II:PRARYER

CHAPTER

1

Obligation of the Five Prayers

Prayer is the most obligatory of the Five Pillars of Islam next to the Two Testifications of Faith,[1] and it was ordained in the best and the most perfect way for an act of worship. Prayer includes many of the acts of worship, like the remembrance of Allah, the recitation of the Qur'ân, standing humbly before Almighty Allah, bowing, prostration, supplication, and *takbîr*[2]. Prayer is also the head of the physical acts of worship, of which none of the religions brought by any of Allah's Messengers is void. Prayer, unlike all other acts of worship, was enjoined by Allah on His Messenger, Muhammad (PBUH), the Seal of Messengers, on the Night of *Al-Mi'râj* (Muhammad's Ascension)[3]. This is an indication of its greatness, a confirmation of its being obligatory, and a sign of its high status in the Sight of Allah. There are many *Hadîth*s indicating the virtues of prayer and showing its being obligatory on all Muslim individuals. The fact that prayer is an obligatory act of worship is primarily known in Islam. So, whoever denies this fact is considered to be an apostate; such a person is to be asked to recant, and if he does not, he is to be killed as unanimously agreed upon by Muslim scholars.

Linguistically, prayer means invocation; Allah, Exalted be He, commands the Prophet to 'pray' for the believers, saying:

> ***"...And invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them..."***
>
> (Qur'ân: At-Tawbah: 103)

According to the *Sharî'ah* (Islamic Law), prayer is defined as a special kind of sayings and deeds beginning with *takbîr* and ending with *taslîm*[4]. It is called 'prayer' because it includes invocation; during prayer, the worshipper is in a state of invocation through worshipping Allah, praising Him, or supplicating Him for something. This is why it is called 'prayer'. Prayer was decreed by Allah on the Night of *Al-Mi'râj*, before *Hijrah*,[5] as five prayers to be performed everyday and night at specified times by every legally accountable Muslim. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times."*** (Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 103)

Those prayer times are the times pointed out by Allah's Messenger (PBUH) through his words or his deeds (i.e. through the *Sunnah*). Allah, Exalted be He, also says:

> ***"And they were not commanded except to worship Allah [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Bayyinah: 5)

In addition, in many verses of Allah's Glorious Book (the Qur'ân), Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"And establish prayer..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 43)

Allah also says:

> ***"[O Muhammad], tell My servants who have believed to establish prayer..."*** (Qur'ân: Ibrâhîm: 31)

Moreover, Allah, Glorified be He, says:

> ***"So exalted is Allah when you reach the evening and when you reach the morning. And to Him is [due all] praise throughout the heavens and the earth. And [exalted is He] at night and when you are at noon."*** (Qur'ân: Ar-Rûm: 17-18)

Therefore, it is obligatory for whoever reaches one of the specified times of prayer, being adult and sane, to perform it, excluding women in a state of menstruation or postnatal bleeding. Scholars unanimously agree that it

is not obligatory for women in the aforesaid two cases to perform prayer, nor to perform it later after purification. On the other hand, whoever is in a state of unconsciousness, as in sleeping, fainting, and the like, has to perform the prayer(s) he/she has missed when he/she wakes up. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"...And establish prayer for My remembrance."***
>
> (Qur'ân: Tâhâ: 14)

In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) says:

> *"Whoever misses a prayer out of oversleeping or forgetfulness let him perform it once he remembers it."*[6]

A guardian of a child has to command him to perform prayer when the child reaches the age of seven, though it is still not obligatory for him. But the purpose is to make the child interested in prayer and used to it. Thus, the child and his guardian will be rewarded when the former performs prayer, for Allah, Exalted be He, says in general:

> ***"Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof [to his credit]..."***
>
> (Qur'ân: Al-An`âm: 160)

Moreover, when a woman showed the Prophet (PBUH) a young boy who was with her saying:

> *"Does this one have to perform Hajj (Pilgrimage), O Messenger of Allah?" He (PBUH) replied, "Yes, and you will have a reward."*[7]

So, a guardian has to teach his child how to perform prayer and how to perform ablution for it. A guardian has also to beat his child if the latter is ten years old and neglects prayer, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Command your children to perform prayer when they become seven years old, and beat them for (not performing) it (i.e. prayer) when they become ten years old; and arrange their beds (so that boys and girls sleep) separately."*[8]
>
> (Related by Ahmad, At-Tirmidhî, Abû Dâwûd, and other compilers of *Hadîth*)

It is also impermissible to perform prayer later than its due time, for Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...Indeed prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times." (Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 103)

The meaning is that prayer has specified times at which it has to be performed. A prayer is impermissible to be deferred except for those who would like to combine it with the following prayer, provided that the said prayer can be combined with another, and that the case is among those in which combining two prayers is permissible as well as the person being one who is allowed to combine prayers in this way. As for delaying performing a night prayer until the morning, a day prayer until the night, or the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer until sunrise, it is by no means permissible, whether the reason is a state of major ritual impurity, minor ritual impurity, or anything else. Rather, one has to perform them at their specified times, regardless of one's state.

A person might happen to be detained in hospital where he is confined to a bed that he cannot leave to pray, or cannot change the impure clothes he wears, or cannot find pure earth to perform *tayammum* (dry ablution) instead of ablution to pray. Some ignorant people in this case defer prayer on the pretext that they will perform it later when possible. In fact, this is a grave mistake and a means of missing prayer whose reason is unawareness and lack of juristic consultation. What they have to do is to perform prayer at its specified times regardless of their states. Their prayer will be sufficient, even if it is performed without *tayammum* or in impure clothes; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"So fear Allah as much as you are able..."

(Qur'ân: At-Taghâbun: 16)

Even if they pray without facing the *qiblah*,[9] provided they are unable to face it, their prayer is still valid.

As regards those who abandon performing prayer out of negligence or slackness, even if without denying the fact that it is obligatory, they are considered disbelievers according to the more valid of the two juristic opinions in this regard. This is what is indicated in the prophetic *hadîth*s, like the one related by Imâm Muslim that states:

"Verily, between man and between polytheism and disbelief is the negligence of prayer."[10]

There are many other legal proofs. Those who abandon prayer are to be pointed out among people so as to be ashamed of themselves and perform prayer. In addition to this, they are to be discarded to the extent that they are not to be greeted and their invitations are not to be accepted until they repent and establish regular prayer. This is because prayer is the basic pillar of religion, and the main difference between a Muslim and a disbeliever. So, whatever good deeds one might do are useless if one is negligent of prayer, we ask Allah for safety.

Endnotes

1 The Two Testifications of Faith: Saying, "I testify that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."
2 *Takbîr*: Saying, *"Allâhu-Akbar"* (i.e. Allah is the Greatest).
3 See Al-Bukhârî (7517) [13/583] and Muslim (409) [384].
4 *Taslîm*: Saying the final *Salâms* in prayer (saying, "*As-salâmu `alaykum wa Rahmatullâh*" i.e. "Peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allah") when concluding prayer.
5 Hijrah: The Prophet's Immigration to Medina.
6 Al-Bukhârî (597) [3/93] and Muslim (1566) [3/198].
7 Muslim (3240) [5/103].
8 Ahmad (6753) [2/248], Abû Dâwûd (495) [1/239], Al-Hâkim (951) [1/378]; see also At-Tirmidhî (407) [2/259], Ibn Khuzaymah (1002) [2/102].
9 The *qiblah*: The direction of prayer, namely towards the Ka`bah.
10 Muslim (243) [2/259].

CHAPTER

2

Prayer Call (*Adhân*) and Immediate Prayer Call (*Iqâmah*)

The Five Prayers have specified times, before which it is impermissible to perform them. Many people (at the time of the Prophet) did not know the exact time of prayer, or were so busy that they did not pay attention to the time of prayer. Therefore, Allah decreed the prayer call (*adhân*) to notify them of its due times. The prayer call was decreed in the first year after the Prophet's Immigration to Medina. The reason behind its prescription was that it was difficult for the Muslims then to observe the exact times of prayer. Therefore, they conferred and agreed to have a certain sign to gather them for prayer. Afterwards, the wording of the prayer call was revealed to `Abdullâh Ibn Zayd in a vision, which was confirmed by the Divine Revelation;[1] Allah, Exalted be He, revealed:

> ***"O you who have believed, when [the adhân] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu`ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Jumu`ah: 9)

Allah also revealed:

> ***"And when you call to prayer..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Mâ'idah: 58)

Each of the prayer call (*adhân*) and the immediate prayer call (*iqâmah*) has special wording, which express creed and faith. Both of them begin with *takbîr* (saying, "*Allâhu-Akbar*" i.e. "Allah is the Greatest") which is a sign of glorification of Allah, Almighty and Ever-Majestic be He. Then the Two Testifications of Faith are to be declared,[2] as an acknowledgement of the Oneness of Allah, Exalted and Glorified be He, and the prophethood of our Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH). After that, a call for prayer, the basic pillar of Islam, is pronounced,[3] following which a call for prosperity is pronounced,[4] inviting all Muslims for prayer, the way to felicity and eternal delights. Finally, the wording of the prayer call ends with *takbîr*, which is the best way of the remembrance of Allah, and the word of sincerity of faith, whose greatness and virtues outweigh the seven heavens with all beings therein (excluding Allah) and the seven earths with all beings therein.

There are many *hadîth*s stating the great virtues of the prayer call, and indicating that prayer callers (i.e., muezzins) will have the longest necks of all people on the Day of Judgment[5]. Both the prayer call (*adhân*) and the immediate prayer call (*iqâmah*) are collective duties,[6] and they are among the apparent Islamic rituals. They are decreed on men, residents or travelers, at each of the five prayer times. The town whose people abandon the prayer call and the immediate prayer call are to be fought, because they are among the manifest Islamic rituals, so it is impermissible to abandon them.

The basic characteristic of a prayer caller is to be a loud-voiced man, so as to be more convenient to call for prayer informing people at its due times. He has also to be an honest man, because he is considered to be an entrusted person, as his calling for prayer decides the times when people pray, fast, and break their fasting. A prayer caller has also to be acquainted with the due times of prayer to call for each prayer once its time is due.

The prayer call consists of fifteen sentences, as it used to be made by Bilâl during the lifetime of Allah's Messenger (PBUH). It is desirable to be deliberate while calling for prayer, without lengthening. It is also desirable

to pause after pronouncing each sentence of the prayer call, and to face the *qiblah* while calling, inserting one's index fingers into one's ears. In addition, it is desirable, while calling for prayer, to turn to the right when saying, "*Hayy `alas-Salâh*", i.e. "Come to prayer," and to the left when saying, "*Hayy `alal-Falâh*", i.e. "Come to success!" When calling for the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer, after saying "*Hayy `alal-Falâh*" twice, it is desirable for the prayer caller to call saying, "*As-Salâtu Khayrun minan-Nawm*", i.e. "Prayer is better than sleep," twice. That was commanded by the Prophet (PBUH),[7] as dawn is a time when people are often asleep. It is impermissible for the prayer caller to add any words to the original wording of the prayer call before or after calling, as this is considered to be a *bid`ah* (i.e., a matter innovated in religion). Whatever is pronounced other than the wording of the prayer call approved of by Allah's Messenger (PBUH) is regarded as a prohibited and an innovated act in religion. For example, uttering words of *tasbîh*,[8] chanting, invoking Allah, or conferring Allah's peace and blessings upon the Prophet loudly before or after calling for prayer, all are nothing but *bid`ah*s. These acts are prohibited, and one must express one's disapproval of whoever follows any of them (while calling for prayer).

It is not right to call for a prayer before its due time, because the prayer call is to notify people of the exact time of prayer, but an early prayer call causes confusion instead. Still, it is permissible to call for the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer earlier than its due time, in order to allow people to get ready for prayer (in that late hour). But there must be another prayer call at the exact time of the *Fajr* Prayer, so as to acquaint people with the due time of prayer and fasting (as fasting starts from the *Fajr*).

When listening to the prayer call, it is an act of the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) to repeat what the prayer caller is saying while calling. Also, when the prayer caller calls saying, "*Hayy `alas-Salâh*" (Come to prayer) and "*Hayy `alal-Falâh*" (Come to success), one is to say, "*Lâ Hawla wala Quwwata illâ Billâh*," i.e. "There is neither might nor power but in Allah." Afterwards, when the prayer caller finishes calling for prayer, one is to say:

> *"O Allah, Lord of this perfect call and of this established prayer, grant Muhammad the place of Al-Wasîlah*[9] *and the most virtuous place, and raise him to a praiseworthy position (in Paradise) that you have promised him (of)."*

Following the prayer call, it is prohibited for one to leave the mosque without having a legal excuse or an intention to return soon. In addition, if one

is sitting while the prayer caller is calling for prayer, one should not stand, but one should rather be patient until the prayer caller finishes calling so as not to resemble Satan (who flees when hearing the prayer call). Once a Muslim hears the prayer call, he has to head for the mosque (to offer prayer), leaving all worldly affairs. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"[Such niches are] in houses [i.e. mosques] which Allah has ordered to be raised and that His Name be mentioned [i.e. praised] therein; exalting Him within them in the morning and the evenings - [are] men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayer and giving of Zakâh. They fear a Day in which the hearts and eyes will [fearfully] turn about..."*** (Qur'ân: An-Nûr: 36-37)

The immediate prayer call is in eleven sentences that are uttered quickly. There is no need to be slow in pronouncing them because they are merely addressed for those already present for prayers. It is preferable that the person who calls for prayer is the same one who undertakes the immediate prayer call. He should only perform the latter by permission of the *imâm* (i.e., leader in prayer) who is the one who determines the commencement of the prayer.

