cycles. Similarly, in the first and second cycles of the four-cycle *salats*, (For further information look into the treatise of your *Marji*).

11. Performing more or less of the pillars of *salat* intentionally or unintentionally.

12. Intentionally performing more or less of the parts of *salat* that are not pillars.

13. Defying any of the requirements of *salat* like covering the

private parts of men and the whole body of women.

### THE PILLARS OF *SALAT*

Five things have been named as the pillars of *salat*, any of which if not performed or repeated where it must not be, the *salat* gets invalidated:

1. Intention
2. *Takbirat al-Ehram*
3. Standing upright during *Takbirat al-Ihram* and before bending forward; that is one must be in a standing position before bending
4. Bending forward
5. Two prostrations

Finally, we will take this opportunity to advise our brothers and sisters to be well-informed about their religion, particularly *salat* and always be in touch with the treatise of the grand jurists in order to fulfil what is incumbent upon them. This is so, because any kind of carelessness in learning the details and rules of *salat* would be the belittlement of this divine duty. The Muslims in their relationship with their Creator must not be neglectful, regarding the proper method of its accomplishment just as the Holy Prophet had declared:

لكل شيء وجه، ووجه دينكم الصلوة فلا يشين أحدكم وجه دينه

"Everything has a face and the face of your religion is *salat*; none of you should stain the face of his religion."<sup>57</sup>

## Footnotes

1. *Surah 20, Verse 14.*
2. *Jame ul-Ahadith*, p. 13, Tradition 13.
3. *Ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 5, Tradition 35.
4. *Ibid*, p. 6, Tradition 40.
5. *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol.82,p.231,Tradition 56;and *Jame ul-Ahadith*,p.9,Tradition 72.
6. *Kuhl ul-Basar*, p. 78.
7. *Urwat ul-Wothqa*, chapter 21 in "Prayer Intention".
8. *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 82, pp. 203 & 209; and *Wasail ul-Shia*, Vol. 3, p. 17.
9. *Jame ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 2, Tradition 1.
10. *Ibid*, p. u, Tradition 21.
11. *Ibid*, p. 25, Tradition 21.
12. *Ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 25, Tradition 6.
13. *Usd ul-Ghabah* Vol. 3, p. 414.
14. *Taif*, is a town near Mecca.
15. *Sirah ibn Hisham*, Vols. 3-4, p. 504.
16. *Surah Hajj*, 35.
17. *Surah Fair*, 29.
18. *Surah Naml*, 3.
19. *Bihar*, Vol. 10, p. 313.
20. *Ibid*, Vol. 3, p. 89.
21. *Ibid*, Vol. 83, p. 23.
22. *Ibid*, Vol. 45, p. 21.

23. *Ibid*, Vol. 84, p. 249.
24. *Jame ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 247.
25. *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 84, p. 239.
26. *Ibid*.
27. *Surah Ankabut*, 44.
28. *Jame ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 11, Tradition 77.
29. *Surah Muddathir*, 42.
30. *Surah Asra*, 79.
31. *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 82, p. 233; and *Jame ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 4, Tradition 27.
32. *Nahj ul-Balagha, short sayings No. 244, p. 1187.*
33. "Ettelaat" Newspaper No 15952, p. 12.
34. *Wasail*, Vol. 3, p. 7.
35. *Surah Ibrahim*, 40.
36. *Jami ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 6.
37. *Talkhis ul-Wasail*, Vol. 3, p. 11.
38. *Jami ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 253. Tradition 67.
39. *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 84, p. 234.
40. *Ibid*, Vol. 84, p. 204.
41. *Jami ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 23.
42. *Ibid*, p. 18, Tradition 6.
43. *Bihar ul-Anwar*, Vol. 83, p. 21.
44. The duty of offering the lapsed *salat* of a mother on the eldest son is according to caution in view of some jurists.
45. If the greater ablution is due to *Janaba*, i.e. the state one is in after sexual intercourse or any kind of seminal discharge, then one must not perform ablution, instead the *Ghusl* will suffice for the *salat*. But if the *Ghusl* is for some other reason, then ablution is also required for *salat*.
46. Wearing pure silk clothes, adorning with gold ornaments like chain, ring, watch, necklace, etc is forbidden for men in all circumstances and his prayers with these adornments is invalid. For women, however, these ornaments are unobjectionable and they can offer *salat* with them.
47. In view of many jurists, the end time of afternoon prayers is not sunset, but it ends when the redness which appears after sunset in the East,



moves across towards the west, which is denoted as *al-Maghrib al-Shar'i*. (See the treatise of your particular Marja).

48. At *Al-Maghrib Al-Shar'i*, the time it takes to perform three cycles of salat is the special time for dusk prayers and the time needed for four cycles of *salat* just before midnight is the special time for night prayers. Night prayers, if not performed until midnight, deliberately or out of forgetfulness, can be performed before the dawn, but with neither the intention of *ada* (that which is performed on proper time) nor *Qadha* (lapsed) [however, in case of deliberation the person would have committed a sin]. It must be kept in mind that the midnight from Islamic point of view, according to what is well known among the jurists, is eleven hours and fifteen minutes after mid-day. Also, it is the mid-point between *Maghrib* and *Fajr* (dawn).

49. *Jami ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, pp. 44-5.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Wasail ul-shi'a*, Vol. 1, p. 257.

53. After it has become cold and before it has been given its bath.

54. *Jami ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 205.

55. The *Qibla* of Muslims is *kaaba*, the house of *Allah*, situated at *Al-Masjid ul-Haram*, the Holy Mosque, in *Mecca*. It was built by the prophet of *Allah*, *Ibrahim (A.S.)*. All the Muslims must stand facing it in their prayers. The direction of *Qibla* can be located with a compass or with some other means.

56. Prostration upon charcoal and ash is not permissible; some authorities disallow prostration upon things that are parts of earth but have been baked, like bricks, chalk, urine, cement, mosaic, earthenware, etc. In case of option, one must not prostrate upon them.

57. *Jami ul-Ahadith*, Vol. 2, p. 27.

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