Endnotes

1 Abû Dâwûd (499) [1/241], At-Tirmidhî (189) [1/358] and Ibn Mâjah (706) [1/389]; see also Muslim (835) [2/298].

2 Saying, *"Ashhadu allâ ilâha illallâh (twice). Ashhadu anna Muhammadar-Rasûlullâh (twice),"* i.e. *"I testify that there is no deity but Allah (twice). I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (twice)."*

3 Saying, *"Hayy 'alas-Salâh"* (twice), i.e. "Come to prayer."

4 Saying, *"Hayy 'alal-Falâh"*, i.e. "Come to prosperity."

5 Muslim (850) [2/311].

6 Collective duty: A religious duty which if sufficiently fulfilled by some Muslims, the rest will not be accountable for it as an obligation, and it becomes an act of the *Sunnah* for them

7 Abû Dâwûd (500) [1/242], An-Nasâ'î (632) [1/334], At-Tirmidhî (198) [1/378] and Ibn Mâjah (715) [1/396].

8 *Tasbîh*: Saying, *"Subhân-Allâh"* (i.e. Glory be to Allah).

9 *Al-Wasîlah*: It is the greatest and the most superior degree in Paradise reserved for only one of Allah's servants, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) hopes to be that one. So, he (PBUH) asks everyone of his nation to pray to Allah following each prayer call (*adhân*) to grant him that place, *Al-Wasîlah*.

CHAPTER

3

Prayer Conditions

The conditions of prayer are those on which the validity of prayer depends so long as one is able to fulfill them. Prayer has certain conditions if they, or any of them, are neglected, prayer is nullified. Among those conditions are the following:

The first condition: To be performed at its specified times; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times."*** (Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 103)

That is to say, prayer is decreed to be performed at certain times specified by Allah, Glorified be He. Thus, Muslim scholars uniformly agree that prayer has five specified times and it is insufficient to perform a prayer before its due time. The Commander of the Believers, `Umar Ibnul-Khattâb (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

> *"Prayer has specified times stipulated by Allah, without observing which prayer is invalid."*

So, prayer is obligatory on a Muslim once its due time begins, for Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Establish prayer at the decline of the sun..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 78)

Moreover, scholars uniformly agree on the great virtues of performing prayer at its specified times in general according to the verse in which Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...So race to [all that is] good..." (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 148)

Allah, Exalted be He, also says:

"And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord..."

(Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 133)

Furthermore, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"And the foremost, the foremost. Those are the ones brought near [to Allah]." (Qur'ân: Al-Wâqi`ah: 10-11)

In addition, it is related in the Two Sahîhs that when the Prophet (PBUH) was asked about the dearest deed in the Sight of Allah, he replied:

"Performing prayers at their specified times."[1]

Further, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 238)

And performing prayer at its specified times is a sign of such care enjoined by Allah.

The obligatory prayers are five ones to be performed daily, and each has a due time of performance specified by Allah so that it suits the life conditions of His servants; that is, times of prayer are specified in a way that does not hinder people from managing their worldly affairs, but helps them manage such affairs. In addition, prayer is a way through which people's sins are forgiven; the Prophet (PBUH) has likened prayer to a river in which a Muslim takes a bath five times a day, so no trace of dirt would be left on him[2].

Those specified times of prayer are as follows:

1- **The Zuhr (Noon) Prayer:** Its specified time begins when the sun passes its meridian and declines westward, and this is what is indicated in the verse in which Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"Establish prayer at the decline of the sun..." (Qur'ân: Al-Isrâ': 78)

Such a decline of the sun is known when the shadow of an object becomes eastward instead of westward, and this specified time for the Zuhr (Noon) Prayer continues until an object's shadow becomes approximately the same in length as the object itself and ends at this time, for the Prophet (PBUH) said, as related by Imâm Muslim:

"The time of the Zuhr (Noon) Prayer is when the sun passes the meridian and a man's shadow is the same (length) as his height."[3]

It is desirable to hasten performing the Zuhr Prayer at the beginning of its specified time unless it is extremely hot, in which case it is desirable to delay performing it until it is cooler, as the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"In a very hot weather, delay the Zuhr Prayer until it becomes (a bit) cooler, because the severity of heat is from the raging of the Hell-fire."[4]

2- **The *'Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer:** It begins when the time of the Zuhr (Noon) Prayer ends, i.e. when the shadow of an object is of the same length as the object itself, and continues until the sun sets according to the valid of the two juristic opinions in this regard. It is an act of the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) to hasten performing the *'Asr* Prayer at the beginning of its due time, as it is the Middle Prayer whose virtues are stated by Allah, Exalted be, when He says:

"Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle [i.e. 'Asr] prayer..." (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 238)

It is also stated in the *Sunnah* that it is the *'Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer[5].

3- **The *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer:** The time of the *Maghrib* Prayer begins when the sun sets; i.e. when it completely disappears so that it can by no means be seen, neither from a plane hill nor a mountain. The time of the sunset is known by the coming of the darkness of night from eastward; the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"When night falls from this side and the day vanishes from that side and the sun sets, then the fasting person should break his fast."[6]

The time of the *Maghrib* Prayer lasts until the red twilight ends, and it is an act of the *Sunnah* to hasten performing the *Maghrib* at the beginning of its due time, according to the *hadîth* related and

deemed *sahîh* (i.e. authentic) by At-Tirmidhî on the authority of Salamah, which states that the Prophet (PBUH) used to perform the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer when the sun disappeared from the horizon[7]. **At-Tirmidhî commented,** *"This is also the opinion of most of the people of religious knowledge of the Prophet's Companions and their followers."*

4- **The *'Ishâ'* (Night) Prayer:** The time specified for this prayer begins when the time of the *Maghrib* Prayer (i.e. the time during which it is performed) ends. Thus, the time of the *'Ishâ'* Prayer begins when the red twilight disappears and continues up to half of the night. This time is divided into two parts; an optional time and an obligatory time. The optional time continues until the third of the night, and the obligatory time begins from the third of the night until the second (real) dawn. It is desirable to delay performing the *'Ishâ'* Prayer until the end of the preferred time for it, which is the third of the night, if possible. Yet, if this might cause difficulty to the Muslims, it is then desirable to hasten performing it at the beginning of its due time so as to avoid difficulty. On the other hand, it is detestable to sleep before the *'Ishâ'* Prayer so as not to oversleep and miss it. Moreover, it is detestable for people to gather and chat following performing the *'Ishâ'* Prayer so that they can sleep early and get up early. So, a Muslim should sleep following performing the *'Ishâ'* Prayer so as to be able to get up early and offer *Tahajjud*[8] and then the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer actively, as the Prophet (PBUH) disliked sleeping before the *'Ishâ'* Prayer and talking after (performing) it[9]. Thus, it is detestable to stay up after the *'Ishâ'* unless one has something useful or urgent to do.

5- **The *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer:** The time of the *Fajr* Prayer begins with the true dawn and lasts until sunrise, and it is desirable to hasten performing it provided that the rise of the true dawn is certain.

These are the specified times of the five obligatory prayers decreed by Allah, so you should, gentle Muslim reader, perform them at their specified times without delay, for Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"So woe to those who pray - [but] who are heedless of their prayer."

(Qur'ân: Al-Mâ`ûn: 4-5)

That is, woe to those who perform prayer but delay it and do not perform it at its specified times. Allah, Exalted be He, also says:

> ***"But there came after them successors [i.e. later generations] who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil - except those who repent..."*** (Qur'ân: Maryam: 59-60)

The phrase "neglected prayer" in the above verse means that those people used to neglect observing prayer at its specified times. In brief, Allah refers to those who do not perform prayer at its due times as "heedless" people who "neglect" prayer, and He states that such people will be severely tortured in the Hellfire and that ***"... they are going to meet evil."*** If one forgets performing one of the five obligatory prayers or misses it out of oversleeping, one has to perform it once one remembers or gets up; the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"If anyone forgets a prayer or misses it because of sleeping, he should perform it when he remembers it; there is no other expiation for it."*

Thus, it is obligatory to make up for a missed prayer as soon as possible. One should by no means wait to perform a missed prayer with the same prayer on the following day, as mistakenly done by some people. Also, one should not put off performing a missed prayer until such time when its regular time is overdue, but one has to perform it immediately instead.

The second condition (of prayer): To conceal one's *`awrah*[10] while performing prayer, i.e. to screen the parts of the body that have to be covered, as exposing them is offensive or causes one embarrassment; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"O children of Adam, take your adornment [i.e. wear your clothing] at every masjid..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 31)

"*Masjid*" means a place for prayer or a mosque, so the meaning of the verse is that people have to wear their clothing that conceal their private parts upon each prayer. Moreover, in the *hadîth* related and deemed *hasan* (good) by At-Tirmidhî, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached puberty unless she wears a veil."*[11]

Ibn `Abdul-Barr said:

> *"Scholars uniformly agree on the invalidity of the prayer of one who refrains from clothing, and performs it naked though able to clothe oneself and conceal one's `awrah."*

So, it is indisputable that it is obligatory to conceal one's *`awrah* during prayer, in the presence of people, or even while being alone according to the valid opinion implied in the *hadîth* narrated on the authority of Mu`âwiyah Ibn Haydah Al-Qushayrî who reported:

> *"Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said to me, 'Conceal your `awrah (private parts) except from your wife and from whom your right hands possess (i.e. slave-girls).' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What (should we do) if the people are assembled together?' He (PBUH) said, 'If it is within your power that no one looks at it (i.e. your `awrah), then let no one look at it.' I then said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What if one is alone (i.e. should one conceal it too)?' He (PBUH) replied, 'Allah is more entitled to be shown bashfulness than people.' "*
>
> (Related by Abû Dâwûd and other compilers of *Hadîth*)[12]

Allah also refers to exposing *`awrah* as an act of 'immorality' as the unbelievers used to circumambulate the House (i.e. the Ka`bah) while being naked, claiming that it was an act of religion; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"And when they commit an immorality, they say, 'We found our fathers doing it and Allah has ordered us to do it.' Say, 'Indeed, Allah does not order immorality...' "*** (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 28)

In the light of the above, exposing one's *`awrah* and looking at it leads to grave evil and such an act is a means of immorality and debauchery. We see in those dissolute societies nowadays that their honor is lost and their morals are gone due to exposing their *`awrah*, which led to the spread of vice and the disappearance of virtue among them. On the other hand, concealing *`awrah* is a means of maintaining virtue, and this is why Satan is keen to tempt people to expose their *`awrah*. Therefore, Allah warns us against Satan, saying:

> ***"O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 27)

So, exposing *`awrah* is a satanic scheme in which many communities are entrapped nowadays, calling it fashion and modernity. As a result, there have become strip clubs, and women have become so dissolute that they expose their bodies before men so shamelessly.

So, you should know, gentle Muslim reader, that *`awrah* (private parts) has to be concealed in a way that makes such parts unnoticeable; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 26)

Thus, concealing one's *`awrah* (private parts) with clothing is a necessary, obligatory act.

A man's *`awrah* is from his navel to his knees, for `Alî Ibn Abû Tâlib narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Do not unveil your thigh, and do not look at the thigh of the living or the dead."*[13]
>
> (Related by Abû Dâwûd and Ibn Mâjah)

In another *hadîth*, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Cover your thigh for a man's thigh is a part of his `awrah (private parts)."*[14]
>
> (Related by Mâlik, Ahmad, and At-Tirmidhî who deemed it a *hasan* (good) *hadîth*)

In spite of all the above, regrettably, we find that a lot of men nowadays when practicing certain sports expose their bodies and cover only their sexual organs, which is an explicit contradiction to the aforementioned religious texts. Such men have to beware of that, and to abide by the teachings of their religion, refraining from whatever contradicts them.

As for a woman, all her body is considered *`awrah*, as the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"A woman is (regarded as) `awrah (i.e. she has to be concealed just like `awrah)."*[15]

This *hadîth* is deemed *sahîh* (aurthentic) by At-Tirmidhî. Also, it is narrated on the authority of Umm Salamah that she asked the Prophet (PBUH) saying:

> *"Can a woman perform prayer while wearing a dir` (a long upper garment) and a veil but not wearing a loincloth? He (PBUH) replied, "(Yes,) only if the dir` is long enough to cover her instep."*[16]
>
> (Related by Abû Dâwûd)

Moreover, Abû Dâwûd, At-Tirmidhî, and Ibn Mâjah narrated on the authority of `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached puberty unless she wears a veil."*[17]

At-Tirmidhî commented:

> *"The opinion of scholars is that if a woman who has reached puberty performs prayer while a certain part of her `awrah is exposed, her prayer is deemed invalid."*[18]

In addition to the aforesaid hadiths concerning a woman's *`awrah*, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"...And not display their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their head-covers over their chests and not display their adornment [i.e. beauty] except to their husbands..."*** (Qur'ân: An-Nûr: 31)

Allah, Exalted be He, also says:

> ***"O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Ahzâb: 59)

Moreover, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"...And when you ask [his wives] for something, ask them from behind a partition..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Ahzâb: 53)

For more illustration, `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated:

> *"Men would pass by us when we accompanied the Messenger (PBUH) while we were in the state of ihrâm (a state of ritual consecration during Hajj or `Umrah). When they came by us, every one of us would let down her veil over her face, and when they had passed on, we would uncover our faces."*[19]

The aforesaid texts as well as their likes in the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), which are so numerous, stress that everything in a woman is considered *`awrah* that has to be concealed in the presence of men who are *ajnabîs* (foreign, marriageable males); nothing of a woman's body is permissible to be exposed in the presence of an *ajnabî* (a foreign, marriageable male), whether in prayer or elsewhere. However, if a woman performs prayer in a place void of *ajnabîs*, it is permissible for her to uncover her face, as it is not regarded as *`awrah* during prayer provided there is no *ajnabî* to see her face, as it is impermissible in this case.

It is really shameful, upsetting and disappointing that many of the Muslim females of this modern age have reached a dangerous extent of dissoluteness and debauchery; they compete in exposing their bodies and wear see-through clothing and the like, imitating the unbelieving and apostate females. There is neither might nor power except in Allah, the Most High, and the Most Great!

Allah, Exalted be He, does not only command concealing *`awrah* during prayer, but He also enjoins Muslims to appear well when going to perform prayer; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"O children of Adam, take your adornment [i.e. wear your clothing] at every masjid..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-A`râf: 31)

This means that Allah commands His servants to wear their best, cleanest, and most beautiful clothing when heading for mosques to perform prayer, as they will stand in prayer between the Hands of Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He. Therefore, one has to appear perfectly well, physically and spiritually, to stand before Almighty Allah in prayer.

The third condition (of prayer): To avoid impurity. One of the conditions of the validity of prayer is the avoidance of impurity, and being in a perfect state of purity, whether related to one's body, clothing, or the place in which one stands to perform prayer. Impurity here means a special kind of filthy materials that makes it impermissible for one to perform prayer, such as the flesh of dead animals, blood, wine, urine, and stool. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"And your clothing purify."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Muddaththir: 4)

Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Purify yourselves from urine, for most of the torture in the grave is because of it."*

He (PBUH) also commanded a woman to wash her garment and purify it from menstruation blood before performing prayer in it,[20] and enjoined scrubbing the soles of one's shoes to clean them before performing prayer wearing them[21]. The Prophet (PBUH) ordered his Companions to pour a bucket of water over the place in the mosque where a Bedouin had urinated. Such incidents, as well as many others, are proofs of the necessity of avoiding impurity while performing prayer, as prayer is invalid if there is something impure afflicting one's body, one's clothing, or the place in which one performs prayer; the same ruling is applicable in case one is carrying something impure.

If one notices something impure on one's body or clothing after performing prayer, one's prayer is deemed valid so long as one has not been aware of it. Likewise, if one has been aware of impurity and has forgotten to remove it before performing prayer, one's prayer is deemed valid according to the sound juristic opinion in this regard. However, if impurity is noticed during prayer and one is able to remove it without making much movement during prayer (such as taking off one's impure shoes or turban), one is to remove it and continue performing prayer. But if unable to remove it, one's prayer is deemed invalid.

Prayer is invalid if performed at a graveyard, except for the Funeral Prayer, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"The whole earth is a masjid (a place for prayer) except bathrooms and graveyards."*

This *hadîth* is related by the Five Compilers of *Hadîth* except An-Nasâ'î, and was deemed *sahîh* (authentic) by At-Tirmidhî[22]. The Prophet (PBUH) also said:

> *"Do not face graves in prayer and do not sit on them."*
>
> (Related by the Group of Compilers of *Hadîth* except Al-Bukhârî)[23]

The Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Do not take graves as masjids (i.e. places for prayer)."*[24]

The reason for such prohibition is not just to avoid impurity, but for fear that graves might be taken as sacred places or idols to be worshipped by people. That is, the prohibition of performing prayer at graveyards is intended to avoid worshipping their dwellers (the dead) afterwards. Still, the Funeral Prayer is an exception of that ruling, as it is permissible to be performed at graves, as done by the Prophet (PBUH),[25] which makes the Prophetic prohibition restricted to certain cases. So, whatever is related to graves is prohibited to perform prayer therein, such as graves themselves, graveyards, etc.

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah said:

> *"The Imâms agree that it is impermissible to build a mosque over a grave, or to bury a dead person in a mosque. If the mosque has been built before the grave, the grave inside has to be leveled to the mosque floor, or to be disentombed if it has been recently built. However, if the mosque has been built after the grave, we should either pull down the mosque or pull down whatever indicates that the place is a grave rather than a mosque, for it is prohibited to offer prayer at a mosque built on a grave, be it obligatory or supererogatory prayer."*[26]

On the other hand, prayer is invalid if performed at a mosque whose *qiblah*[27] faces a grave, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Do not face graves in prayer."

It is also prohibited to perform prayer in a toilet, as they are places specified for urination and defecation and connected with impurity; since the Lawgiver[28] prohibits mentioning the Name of Allah in a toilet, then, with greater reason, it is prohibited to perform prayer in such places, which are inhabited by devils. Moreover, it is prohibited to perform prayer in bathrooms, where one gets washed, because they are places where people's `*awrah*s (private parts) are exposed and where devils live; this prohibition includes all the places inside the bathroom.

In addition, it is impermissible to perform prayer at camel stalls; **Shaykhul-Islâm Taqiyyud-Dîn Ibn Taymiyah** said:

> *"It is prohibited to perform prayer at their stalls (i.e. the camels') as their stalls are shelters for devils, and it is also prohibited to perform prayer in a bathroom, as it is a shelter for devils. So, such places of evil spirits reasonably necessitate avoiding performing prayer therein."*[29]

It is detestable to perform prayer in a place containing pictures or the like; **Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim** said:

> *"Such places are more deserving of avoiding performing prayer therein than bathrooms. The detestability of performing prayer in a bathroom is out of fear that the place is impure, or because it is the devils' dwelling place which is the sound opinion. Yet, the detestability of performing prayer in a place containing pictures or the like is intended to avoid polytheism, for the polytheism of most of the previous nations was related to paintings and graves."*[30]

Dear gentle Muslim reader, you should take care of your prayer and be keen on its validity, verifying your purity before being engaged in it, and avoiding the places where performing prayer is invalid, so as to ensure that your prayer is legally performed in the way decreed by Allah. In addition, you should never neglect any of the rulings on prayer or disregard it, for prayer is the basic pillar of your religion, if perfected, your faith will be perfected as well; if not, your faith will be imperfect. May Allah guide us all to that which leads to goodness and righteousness!

The fourth condition (of prayer): Facing the *qiblah* (direction of prayer). Among the conditions of the validity of prayer is facing the *qiblah*, the honorable Ka`bah. It is called *qiblah* because all Muslims turn their face towards it during prayer. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"...So turn your face [i.e. yourself] toward Al-Masjid Al-Harâm (the Sacred Mosque). And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces [i.e. yourselves] toward it [in prayer]..."***
>
> (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 144)

So, whoever is so near to the Ka`bah that he can see it, it is obligatory for him to turn his whole body toward it during prayer, as such a person can face it well, as he sees it with his eyes. Thus, it is impermissible for such a person to deviate from its direction. On the other hand, if one is near to the Ka`bah but there is something that hinders one from seeing it, one in this case has to try facing it as much as possible. However, if one is anywhere in the world so that one is away from the Ka`bah, one then can face the direction believed to be that of the Ka`bah, and moving a bit leftward or rightward does not matter, as the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"There is qiblah (direction of prayer) between the east and the west."*[31]

This *hadîth* was deemed *sahîh* (authentic) by At-Tirmidhî, and was narrated by many of the Prophet's Companions. Surely, this *hadîth* specifies the *qiblah* for Medina and all the places of the same direction and location. However, the *qiblah* for the east, for example, is between the south and the north, and so is the *qiblah* for the west.

Generally, prayer is invalid without facing the qiblah, for Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"...And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces [i.e. yourselves] toward it [in prayer]..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 144)

"Wherever" here indicates that the *qiblah* is to be faced during prayer no matter where one is; traveling by land, sea, air, eastward, westward, etc. Yet, one is not obliged to face the *qiblah* if unable to, such as being tied up or crucified in a way that one cannot face it. In such a case, one is to perform prayer facing the available direction even if it is not the *qiblah*, as this condition is inapplicable in such a case according to juristic consensus. Similarly, if one is engaged in a fierce war, or one flees from a flood, fire, a wild animal, or an enemy, or one is

so ill that one is unable to face the *qiblah*, one in such cases can perform prayer in the same state one is in, even if one is not facing the *qiblah*, and one's prayer will be deemed valid as well. This is because the condition is nullified in case of inability; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"So fear Allah as much as you are able..."

(Qur'ân: At-Taghâbun: 16)

The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"If I command you to do something, then do (of) it as much as you can."

Also, it is stated in a *hadîth* related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim that the Muslims in case of extreme fear used to perform prayer with and without facing the *qiblah*[32].

How to Identify the *Qiblah*

There are many ways through which one can know the *qiblah*, among which are:

Informing: One can be informed by a legally responsible, trustworthy person of the direction of *qiblah*, provided that the informer is certain about it.

Following the *qiblah* observed by mosques and *mihrâbs*: One can identify the *qiblah* by following the *qiblah* observed by a mosque or a *mihrâb* (prayer niche), which would show one the right direction of the *qiblah*.

Astronomy: The *qiblah* can also be identified by means of stars; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...And by the stars they are [also] guided."

(Qur'ân: An-Nahl: 16)

The fifth condition (of prayer): Intention; to intend performing an act of worship to draw near to Allah, Exalted be He. The heart is the real place of intention, so one does not have to declare it overtly, for this is regarded as an act of innovation in religion that had never been observed either by the Prophet (PBUH) or by his Companions. So, one is to intend performing a certain prayer only with one's heart, not tongue, in accordance with the *hadîth* that states:

"Deeds (i.e. their correctness and rewards) depend upon intentions."[33]

One intends performing a certain prayer upon the opening *takbîr*[34] of that prayer, so that the intention becomes associated with the act of worship; there is no harm if one intends a bit earlier. It is a condition that intention must last until the end of prayer. However, prayer becomes invalid if intention is cancelled during it. If one has said the opening *takbîr* in an obligatory prayer, whether one is led in prayer or performs it alone, it is permissible for one to change one's intention and perform it as a supererogatory prayer provided there is a valid excuse, such as joining a congregational prayer instead of praying alone.

It is important to know that some people have done strict innovations in religion concerning intentions of prayer which have never been decreed by Allah. For example, when intending to perform a certain prayer, some declare overtly which prayer they are going to perform, how many *rak`ah*s (units of prayer) they intend to perform, and who the *imâm* (leader) of prayer is, and so on. Such acts had never been done by the Messenger (PBUH) who had neither been reported to have declared his intention, whether secretly or overtly, upon performing prayer, nor had he been reported to have enjoined that.

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

> *"Declaring intention overtly is neither obligatory nor desirable as uniformly agreed upon by Muslim scholars. Rather, one who pronounces it overtly is regarded to be an innovator in religion who contradicts the Sharî`ah (Islamic Law). If one does so intentionally, thinking that it is an act of Sharî`ah, one is deemed an ignorant, straying Muslim who deserves discretionary punishment for that. If such a person insists on declaring intention overtly upon each prayer after being informed and enlightened, especially if he disturbs his prayer mates with his voice or repeats it several times, he deserves to receive severe discretionary punishment for that..."*

Ibn Taymiyah then added:

> *"... Some of the modern scholars maintained the obligation of doing so (i.e. pronouncing intention overtly) basing their opinion on misinterpretation of an opinion of Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î. However, the majority of the followers of Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î viewed the invalidity of such an interpretation of the Shâfi`î's opinion. This is because, Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î said about prayer, 'It is obligatory to begin it with overt pronunciation.' So, those modern scholars mistakenly thought*

that Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î meant that it was obligatory to pronounce one's intention overtly upon each prayer. However, all the followers of Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î deemed this a misinterpretation, pointing out that Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î only meant the overt pronunciation of the opening takbîr of prayer, not the intention..."[35]

In addition to the fact that expressing intention overtly is *bid`ah* (a matter innovated in religion), it could also lead to hypocrisy; one's intention has to be expressed secretly in one's heart as a sign of sincerity and devotion to Allah while performing acts of worship.

To sum up, a Muslim has to abide by the limits set by the *Sharî`ah* (Islamic Law), to adhere to the acts of the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), and to avoid whatsoever kinds of innovation (in religion) regardless of its adherents. Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"Say, 'Would you acquaint Allah with your religion while Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and Allah is Knowing of all things?"*** (Qur'ân: Al-Hujurât: 16)

Allah is Knowing of the intention of the heart, so a Muslim does not have to pronounce it overtly whether upon performing prayer or in any other act of worship; Allah, Exalted be He, knows best. May Allah guide us all to what He likes and pleases!

Endnotes

1 Al-Bukhârî (527) [2/13] and Muslim (85).
2 Al-Bukhârî (528) [2/15] and Muslim (1520) [3/173].
3 Muslim (1387) [2/114].
4 Al-Bukhârî (536) [2/25] and Muslim (1394) [3/118].
5 See Muslim (1424) [3/130] and Al-Bukhârî (4533) [8/245]; see also Muslim (1425) [3/130].
6 Al-Bukhârî (1954) [4/249] and Muslim (2553)[4/209].
7 Al-Bukhârî (561) [2/55], Muslim (1438) [3/137] and At-Tirmidhî (164) [1/304].
8 *Tahajjud*: The Night Vigil Prayer.
9 Al-Bukhârî (568) [2/65] and Muslim (1460) [3/147].
10 *`Awrah*: The private parts or parts of the body which are illegal to expose to others; a male's *`awrah* is from the navel to the knees whereas in another view it is said to be the external organs of sex and excretion. As for a female's *`awrah*, it includes all her body in one view whereas in another it is all her body with the exception of her face and hands.
11 Ahmad (25823) [6/248], Abû Dâwûd (641) [1/298], At-Tirmidhî (377) [2/215] and Ibn Mâjah (655) [1/362].

12 Ahmad (19978) [5/5], Abû Dâwûd (4017) [4/197], At-Tirmidhî (2799) [5/110], Ibn Mâjah (192) [2/448]; see also Al-Bukhârî (1/500) [1/500].
13 Abû Dâwûd (3140) [3/327] and Ibn Mâjah (1460) [2/200].
14 Ahmad (2492) [1/342] and At-Tirmidhî (2801) [5/111]; see also Abû Dâwûd (4014) [4/197] and At-Tirmidhî (2803) [5/111].
15 At-Tirmidhî (1175) [3/476].
16 Abû Dâwûd (640) [1/297].
17 Ahmad (25823) [6/248], Abû Dâwûd (641) [1/298], At-Tirmidhî (377) [2/215] and Ibn Mâjah (655) [1/362].
18 See *Jâmi` At-Tirmidhî* (2/216).
19 Abû Dâwûd (1833) [2/285] and Ibn Mâjah (2935) [3/429].
20 Al-Bukhârî (277) [1/430] and Muslim (673) [3/190].
21 Abû Dâwûd (650) [1/302].
22 Ahmad (11903) [3/121], Abû Dâwûd (492) [1/236], At-Tirmidhî (317) [2/131] and Ibn Mâjah (745) [1/412].
23 Muslim (2248) [4/42], Ahmad (17184) [4/185], Abû Dâwûd (3229) [3/359], At-Tirmidhî (1051) [3/367] and An-Nasâ'î (759) [1/401].
24 Muslim (1188) [3/17].
25 Al-Bukhârî (1336) [3/261] and Muslim (2208) [4/27]; see also Al-Bukhârî (1337) [3/261] and Muslim (2212) [4/29].
26 See Ibn Taymiyah's *Majmû`ul-Fatâwâ* [4/521-523], [11/290, 291], [17/502, 503], [19/41], [21/304, 321-322], [22/194-195], [27/140].
27 The *qiblah*: The direction of prayer, namely towards the Ka`bah.
28 The Lawgiver of *Sharî`ah* (Islamic Law) is Allah, Exalted be He; the term can also refer to the Prophet (PBUH) as he never ordained but what was revealed to him by Allah.
29 See Ibn Taymiyah's *Majmû`ul-Fatâwâ* [25/240].
30 See *Zâdul-Ma`âd* [2/147, 183].
31 At-Tirmidhî (342) [1/171] and Ibn Mâjah (1011) [1/534].
32 Al-Bukhârî (943) [2/555]; see also Muslim (1941) [3/64].
33 Al-Bukhârî (1) [1/12] and Muslim (4904) [7/55].
34 The opening *takbîr* (in prayer): Opening prayer with saying, "*Allâhu-Akbar*" (i.e. Allah is the Greatest).
35 See Ibn Taymiyah's *Majmû`ul-Fatâwâ* [22/218-221], [37/57].

CHAPTER

4

Etiquette of Heading for Mosque

Gentle Muslim reader, you really have to know the legalized standards of behavior prior to prayer, so as to get ready for it properly. This is because prayer is a great act of worship that must be preceded with the proper preparation and readiness, so that a Muslim can engage in such a glorious act of worship in the best state.

Therefore, if one heads for the mosque to join one's fellow Muslims in a congregational prayer, one should walk calmly, peacefully, and tranquilly, without haste. One should be in a state of solemnity and calmness, averting one's vision (from looking at what Allah prohibits), lowering one's voice and trying as much as possible not to look around.

It is stated in the Two Sahîhs that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"If the iqâmah is declared - (in another narration, 'When you hear the iqâmah...')*[1] *- proceed to perform the prayer with calmness and solemnity and do not make haste. And pray whatever rak'ahs (units of prayer) you get (with the people) and complete the rest which you have missed.")*[2]

Moreover, Imâm Muslim related that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"...When one of you is preparing for prayer, he is in fact engaged in prayer."*[3]

When a Muslim heads for the mosque to perform prayer, he should not be late, so as not to miss the opening *takbîr*, i.e. to attend the congregational prayer from the beginning. In addition, while making towards the mosque, one should make one's pace slow, taking one's steps close to one another to get more rewards. It is stated in the Two Sahîhs that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"If a person performs ablution and does it perfectly, and then proceeds to the mosque with the sole intention of performing prayer, then for each step he takes toward the mosque, Allah raises him a degree in reward and blots out (i.e. forgives) one of his sins."*[4]

When a Muslim reaches the mosque, he should step in with his right leg, saying the following invocation:

> *"In the Name of Allah, I seek refuge with Allah the Most Great, in His Honorable Face, and in His infinitely preexistent Sovereignty, from the accursed Satan. O Allah! Confer Your blessings upon Muhammad. O Allah! Forgive my sins and let the doors of Your Mercy be open for me."*

When one wishes to come out of the mosque, one should step out with one's left leg saying the aforesaid invocation, but instead of saying, "... *and let the doors of Your Mercy be open for me*", one should rather say, "... *and let the doors of Your Favor be opened for me.*" This is because the mosque is the place of seeking Allah's Mercy, while outside the mosque is where one seeks livelihood, which Allah bestows upon His servants out of His Favor.

Once one enters the mosque, one should perform two *rak`ahs* before sitting, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"If anyone of you enters a mosque, he should perform two rak`ahs before sitting."*[5]

Then one sits waiting for the *iqâmah*; while waiting for the *iqâmah*, one should spend the time between the two *rak`ahs* and the *iqâmah* in glorifying and praising Allah, and in reciting the Qur'ân. One has also to avoid frivolous play, such as interlacing one's fingers and the like, for the Prophet (PBUH) forbade doing so while waiting for the *iqâmah*, saying:

"When anyone of you is in the mosque, he should not interlace (his fingers), for interlacing (fingers) is from Satan."[6]

As for those in the mosque for reasons other than waiting for the *iqâmah*, they are allowed to interlace their fingers, as it is stated that the Prophet (PBUH) once interlaced his fingers after concluding prayer with *taslîm*[7].

While waiting for prayer in the mosque, one should not enter into talks unrelated to religion, because it is stated in a *hadîth* that doing so eats up rewards in the same way as fire eats up wood[8]. In another *hadîth*, the Prophet stated that when anyone enters a mosque, he is considered to be in prayer as long as he is waiting for the prayer, and the angels keep on asking for Allah's forgiveness for him[9]. Therefore, a Muslim should not miss such great rewards by being engaged in frivolous play or idle talks.

When the *iqâmah* is declared, one should stand up when the prayer caller says "*qadi-qâmatis-salâh*" (i.e. "Prayer is commenced"), for the Prophet (PBUH) used to do so. It is also allowed for one to stand up on the beginning of declaring the *iqâmah* if one sees the *imâm* (prayer leader); if not, it is better not to stand up until one sees the *imâm*. Besides, one should always be keen on standing in the first row (in congregational prayers), for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"If the people knew the reward for pronouncing the adhân (prayer call) and for standing in the first row (in congregational prayers), and found no other way to get that reward except by casting lots, they would cast lots."[10]

(Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

He (PBUH) also said:

"The best rows for men are the first rows..."[11]

As for men, it is better to be close to the *imâm*, as the Prophet (PBUH), who used to lead the Muslims in prayer, said:

"Let those of you who are sedate and prudent be near me (i.e. be in the first row)."[12]

As regards women, it is better for them to be in the last rows, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"...And the best rows for women are the last ones."

This is because women will not be visible to men in this way.

The *imâm* and the ones led behind him ought to be cautious to straighten rows, for the Prophet said:

> *"Straighten your rows, for the straightening of a row is part of the perfection of prayer."*[13]
>
> (Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

In another *hadîth*, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Straighten your rows or else Allah will alter your faces."*[14]

Thus, when standing for congregational prayer, Muslims should straighten their rows so that their shoulders and ankles become aligned, leaving no space between one another, for the Prophet (PBUH) said in this regard:

> *"Straighten your rows and stand close to one another."*[15]

This *hadîth* means that the ones led in prayer ought to stand close to one another, leaving no gaps between them for Satan.

The Prophet (PBUH) has always been greatly concerned with straightening rows and making the ones led in prayer stand close to one another, which indicates how important and useful it is. This does not mean that people should widen between their feet in a way that disturbs those standing beside them, as mistakenly done by some ignorant people. Such people thus leave gaps in rows, causing harm and annoyance to those standing next to them without having any legal proof supporting such an act. Therefore, Muslims should pay more attention to such issues and care for straightening their rows in prayers, following the example of the Prophet (PBUH) and ensuring the perfection of their prayer; may Allah guide us all to whatever He likes and pleases.

Endnotes

1 Al-Bukhârî (636) [1/53].
2 Al-Bukhârî (908) [2/105] and Muslim (1358) [3/100].
3 Muslim (1359) [3/101].
4 Al-Bukhârî (477) [1/73] and Muslim (1504) [3/168].
5 Al-Bukhârî (1163) [3/63] and Muslim (1652) [3/232].
6 Ahmad (11324) [3/43] and Ibn Abû Shaybah (4824) [1/420]. Al-Haythamî in his book *'Majma' Az-Zawâ'id'* (*The Collection of Additional Hadîths*) (2/25).
7 Al-Bukhârî (482) [1/731] and Muslim (1288) [3/69]
8 This tradition was not mentioned by any one of the compilers of *Hadîth* as said by Al-'Irâqî in his book *Takhrîjul 'Ihyâ'* (1/136); Ibn As-Subkî in his book *'Tabaqât Ash-Shâfi'iyyah'* (4/145) and Al-Albânî in his book *'As-Silsilah Ad-Da'îfah'* (4) [1/18]

9 Al-Bukhârî (477) [1/730] and Muslim (1504) [3/168]
10 Al-Bukhârî (615) [2/126] and Muslim (980) [2/378]
11 Muslim (984) [2/38]
12 Muslim (973) [2/376]
13 Al-Bukhârî (723) [2/271] and Muslim (974) [2/376]
14 Al-Bukhârî (717) [2/268] and Muslim (977) [2/377]
15 Al-Bukhârî (719) [2/269]

CHAPTER

5

Prayer: Integral Parts, Obligatory Practices and Acts of the *Sunnah*

Prayer is a great act of worship which includes decreed statements and postures forming the perfect form of its performance. Scholars define prayer as special statements and postures starting with *takbîr* and ending with *taslîm*.

These statements and postures of prayer are divided into three sections, namely the integral parts, the obligatory practices, and the acts of the *Sunnah*. **The integral parts** of prayer are those the negligence of any of which, intentionally or inattentively, invalidates prayer or invalidates the *rak`ah* (unit of prayer) in which it is neglected; being replaced by the next one, as we will point out later. As for **the obligatory practices** of prayer, if any of them is intentionally neglected, prayer is invalidated, but if inattentively, it is not invalidated, and performing the Prostration of Forgetfulness will be obligatory then. Concerning **the acts of the *Sunnah*** to be observed during prayer,

the negligence of any of them neither affects the validity of prayer nor makes it incomplete. Still, we have to bear in mind that whenever the Prophet (PBUH) performed prayer, he observed its integral parts, obligatory practices, and acts of the *Sunnah,* and we have to follow his example, for he (PBUH) said:

"Perform prayer in the way you see me performing prayer."[1]

A-The Integral Parts of Prayer

They are fourteen:

The first is to stand while performing an obligatory prayer; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...And stand before Allah, devoutly obedient."

(Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 238)

Moreover, in the *marfû`* (traceable) *hadîth* narrated on the authority of `Imrân, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Perform prayer while standing; if you cannot, perform it while sitting; if you cannot, then perform it while lying on your side."[2]

The above-mentioned verse and *hadîth* prove that standing is obligatory while performing one of the obligatory prayers so long as one is able to. Yet, if one is unable to pray while standing due to an illness, one is allowed then to pray while sitting or lying on one's side. The same goes for one in a state of extreme fear, one who is naked (finding no clothing to conceal one's *`awrah*), one whose recovery requires sitting or lying on one's side rather than standing, or one who is unable to stand because the roof of the place where one prays is not high enough provided one is unable to go out (to pray in the mosque). Likewise, in case the regular *imâm* of a mosque leads the people in prayer while sitting, due to a legal excuse, the people led in prayer behind him should also perform it while sitting, following their regular *imâm*. This is because the Prophet (PBUH) was once ill and led the people in prayer while sitting, commanding them to do the same, i.e. to sit as well[3].

As for a supererogatory prayer, it is permissible to perform it while standing or sitting. In other words, it is not obligatory to perform it while standing, as it is stated that the Prophet (PBUH) sometimes performed supererogatory prayers while sitting, without any legal excuse[4].

The second integral part of prayer is the opening *takbîr* (in the beginning of prayer); the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"... Then face the qiblah (direction of prayer towards the Ka`bah) and say takbîr."[5]

This is also supported by the *hadîth* in which the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"... And takbîr is the beginning of prayer (that makes all lawful acts outside prayer unlawful in prayer."[6]

The Prophet (PBUH) was never reported to have started performing prayer without the opening *takbîr* (saying, "*Allâhu-Akbar*", i.e. "Allah is the Greatest"). There is by no means any other sufficient substitute for it when opening a prayer, according to what is reported to have been observed and enjoined by the Prophet (PBUH).

The third integral part of prayer is the recitation of the *Al-Fâtihah (the Opening Chapter of the Qur'ân)*. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"No prayer is (accepted) from whoever does not recite Al-Fâtihah (in it)."[7]

Reciting *Al-Fâtihah* is one of the integral parts of each *rak`ah* in prayer, as authentically narrated to have been observed by the Prophet (PBUH). Moreover, when the Prophet (PBUH) taught the one who used to perform prayer improperly, he ordered him to recite *Al-Fâtihah* in each *rak`ah*[8].

The question here: Is everyone performing a congregational prayer obliged to recite *Al-Fâtihah*, or is it only obligatory to be recited by the *imâm* in case of a publicly-recited prayer and by the single worshipper? In fact, scholars disagree in this concern. So, to avoid any doubt and to be in the safe side, one is to recite *Al-Fâtihah* if one is led in a secretly-recited prayer, and to recite it during the pause made by the *imâm* (after his recitation of *Al-Fâtihah*) in case of publicly-recited prayers.

The fourth integral part of prayer is bowing in every *rak`ah*; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"O you who have believed, bow and prostrate..."

(Qur'ân: Al-Hajj: 77)

Moreover, bowing during prayer is authentically stated in the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), so it is an integral part of prayer according to the Qur'ân, *Sunnah*, and consensus[9].

Proper bowing during prayer is done by bending one's body forward so that one's hands can reach one's knees in normal cases (i.e. when one's hands are neither longer nor shorter than normal). Otherwise, one tries to bend one's body in a degree similar to that of normal cases as much as possible. It is also sufficient for one praying while sitting to bend one's face instead, so that it is aligned with one's knees.

The fifth and the sixth integral parts of prayer are rising following bowing, and standing upright, as the Prophet (PBUH) used to do so while performing prayer; he (PBUH) said:

"Perform prayer in the way you see me performing prayer."

The seventh integral part of prayer is prostrating, i.e. making one's forehead touch the ground, as well as the other organs of prostration, namely the nose, the hands, the knees and the bottom of the toes. Prostration is to be done twice in each *rak`ah*; it is a Divine command, as Allah, Exalted be He, says, ***"...And prostrate..."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Hajj: 77) It is also a Prophetic command according to many *hadîth*s,[10] for he (PBUH) said, as mentioned above:

"Perform prayer in the way you see me performing prayer."[11]

The organs of prostration are seven as previously mentioned (the forehead and the nose together, both hands, both knees, and the bottom of the toes of both feet). Each of them has to touch the ground well, as much as possible. In fact, prostration is the greatest integral part of prayer; the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"The state in which a servant is nearest to his Lord is while prostrating himself."[12]

Thus, the Prophet (PBUH) teaches us that prostration is the optimum state that draws one near to the Lord, Allah.

The eighth integral part of prayer is raising oneself from prostration and sitting erect between the two prostrations; Imâm Muslim related that `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated:

"When he (the Prophet) raised his head after prostration, he did not prostrate himself (again) until he had sat erect."[13]

The ninth integral part of prayer is being tranquil while performing all the actions of prayer. Tranquility here means performing the acts of

prayer serenely, humbly and submissively, moving as less as possible. The Qur'ân and *Sunnah* state that the prayer of one who does not perform it in a state of tranquility and devotion is deemed incomplete, and it is obligatory for one to re-perform it in this case.

The tenth and the eleventh integral parts of prayer are the Final *Tashahhud*[14] and the posture of sitting for it. It is authenticated that the Prophet (PBUH) used to recite *Tashahhud* during prayer and never abandoned it,[15] so we must follow in his footsteps, as he (PBUH) said:

"Perform prayer in the way you see me performing prayer."

Ibn Mas`ûd (may Allah be pleased with him) said, *"Before Tashahhud was decreed, we used to recite instead..."*[16]; the phrase *"was decreed"* here implies that it is obligatory to recite *Tashahhud* in prayer.

The twelfth integral part of prayer is invoking Allah to confer His blessings upon Muhammad, by saying:

"O Allah! Confer Your blessings upon Muhammad..."

Whatever is recited more than this is an act of the *Sunnah*, not an obligatory act.

The thirteenth integral part of prayer is observing succession when performing the above-mentioned integral parts of prayer, as the Prophet (PBUH) used to perform them successively, and he (PBUH) commanded Muslims to follow his example while performing prayer, saying, as mentioned above:

"Perform prayer in the way you see me performing prayer."

In addition, when the Prophet (PBUH) taught the one, who performed prayer improperly, the right way of performing prayer, he pointed out the aforesaid acts successively, one after another[17].

The fourteenth integral part of prayer is concluding prayer with *taslîm*, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"...And its conclusion is taslîm."[18]

So, after *taslîm*, what has been unlawful to be done during prayer (such as eating, drinking, talking, etc.) becomes lawful once again, as *taslîm* is decreed as a sign of the end of the prayer.

Gentle reader, you should be aware that a Muslim should never neglect any of the aforesaid integral parts of prayer. As for the opening *takbîr*, if it is not pronounced, then prayer is not begun, and one thus will not be considered in a state of prayer. Regarding the other integral parts of prayer, intentional negligence of any of them causes prayer to be invalid. However, if it is inattentively neglected, such as bowing or prostrating, and one remembers that before starting another *rak'ah*, one then performs whatever one has inattentively missed. But, if one remembers after the following *rak'ah* has been started, the previous *rak'ah* (one of whose integrals is inattentively neglected) will be null and the following one will take its place. Still, prayer is not invalidated in the latter case, provided that one performs the two prostrations of forgetfulness even if one realizes the missed integral part after *taslîm*. In case the forgotten integral part is the Final *Tashahhud* or one of the two *taslîms*, and one remembers it after concluding prayer with *taslîm*, one can re-perform it, perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness, and then say *taslîm*. However, if the forgotten part is something other than the Final *Tashahhud* or one of the two *taslîms*, such as bowing or prostrating, one makes up for it by performing a whole *rak'ah* then performing the two prostrations of forgetfulness, provided that there is no long interval between ending prayer and remembering the forgotten integral, or that one's ablution is not invalidated by then. Otherwise, the whole prayer must be re-performed.

What a great act of worship prayer is, and how glorious are its words and actions! May Allah grant us success in establishing it regularly and observing it perfectly!

B-The Obligatory Acts of Prayer

There are eight obligatory acts to be observed during prayer:

1- **All the *takbîrs*** of prayer - other than the opening *takbîr* - are among the obligatory acts, not the integral parts, which have to be observed during prayer. The example for this is the transition *takbîrs*.

2- ***Tasmî'***,[19] which is only obligatory to be said by the *imâm* or by one praying alone, not the one(s) led in prayer.

3- ***Tahmîd***,[20] which is obligatory to be said by the *imâm*, the one praying alone, and the one(s) led in prayer, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"When the imâm says, 'Allah listens to the one who praises Him,' you should say, 'O our Lord, to You be (all) the praise.'"[21]

4- **Saying, *"Subhâna Rabbiyal-`Azîm"*** (i.e. "Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great") only once while bowing; it is an act of the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) to say it three times at least, or ten times at most, for the sake of perfecting prayer.

5- **Saying, *"Subhâna Rabbiyal-A`lâ"*** (i.e. "Glory be to my Lord, the Most High") only once while prostrating; it is also an act of the *Sunnah* to say it up to three times.

6- **Invoking Allah saying,** *"O my Lord, forgive me,"* once between the two prostrations, and it is an act of the *Sunnah* to say it up to three times.

7- **Reciting the First *Tashahhud*,** saying:

"(All) compliments, prayers and good things are due to Allah; peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His blessings (be upon you). Peace be upon us and upon the pious servants of Allah. I testify that there is no deity (worthy of worship) but Allah, Alone, with no partner, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger."

Or the like of what is reported to have been observed by the Prophet (PBUH).

8- **Sitting for reciting the First *Tashahhud*,** as reported to have been regularly observed by the Prophet (PBUH), who said:

"Perform prayer in the way you see me performing prayer."

It is worth mentioning here that prayer is invalidated if one abandons any of the aforesaid eight obligatory practices of prayer intentionally, as one thus alters and distorts prayer. Yet, if one does not perform any of them by remissness or ignorance, it is obligatory for one to offer the two prostrations of forgetfulness instead, as a way of making up for one's negligence of an obligatory practice of prayer whose nonperformance is forbidden.

C-The Acts of the *Sunnah* to be Observed during Prayer

They are divided into two types; verbal and physical practices of the *Sunnah*, abandoning any of which does not invalidate prayer, unlike the previous two sections (the integral parts and the obligatory acts of prayer).So, there are two kinds of the acts of the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) to be observed during prayer:

1- Verbal Acts of the *Sunnah*

There are many verbal acts of the *Sunnah* to be observed during prayer, among which are the opening invocation of prayer, seeking refuge with Allah from Satan, saying *Basmalah*,[22] *ta'mîn*,[23] and reciting some of the Qur'ân following reciting *Al-Fâtihah (the Opening Chapter of the Qur'ân)* in the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer, the *Jumu`ah* (Friday) Prayer, the *`Îd* (Feast) Prayer, the Eclipse Prayer, and in the first two *rak`ahs* of the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer, the *Ishâ'* (Night) Prayer, the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer, and the *`Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer.

Among the verbal acts of the *Sunnah* of prayer is saying, following *tahmîd*:

> *"(Our Lord, to You be (all) praise) with which are filled the heavens and the earth, and what is between them, and whatever You will afterward."*

It is only an act of the *Sunnah* to say, "*Subhâna Rabbiyal-`Azîm*" (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great) while bowing and "*Subhâna Rabbiyal-A`lâ*" (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High) while prostrating; such verbal acts may be said more than once. Moreover, it is an act of the *Sunnah* to say more than once, between the two prostrations, *"O Allah! Forgive me."* Also, among the verbal acts of the *Sunnah* to be observed during prayer is to invoke Allah saying, following the Final *Tashahhud*:

> *"O Allah! I seek refuge with You from the torture of the Fire, from the torture in the grave, from the trial of life and death, and from the evil of the trial of Al-Masîhud-Dajjâl (Antichrist)."*

In addition, one can invoke Allah with other invocations that the Prophet used to say in the Final *Tashahhud*.

2- Physical Acts of the *Sunnah*

There are physical acts of the *Sunnah* to be observed while performing prayer, such as raising one's hands (so that the thumbs be near the ears) when saying the opening *takbîr*; the same is to be observed before bowing, and also when standing upright after bowing. It is also an act of the *Sunnah* to put one's right hand on the left one, putting the latter either on the chest or under the navel when rising from bowing. Moreover, it is an act of the *Sunnah* to keep looking at the position of prostrating during prayer. Also, one is to put one's hands on one's knees while bowing, straightening one's back (as if forming a right angle), and making one's head in alignment with one's back without lowering or raising the head. During prostration, it is an act of the *Sunnah* to keep one's abdomen apart from one's thighs, and one's thighs apart from one's legs, making one's forehead, nose and the rest of the aforesaid seven parts of prostration well settled on the ground (or the place of prayer).

In addition to the above, there are many verbal and physical acts of the *Sunnah* concerning prayer pointed out in details in juristic books. At any rate, it is not obligatory to observe these acts of the *Sunnah* during prayer; whoever observes them or any of them will be rewarded, and there is no sin on those who do not observe them, just like the ruling on all other acts of the *Sunnah*. We do not find any logical justification for the strictness and narrow-mindedness observed by some youth nowadays when applying the acts of the *Sunnah* during prayer, which may lead them to perform it in a very strange manner. For instance, some of them may bow their heads while standing as if they were in a state of bowing. They may also put their hands on the upper part of the chest, under the neck, instead of putting them on the chest or under the navel as stated in the *Sunnah*. In addition, some of them are so strict in keeping themselves screened while praying (so that no one can pass in front of them) that they do not perform the supererogatory prayer in the same row (where they have offered a congregational prayer); they rather perform it elsewhere in the mosque provided it is a screened place. Some of those strict youth also stretch their heads forwards and their legs backwards during prostration that they look as if they were lying on the ground rather than prostrating. Furthermore, some of them, while being in a standing position, keep their feet wide apart in a way that disturbs those beside them. These are, in fact, strange practices that may lead to strictness and excessiveness, which are detestable in religion.

May Allah guide them and us to the straight path, and make us work accordingly.

Endnotes

1 Al-Bukhârî (6008) [10/538].
2 Al-Bukhârî (1117) [2/758], Abû Dâwûd (952) [1/409] and At-Tirmidhî (372) [2/208].
3 Al-Bukhârî (805) [2/375] and Muslim (920) [2/351].
4 Muslim (1696) [3/253].
5 Al-Bukhârî (6251) [11/44] and Muslim (884) [2/330].
6 Muslim (1110) [2/438] and also in (1810) [3/302].
7 Al-Bukhârî (756) [2/306] and Muslim (872) [422].
8 Al-Bukhârî (757) [2/306] and Muslim (883) [2/329]. Concerning the Prophet's order to recite *Al-Fâtihah* as reported in *Sahîh* of Ibn Hibbân (1787) [5/88].
9 See the book of *'Al-Mu'jamul-Mufahras'* (2/298).
10 See the book of *'Al-Mu'jamul Mufahras'* (2/415).
11 Al-Bukhârî (6008).
12 Muslim (1083) [2/423].

13 Muslim (498)

14 (The Final) *Tashahhud*: Reciting, *"(All) compliments, prayers and good things are due to Allah; peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His blessings (be upon you). Peace be upon us and upon the pious servants of Allah. I testify that there is no deity (worthy of worship) but Allah, Alone, with no partner, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger. O Allah! Confer Your blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You conferred Your blessings upon Ibrâhîm (Abraham) and the family of Ibrâhîm. Verily, You are Praiseworthy and Honorable. And bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed Ibrâhîm and the family of Ibrâhîm. Verily, You are Praiseworthy and Honorable."*

15 This may be concluded from a lot of *hadîth*s such as that one related by Muslim (1110) [2/438].

16 An-Nasâ'î (1276) [2/247], Al-Bukhârî (6328) [11/157] and Muslim (895) [2/337].

17 Al-Bukhârî (757) [2/306] and Muslim (883) [2/329].

18 Muslim (1110) [2/438].

19 *Tasmî'*: Saying "*Sami'allâhu liman hamidah*" i.e. "Allah listens to the one who praises Him," when standing following bowing in prayer.

20 *Tahmîd* (in prayer): Saying as a reply to *tasmî*, "*Rabbanâ-walakal-hamd*" i.e. "Our Lord, to You be (All) praise."

21 Al-Bukhârî (689) [2/225] and Muslim (920) [2/351].

22 *Basmalah*: Saying, "*Bismillâhir-Rahmânir-Rahîm*" i.e. "In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful."

23 *Ta'mîn*: Saying, "*âmîn*" i.e. "Amen" after the recitation of *Al-Fâtihah* in prayer.

CHAPTER

6

Manner of Prayer

We have dealt with the integral parts, the obligatory acts, and the verbal and the physical acts of the *Sunnah* of prayer. Therefore, we would like now to point out the way prayer is performed, as stated to have been observed by the Prophet (PBUH), so as to follow the Prophet's example in this regard and in accordance with the *hadîth* in which he (PBUH) said:

"Perform prayer in the way you see me performing prayer."

Here is the Prophetic way of performing prayer:

- Whenever the Prophet (PBUH) stood for prayer, he faced the *qiblah*,[1] raised his hands making the palms face the *qiblah*, saying, "*Allâhu-Akbar*," i.e. "Allah is the Greatest."
- He (PBUH) then holds his left hand with his right one, putting it on his chest.
- Then, he (PBUH) says the opening invocation; he (PBUH) did not observe a certain opening invocations regularly, so it is permissible to say any of the opening invocation reported to have been said by the Prophet (PBUH). Among these invocations is:

"Glory be to You, O Allah, and to You be all praise, and Blessed is Your Name, and Exalted is Your Majesty, and there is no deity (worthy of worship) but You."

The Prophet (PBUH) then says:

"I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the expelled (from the mercy of Allah). In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful."

- Then, he (PBUH) recites *Al-Fâtihah (the Opening Chapter of the Qur'ân)*, following it with saying "*Âmîn* (Amen)."
- After that, he (PBUH) recites a sura (a long, a short, or a medium one). It is narrated that he (PBUH) used to prolong reciting the Qur'ân in the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer in particular. The Prophet also used to recite publicly in the first two *rak'ah*s of the *Fajr* (Dawn), the *Maghrib* (Sunset), the *'Ishâ'* (Night) Prayers, and recite quietly to himself in any other *rak'ah*s. Moreover, he (PBUH) used to make the recitation of the first *rak'ah* longer than that of the second one in every prayer.
- He (PBUH) then raises his hands in the same way he does while saying the opening *takbîr* of prayer, saying, "*Allâhu-Akbar*" (i.e. "Allah is the Greatest"). He then bows putting his hands on his knees firmly, parting between his fingers, and stretching his back, making his head aligned with his back, neither raising nor lowering it, and says, "*Subhâna Rabbiyal-'Azîm*" (i.e. "Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great").
- Then, he (PBUH) raises his head saying, *"Allah listens to the one who praises Him"*, raising both his hands in the same way he does upon bowing.
- After that, he (PBUH) stands up straight saying, (following *tasmî'*),[2] *"Our Lord, to You be (all) the praise."* It is important to point out that the Prophet (PBUH) used to prolong standing following bowing.
- He (PBUH) then says *takbîr* (without raising his hands this time) then prostrates. In prostration, he (PBUH) used to settle his forehead, nose, hands, knees, and the bottom of his toes on the ground (or the place of prayer), making his fingers and toes face the *qiblah*. He (PBUH) used to lean on the palms of his hands during prostration, keeping his upper arms apart from his sides, his abdomen apart from his thighs, and his thighs apart from his legs, saying, "*Subhâna Rabbiyal-A'lâ*"

(i.e. "Glory be to my Lord, the Most High"); he (PBUH) used to make his prostration neither long nor short.

- Following the first prostration, he (PBUH) raises his head saying *takbîr*, placing his left foot on its side and sitting on it, keeping the right foot as it was since prostration (i.e. resting on the bottom of its toes while the heel is up). He (PBUH) also places his hands on his thighs saying:

  "O Allah! Forgive me, have mercy on me, set me right, guide me, and sustain me."

- He (PBUH) then says *takbîr* and prostrates, doing in the second prostration the same as he did in the first.

- After that, he (PBUH) raises his head saying *takbîr*, and then he stands upright after resting on the bottom of his toes and leaning on his knees and thighs.

- When he (PBUH) stands upright, he starts recitation, performing the second *rak`ah* in the same way he did in the first.

- At the end of the second *rak`ah*, the Prophet (PBUH) sits for the First *Tashahhud*, placing his left foot on its side and sitting on it just as he does while sitting between the two prostrations. Then he (PBUH) places his right hand on his right thigh and his left hand on his left thigh. He (PBUH) also places the thumb of his right hand on his middle finger making them like a ring, leaving the index finger extended forward as if pointing, and keeps looking at it, reciting the First *Tashahhud*, saying:

  "(All) compliments, prayers and good things are due to Allah; peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His blessings (be upon you). Peace be upon us and upon the pious servants of Allah. I testify that there is no deity (worthy of worship) but Allah, Alone, with no partner, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger."

- He (PBUH) used to make this sitting as short as possible.

- After this, he stands upright saying *takbîr*, performing both the third and the fourth *rak`ah*s just like the first two, but making them shorter; he (PBUH) also recites *Al-Fâtihah* in both the third and the fourth *rak`ah*s.

- He (PBUH) sits for the Final *Tashahhud*, placing his left foot on its side and sitting on it, keeping the right foot as it was since prostration (i.e., resting on the bottom of its toes while the heel is up), or putting his left calf under his right one, keeping his right foot vertical, and sitting on the ground (or the place of prayer) instead.
- Then, he (PBUH) recites the Final *Tashahhud*, which is the same as the first with the following addition:

  "...O Allah! Confer Your blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You conferred Your blessings upon Ibrâhîm (Abraham) and the family of Ibrâhîm. Verily, You are Praiseworthy and Honorable. And bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed Ibrâhîm and the family of Ibrâhîm. Verily, You are Praiseworthy and Honorable."
- Following the Final *Tashahhud*, he (PBUH) seeks refuge with Allah from the torture of the Fire, from the torture in the grave, from the trial of life and death, and from the evil of the trial of Antichrist. A Muslim may then invoke Allah with invocations mentioned in the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*.
- Finally, he (PBUH) closes prayer with *taslîm*, turning his head to the right saying, "*As-slâmu 'alaykum wa rahmatullâh*" (i.e. "Peace and Mercy of Allah be upon you"), then turning to the left saying the same. He (PBUH) used to start uttering *taslîm* while facing the *qiblah* and finish it when he completed turning his head to the right or the left.
- When the Prophet finishes *taslîm*, he says:

  "O Allah! I seek Your forgiveness (thrice). O Allah! You are the Perfection and You are the One Who grants perfection; Blessed are You, O Owner of Majesty and Honor."
- Then, he (PBUH) used to remember Allah with the invocations reported to have been observed by him.

This is, gentle Muslim reader, a brief description of the way the Prophet (PBUH) used to perform prayer according to the texts of *hadîths* mentioned in this regard. Therefore, you should take an interest in your prayer, trying your best to perform it perfectly, following in the Prophet's footsteps as much as possible; Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the last day and [who] remembers Allah often."

(Qur'ân: Al-Ahzâb: 21)

May Allah grant us all success and acceptance of our good deeds.

Endnotes

1 The *qibîlah*: The direction of prayer, namely towards the Ka`bah.
2 *Tasmî`*: Saying "*Sami`allâhu liman hamidah*" i.e. "Allah listens to the one who praises Him," when standing following bowing in prayer.

CHAPTER

7

Prayer: Detestable Acts

It is detestable to turn around with one's face and chest, for the Prophet (PBUH) said about turning around in prayer, as related by Al-Bukhârî:

"It is what Satan steals from the prayer of any one of you."[1]

There are exceptional cases such as turning around in case of fear or for a valid excuse. However, if one turns around with all one's body, or turns his back to the Ka`bah in cases other than fear, one's prayer will be invalid, for one thus turns and does not face the *qiblah* during prayer without a legal excuse. This shows that it is permissible to turn around in prayer only in the case of fear, for it is one of the things that fighting necessitates. So, in cases other than fear, it is permissible to turn with one's face and chest only when necessary. Yet, it is detestable to turn around unnecessarily during prayer, and if one turns around with one's whole body, one's prayer becomes invalid.

It is also detestable to look toward the sky during prayer, as the Prophet (PBUH) disallowed this saying:

"What is wrong with those people who look toward the sky during prayer?"

The Prophet (PBUH) criticized such an act so bitterly that he continued saying:

> *"They should stop (looking toward the sky during prayer) or else their eyesight would be taken away."*[2]
>
> (Related by Al-Bukhârî)

As we have previously mentioned, one should look only at the position of prostrating during prayer. One should never let one's sight wander everywhere during prayer, looking at the walls, engraved patterns, writings, and the like, as this distracts one during prayer.

It is detestable to close one's eyes during prayer unnecessarily, as this is a Jewish practice. Yet, it is not detestable to close one's eyes when necessary, such as closing them to avoid looking at what may distract one during prayer, like decorations, ornaments, etc. This is the opinion Ibnul-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions in this regard[3].

It is detestable to lean on one's forearms when sitting during prayer, as the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"When you raise your head after prostration, do not squat as a dog squats."*

This *hadîth* is related by Ibn Mâjah,[4] and there are other *hadîth*s stressing the same point.

It is also detestable to lean on a wall or the like when standing during prayer, unless in case of necessity, such as an illness or the like, as leaning on something facilitates standing up.

It is detestable to put one's forearms flat while prostrating, stretching them with elbows touching the ground, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Perform the prostration properly and do not put your forearms flat with elbows touching the ground like a dog."*[5]

It is detestable as well to trifle in prayer, such as playing with one's leg, beard, garment or anything else during prayer, or playing with one's hand on the ground, and so on.

Among the detestable acts is placing one's hands on one's waist during prayer, as such a posture is related to the unbelievers and the arrogant people, and the Prophet (PBUH) forbade Muslims to imitate them; it is authentically stated in a *hadîth* related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim that the Prophet (PBUH) forbade performing prayer with the hands on the waist[6].

Interlacing one's fingers and cracking one's knuckles are also detestable in prayer.

It is also detestable for one to perform prayer while there is some distracting thing in front of one (such as drawings on the prayer mat) as this negatively affects the perfection of one's prayer.

It is detestable to perform prayer in a place where there are paintings or drawings, as this in a way resembles idolatry, be they hung on walls or not, according to the valid view in this regard.

It is detestable to perform prayer while being disturbed by something such as one's need to answer the call of nature (to urinate, excrete or break wind) or being disturbed by extreme hot or cold weather, or extreme hunger or thirst, as such issues hinder one from performing prayer tranquilly and submissively.

It is also detestable to perform prayer in the presence of delicious food one desires, as the Prophet (PBUH) said in the *hadîth* related by Muslim:

> *"No prayer should be performed when the food is present, or when one is prompted by the call of nature."*[7]

The Muslim should avoid such detestable issues to observe the obligations decreed by Allah, Exalted be He, devoutly, and to stand before Allah in prayer attentively, tranquilly, and humbly.

It is detestable as well to make prostration restricted to the forehead excluding the nose, as maintained by a group of heretics called the Râfidah,[8] imitating whom is prohibited.

It is also detestable to wipe whatever attaches to one's forehead or nose during prayer following prostration, yet one is allowed to do so after finishing prayer.

During prayer, it is detestable to play with one's beard, to hem one's garment, to clean one's nose, or the like, as this distracts one's attention in prayer.

In brief, Muslims are required to stand before Allah during prayer in full devotion, in both heart and soul, doing nothing that may distract them, for Allah says:

> ***"Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle [i.e. `Asr] prayer and stand before Allah, devoutly obedient."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 238)

Accordingly, Muslims are required to perform prayer attentively, submissively, and devoutly, observing what is decreed to be done therein, and refraining from whatever acts or words that may affect its validity. By doing so, their prayer will be performed properly, both in form and essence. It will be a valid and sufficient prayer.

May Allah guide us all to goodness and felicity in both this world and the Hereafter.

Endnotes

1 Al-Bukhârî (3291) [6/407].
2 Al-Bukhârî (750) [2/302].
3 See the book of *'Zâdul Ma'âd'* (1/75-76).
4 Ibn Mâjah (896) [1/483].
5 Al-Bukhârî (532) [2/21] and Muslim (1102) [2/433].
6 Al-Bukhârî (1220) [3/115] and Muslim (1218) [2/38].
7 Muslim (1246) [2/49].
8 The *Râfidah*: A Shiite group who refused the caliphates of Abû Bakr As-Siddîq and 'Umar Ibnul-Khattâb and waged accusations against them and against many of the Prophet's Companions as well.

CHAPTER

8

Prayer: Desirable and Permissible Acts

It is an act of the *Sunnah* for the one performing prayer to let no one pass in front of him, for the Prophet (PBUH) said in a *hadîth* related by Muslim:

> *"When anyone of you performs prayer, he should not let anyone pass in front of him; if he (the passer) refuses to go, he (the prayer) should turn him away forcibly for there is a devil with him (the passer)."*[1]

However, if there is a concrete object in front of the one performing prayer, such as a wall or the like, it is permissible to let others pass behind that barrier. Similarly, it is permissible for the one performing prayer to let others pass in front of him if the place is not wide enough and they have no other way to pass from; in this case, the one performing prayer should not turn them away if they want to pass in front of him. In addition, if one is performing prayer in the Precinct of Mecca, one should not turn away those passing in front of one, as it was related by the Five Compilers of *Hadîth* that the Prophet (PBUH) used to perform prayer in Mecca while people were passing in front of him and there was no barrier or screen between both[2].

It is an act of the *Sunnah* for the *imâm* (i.e., leader in prayer) or the one praying alone to perform prayer placing a concrete object in front of him as a barrier so as to let no one pass in front of him. This is illustrated in the *hadîth* related by Abû Dâwûd and Ibn Mâjah on the authority of Abû Sa`îd, in which the Prophet (PBUH) says:

> *"When any one of you performs prayer, he should have (or place) a concrete object in front of him and keep close to it."*[3]

As for the ones led in prayer, they are screened by their *imâm*, so they do not have to place any concrete object in front of them if their *imâm* does. It is worth mentioning that it is not obligatory for one to place a concrete object as a screen while performing prayer, for Ibn `Abbâs reported:

> *"The Prophet (PBUH) performed prayer in an open space without placing a concrete object in front of him as a screen."*[4]
>
> (Related by Imâm Ahmad and Abû Dâwûd)

The concrete object put in front of one during prayer should be something erect, which is approximately one cubit high, be it thin or wide. It is put, as mentioned above, to hinder anyone from passing in front of one while performing prayer. In case one is performing prayer in a desert, one should perform prayer behind something fixed such as a tree, a stone, a stick, or the like. If one is unable to insert a stick into the ground, it is permissible to put it in front of oneself in a crosswise position.

It is permissible for the ones led in prayer to correct the *imâm* publicly during prayer if the latter makes a mistake while reciting the Qur'ân therein.

During prayer, it is permissible for one to put on a garment and the like, to carry something or put it down, and to kill a snake or a scorpion, for the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Kill the two black things during prayer: the snake and the scorpion."*[5]
>
> (Related by Abû Dâwûd and At-Tirmidhî, and deemed *sâhîh* (authentic) by the latter)

Yet, one should not do many of these permissible acts during prayer unnecessarily. So, if one does such permissible acts excessively, repeatedly, and unnecessarily, one's prayer becomes invalid, as they distract one's attention during prayer.

It is permissible for the one engaged in prayer to draw another's attention to something urgent, such as answering someone knocking at the door, drawing the *imâm*'s attention to the latter's inattention in prayer, warning someone who is in danger, and so on. Still, this is not to be done freely; men are only allowed to say, "*Subhân-Allâh*" (i.e. "Glorified be Allah), and women just to clap when they want to draw someone's attention to something urgent, for the Prophet said:

> *"If some problem arises during prayer, then the men should say, 'Subhân-Allâh' (i.e. Glorified be Allah), and the women should clap."*[6]
>
> (Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

It is not detestable to greet the one performing prayer if the latter knows how to return it; the one performing prayer is allowed to return greetings by means of gesture, not words. In other words, if the one performing prayers returns greeting by speaking, his prayer becomes invalid, as it is regarded among the kinds of human speech which are prohibited during prayer; one is allowed in this case either to return a greeting by gesture or to postpone returning it until one ends prayer with *taslîm*.

It is also permissible for the one performing prayer to recite more than one sura (following the recitation of *Al-Fâtihah*) in one *rak`ah* according to the *sahîh* (authentic) *hadîth* stating that the Prophet (PBUH) recited the Suras of *Al-Baqarah* (*the Cow*), *An-Nisâ' (Women)*, and *Âlu `Imrân (the Family of `Imrân)* in one *rak`ah* while standing in prayer[7]. It is also permissible for the one performing prayer to recite the same sura in two *rak`ah*s, to divide a sura, reciting it in two *rak`ah*s, or to recite certain parts of a sura (such as the middle or the last verses) during prayer. To illustrate, Imâm Ahmad and Muslim related on the authority of Ibn `Abbâs that the Prophet used to recite the following verse in the first *rak`ah* of the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer[8]:

> ***"Say, [O believers], 'We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us...'"*** (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 136)

And in the second *rak`ah*:

> ***"... Say, 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you...'"*** (Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 64)

Moreover, Allah, Exalted be He, says:

> ***"... So recite what is easy [for you] of the Qur'ân..."***
>
> (Qur'ân: Al-Muzzammil: 20)

Yet, a Muslim should not keep doing so (i.e. reciting certain verses of the Qur'ân during prayer), but it is permissible to do it from time to time.

During prayer, it is permissible for one to seek refuge with Allah from the Fire when reciting or listening to a verse in which the torment of the Fire is mentioned, and to ask Allah for mercy when reciting or listening to a verse in which Allah's mercy is mentioned. Likewise, it is permissible for the one performing prayer to ask Allah to confer His blessings upon the Prophet (PBUH) when reciting or listening to a verse in which the Prophet (PBUH) is mentioned, as this is what the Prophet (PBUH) enjoined (us) to do whenever he is mentioned.

Gentle reader, these are in brief the desirable and the permissible acts to be observed during prayer. We have pointed them out so that you may benefit from them and observe them when performing prayer, and be aware of the rulings of your religion on prayer. We invoke Allah to grant all of us more useful knowledge and guide us to the righteous good deeds.

To conclude, a Muslim should know that prayer is a great act of worship, during which it is not permissible to do or say anything other than what is enjoined by Allah's Messenger (PBUH). Therefore, you should, gentle reader, be keen on the perfection of your prayer, and be aware of what makes it perfect and what makes it imperfect, so as to ensure performing it in the best way ever.

Endnotes

1 Muslim (1130) [2/447].
2 Abû Dâwûd (2016) [2/354]; An-Nasâ'î (757) [1/400] and Ibn Mâjah (2958) [3/440].
3 Abû Dâwûd (698) [1/316] and Ibn Mâjah (954) [1/510].
4 Abû Dâwûd (718) [1/324]; An-Nasâ'î (752) [2/398] and Al-Bayhaqî (3480) [2/387].
5 Abû Dâwûd (921) [1/369]; At-Tirmidhî (390) [2/233]; An-Nasâ'î (1203) [2/14] and Ibn Mâjah (1245) [2/82].
6 Al-Bukhârî (719) [13/225] and Muslim (948) [2/365].
7 Muslim (1811) [3/303].
8 Muslim (1689) [3/249].

CHAPTER

9

Prostration of Forgetfulness

Man is subject to forgetfulness and inattention, and Satan is eager to distract a Muslim from his prayer through whispering distractive thoughts to turn him away. This may cause one's prayer to be incomplete or over-performed, out of inattention and distraction. Therefore, Allah has ordained Muslims to prostrate at the end of prayer in case of inattention in order to please Allah, the Most Gracious, to defeat Satan, and to make up for whatever decrease or addition made inattentively in one's prayer. Such a prostration is called, by scholars, "Prostration of Forgetfulness." It is worth mentioning that the Prophet (PBUH) once forgot while performing prayer; this is one of the signs of Allah's favor upon the Muslim nation to guide them to the perfection of their religion through following the example of the Prophet (PBUH), and to follow in his footsteps when they inattentively err during prayer.

It is authentically narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) sometimes forgot while performing prayer. To illustrate, he (PBUH) once ended a four-*rak`ah* prayer with *taslîm* after performing only two *rak`ah*s (instead of four) and then offered the prostration of forgetfulness in compensation[1]. It is also narrated

that he (PBUH) once ended a four-*rak`ah* prayer with *taslîm* after performing only three *rak`ah*s (units of prayer)[2]. Another time, he (PBUH) forgot to sit for the First *Tashahhud* in the second *rak`ah* of a prayer and prostrated for forgetfulness afterwards[3]. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"When any one of you forgets (i.e. errs inattentively during prayer), he should perform two prostrations."*[4]

Prostration of Forgetfulness is to be performed in three cases:

1- When one inattentively performs something additional during prayer

2- When one inattentively misses something integral in prayer

3- When one is uncertain whether he has performed something additional or missed some integral part in prayer

So, a Muslim is to perform the prostration of forgetfulness in any of the above-mentioned three cases according to the authentic proofs stated in the *Sunnah*, yet not for every unintentional decrease, addition, or doubt during prayer. The prostration of forgetfulness can be performed in both obligatory and supererogatory prayers, as generally indicated in the legal proofs in this regard.

The first case (that obligates the prostration of forgetfulness) is when a Muslim absentmindedly adds **acts or words** to his prayer. Concerning the addition of acts, if one inattentively adds acts which are considered integral parts of prayer, such as standing instead of sitting or vice versa or performing extra bowing or prostration, one has to perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness in compensation. This is because it was narrated on the authority of Ibn Mas`ûd that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"When one (inattentively) adds or omits something in one's prayer, one should perform two prostrations."*[5]
>
> (Related by Imâm Muslim)

Since addition in prayer causes the imperfection of one's performance of prayer, the prostration of forgetfulness has been ordained to make up for such imperfection. Likewise, if one absentmindedly performs an extra *rak`ah* and does not remember until he finishes prayer, then one must perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness. Yet, when one remembers while performing this additional *rak`ah*, one has to sit immediately, recite *Tashahhud* (if one has not already recited it), perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness, and then end prayer with *taslîm*.

If an *imâm* (one who leads a congregational prayer) inattentively adds such acts to a congregational prayer, men performing prayer behind him must draw his attention by saying "*Subhân-Allâh*" (Glory be to Allah), but women can only clap their hands. Then, it is obligatory for the *imâm* to respond to them unless he is sure he is right; this is the legal way to be followed. Also, the people led in prayer must draw the attention of the *imâm* in the same way if he inattentively omits any of the acts of prayer.

As for a **verbal** addition in prayer, if a Muslim absentmindedly recites something inopportunely during prayer, such as reciting some verses of the Qur'ân while bowing or prostrating, or reciting a sura following *Al-Fâtihah* while standing in the last two *rak'ah*s of a four-*rak'ah* prayer or in the third *rak'ah* of the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer, it is desirable for a Muslim in such cases to perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness.

The second case (that obligates the prostration of forgetfulness) is when a Muslim inattentively misses any of the acts of prayer. If the missed act is one of the integral parts of prayer, such as the opening *takbîr*, one's prayer becomes null and the prostration of forgetfulness does not make up for it. If it is an integral part other than the opening *takbîr*, such as a bowing or a prostration, and one remembers before starting another *rak'ah*, one then must go back to it and perform it first, and then perform what comes after it. Yet, if one remembers such a missed integral part after starting another *rak'ah*, this missed act nullifies the *rak'ah* in which it was omitted so the whole *rak'ah* must be re-performed before ending prayer with *taslîm* and then the prostration of forgetfulness is to be performed. This is because the missing integral part cannot be made up for during the same *rak'ah* in this case. Still, if one remembers that missed integral part after *taslîm*, it is considered a complete, missed *rak'ah*, and one in this case must re-perform it individually, perform the prostration of forgetfulness, then end it with *taslîm*, provided the remembrance is soon enough and one's ablution is still valid. However, if one remembers the missed integral part after a long interval after *taslîm*, or when one's ablution is invalidated, one must re-perform the whole prayer.

In case the missed integral part is the Final *Tashahhud* or *taslîm*, it is not regarded as missing a full *rak'ah*, so one has only to perform it, offer the two prostrations of forgetfulness, and then end prayer with *taslîm*. On the other hand, if one misses the First *Tashahhud* and remembers it before completely standing upright for the following *rak'ah*, one can go back to perform it. But if one has already stood upright, it is detestable for one to sit to perform it, yet if he sits it does not nullify one's prayer. However, if one has already stood

upright and started recitation, it is prohibited for one then to sit to perform it (i.e. the missed First *Tashahhud*). This is because one in this case is already engaged in another integral part of prayer (which is recitation) that must not be interrupted.

If one misses glorifying Allah while bowing or prostrating, one has to go back and do it unless one has completely stood upright for the following *rak`ah*. After that, one is to perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness (before *taslîm*) and then end the prayer with *taslîm*.

The third case (that obligates the prostration of forgetfulness) is when one doubts whether one has added or missed some parts of one's prayer. If one is uncertain about the number of *rak`ah*s one has performed (whether one has performed two or three *rak`ah*s for example), one has to proceed taking the smaller number of *rak`ah*s for granted and base one's prayer on that assumption. Then, one completes one's prayer and performs the two prostrations of forgetfulness before *taslîm*. So, the original ruling here is that one is to re-perform what one is uncertain about whether one has performed it or not. This ruling is implied in the following *hadîth* narrated by `Abdur-Rahmân Ibn `Awf (may Allah be pleased with him):

> *"The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'When anyone of you is in doubt whether he has performed one or two rak`ahs (i.e. uncertain about the number of rak`ahs he performed), he should regard it as (only) one. Also, when one is in doubt whether he has performed two or three rak`ahs, he should regard them as two (rak`ahs).'"*[6]
>
> (Related by Imâms Ahmad, Muslim, and At-Tirmidhî)

In a congregational prayer, if a Muslim is uncertain whether he has joined the prayer from the first *rak`ah* or the second, he is to consider it from the second *rak`ah*, and perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness at the end of his prayer. Likewise, when one joins a congregational prayer late and is uncertain whether one has caught a full *rak`ah* or not, one is to disregard this *rak`ah* (i.e. it must be re-performed) and then one performs two prostrations of forgetfulness at the end of one's prayer.

To conclude, if one doubts that one has missed an integral part of prayer, one has to go back and perform it, then perform what comes after it within the same *rak`ah*, as mentioned above in detail. Yet, if the doubt concerns an obligatory act of prayer, not an integral part, it has to be disregarded and one then is not obliged to perform the two prostrations of forgetfulness. Moreover,

when doubt is related to addition, not omission, such doubt is to be disregarded, as the original ruling is to offer the prostration of forgetfulness to make up for inattentive omission, not addition, in prayer.

These are the rulings on prostration of forgetfulness in brief, and whoever seeks more elaboration, he may refer to the books on *fiqhî* rulings. May Allah grant us success.

Endnotes

1 Al-Bukhârî (482) [1/731] and Muslim (1288) [3/69].
2 Muslim (1293) [3/73].
3 Al-Bukhârî (829) [2/400] and Muslim (1269) [3/60].
4 Muslim (1283) [3/67].
5 Muslim (1287) [3/69].
6 Muslim (1272) [3/62]; Ahmad (1655) [1/236]; At-Tirmidhî (398) [2/244] and Ibn Mâjah (1209) [2/63].

CHAPTER

10

Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah) Following Prayer

Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, says:

> ***"O you who have believed, remember Allah with much remembrance - and exalt Him morning and afternoon."***
>
> (Qur'ân: Al-Ahzâb: 41-42)

Allah, Glorified be He, has enjoined *dhikr* (Remembrance of Allah) to be said following the different acts of worship. To illustrate, Allah, Glorified be He, says regarding prayer:

> ***"And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allah standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides..."***
>
> (Qur'ân: An-Nisâ': 103)

Allah, Glorified be He, also says:

> ***"And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Jumu`ah: 10)

As for fasting, Allah commands Muslims to remember and glorify Him after completing the fasting of the month of Ramadân; Allah, Glorified be He, says:

> ***"... to complete the period and to glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful."***
>
> (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 185)

The same goes for *Hajj* (Pilgrimage); Allah commands Muslims to remember Him after performing the rites of *Hajj* saying:

> ***"And when you have completed your rites, remember Allah like your [previous] remembrance of your fathers or with [much] greater remembrance."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 200)

This Divine Command (i.e. to remember Allah following acts of worship) may be decreed to help a Muslim make up for any imperfection or evil whisperings affecting the act of worship he performs. It may also be decreed to make a Muslim feel that he is legally required to continue remembering and worshiping Allah, and that his legal duty (towards Allah) is not restricted to the performance of acts of (obligatory) worship.

A Muslim has to follow the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) in remembering Allah (saying *dhikr*) following obligatory prayers, not to follow the invented ways of Sufi groups who are innovators in religion. It is stated in *Sahîh Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth)* that Thawbân (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

> *"Whenever Allah's Messenger (PBUH) finished performing prayer he used to ask Allah's Forgiveness thrice then say, 'O Allah, You are the Perfection and You are the One Who grants perfection; Blessed are You, O Owner of Majesty and Honor.' "*[1]

In addition, it is stated in the Two *Sahîhs*,[2] on the authority of Al-Mughîrah Ibn Shu`bah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) used to say following prayer:

> *"There is no deity but Allah, Alone, Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise, and He is over*

all things Omnipotent. O Allah! None can withhold what You grant, and none can grant what You withhold, and the fortune of a man of means is useless before You (i.e. only good deeds are of value)."[3]

It is also stated in *Sahîh Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth)*, on the authority of `Abdullâh Ibnuz-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (PBUH) used to say following every prayer:

"There is no deity but Allah, Alone, Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise, and He is over all things Omnipotent. There is neither might nor power except in Allah. There is no deity but Allah and we worship none but Him, Alone. To Him belong all bounties, to Him belongs all grace, and to Him is worthy praise accorded. There is no deity but Allah; we are sincere to Him in religion, although the disbelievers dislike it."[4]

Moreover, it is stated in the *Sunan*,[5] on the authority of Abû Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Whoever says ten times immediately after finishing the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, before moving from his place or talking to anyone, 'There is no deity but Allah, Alone, Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise. He gives life and causes death, and He is over all things Omnipotent,' ten good deeds will be recorded for him, ten sins will be eliminated from him, he will be upgraded ten degrees (in reward), he will be safeguarded from all kinds of harm all that day, he will be guarded against Satan, and no sin can overtake him on that day (and nullify his good deeds) except associating others in worship with Allah."[6]

At-Tirmidhî commented on this *hadîth* **saying,** *"This is a hasan, sahîh hadîth (i.e. a good and authentic hadîth)."* Likewise, it is an act of the *Sunnah* to say the aforesaid supplication of *dhikr* ten times following the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer, according to a *hadîth* related by Imâm Ahmad on the authority of Umm Salamah,[7] and another *hadîth* stated in *Sahîh Ibn Hibbân (Ibn Hibbân's Authentic Book of Hadîth)* on the authority of Abû Ayyûb Al-Ansârî[8]. Moreover, it is an act of the *Sunnah* to say seven times following the *Fajr* and the *Maghrib* Prayers:

"O my Lord, protect me from the Fire."[9]

This is according to the *hadîths* related by Imâms Ahmad, Abû Dâwûd, An-Nasâ'î, Ibn Mâjah and other compilers of *Hadîth*.

Among the ways of *dhikr* is saying, "*Subhân-Allâh*" (Glory be to Allah), "*Al-hamdu-lillâh*" (Praise be to Allah), "*Allâhu-Akbar*" (Allah is the Greatest) respectively thirty-three times each, and then saying to complete a hundred:

> *"There is no deity but Allah, Alone, Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise, and He is over all things Omnipotent."*

It is stated in *Sahîh Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth)* that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"If anyone extols Allah (saying, 'Subhân-Allâh' i.e. 'Glory be to Allah') after (performing) every prayer thirty-three times, and praises Allah (saying, 'Al-hamdu-lillâh' i.e. 'Praise be to Allah') thirty-three times, and declares His Greatness (saying, 'Allâhu-Akbar' i.e. 'Allah is the Greatest') thirty-three times, ninety-nine times in all, and says to complete a hundred: 'There is no deity but Allah, Alone, Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise, and He is over all things Omnipotent,' his sins will be forgiven even if they are as abundant as the foam of the sea."*[10]

After saying that *dhikr* following the performance of prayer, it is preferred for a Muslim to recite the following suras and verses:

1. *Âyatul-Kursî* (i.e. the Verse of *the Throne*)[11]
2. The Sura of *Al-Ikhlâs* (*Sincerity of Faith*)[12]
3. The Sura of *Al-Falaq* (*Daybreak*)[13]
4. The Sura of *An-Nâs* (*Mankind*)[14]

An-Nasâ'î and At-Tabarânî related on the authority of Abû Umâmah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Whoever recites Âyatul-Kursî (i.e. the Verse of the Throne) following (performing) every prayer, nothing will be between him and (entering) Paradise but death."*[15]

This means that nothing delays him from entering Paradise except being alive. In another *hadîth*, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Whoever recites Âyatul-Kursî following (performing) every prayer will be in Allah's covenant of protection until the following prayer."*[16]

It is also stated in the *Sunan* that `Uqbah Ibn `Âmir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

> *"Allah's Messenger (PBUH) commanded me to recite Al-Mu`awwidhatân (the Suras of Al-Falaq (Daybreak) and An-Nâs (Mankind)) following every prayer."*[17]

All the aforementioned honorable *hadîths* state the legality of these religious supplications of *dhikr* following obligatory prayers, and the great rewards prepared for those who observe them. So, we should keep on observing them, following in the footsteps of the Prophet (PBUH). We should also bear in mind that they are to be said after concluding prayers with *taslîm* (i.e. immediately after finishing performing prayers), before moving from the place where we have performed prayer.

Immediately after concluding prayer with *taslîm*, these supplications of *dhikr* are to be said in the following sequence:

- Asking Allah's Forgiveness three times
- Saying, *"O Allah, You are the Perfection and You are the One Who grants perfection; Blessed are You, O Owner of Majesty and Honor."*
- Saying, *"There is no deity but Allah, Alone, Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise, and He is over all things Omnipotent. O Allah! None can withhold what You grant, and none can grant what You withhold, and the fortune of a man of means is useless before You (i.e. only good deeds are of value)."*
- Saying, *"There is neither might nor power except in Allah. There is no deity but Allah and we worship none but Him, Alone. To Him belong all bounties, to Him belongs all grace, and to Him is worthy praise accorded. There is no deity but Allah; we are sincere to Him in religion, although the disbelievers dislike it."*
- Saying, "*Subhân-Allâh*" (Glory be to Allah), "*Al-hamdu-lillâh*" (Praise be to Allah), "*Allâhu-Akbar*" (Allah is the Greatest) respectively thirty-three times each, and then saying to complete a hundred, *"There is no deity but Allah, Alone, Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise, and He is over all things Omnipotent."*
- Saying ten times following the *Fajr* (Dawn) and the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayers, *"There is no deity but Allah, Alone, Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise. He gives life and causes death, and He is over all things Omnipotent,"* then saying seven times, *"O my Lord, protect me from the Hellfire."*

- Reciting *Âyatul-Kursî* (the Verse of the Throne), and the Suras of *Al-Ikhlâs* (*Sencerity of Faith*) and *Al-Mu'awwidhatân* (the Suras of *Al-Falaq* (*Daybreak*) and *An-Nâs* (*Mankind*)). It is also desirable to recite each of these suras three times following the *Fajr* (Dawn) and the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayers.

- Following prayers, it is also desirable to say *tahlîl*,[18] *tasbîh*,[19] *tahmîd*,[20] and *takbîr*[21] aloud, individually not chorally. To count saying *tasbîh*, *tahmîd*, and *takbîr* thirty-three times each, one can use one's fingers, as they will be questioned (by Allah) and will speak and testify about one's deeds on the Day of Judgment. It is also permissible to use a rosary instead of one's fingers for that purpose, provided one is aware that it by no means has a special virtue over using one's fingers. Still, using a rosary is deemed detestable by some scholars. So, if a Muslim believes that a rosary used for counting the times of the aforesaid *dhikr* has any special virtue or superiority, it becomes an innovation in religion, as is the case with the Sufis who wear rosaries as necklaces or make them like bracelets in their hands. This aforementioned behavior is not only an innovation in religion, but it is also a kind of ostentation and affectation.

- After finishing the aforesaid supplications of *dhikr*, a Muslim should invoke Allah secretly asking Him for whatever he desires, for invocation after performing prayer and saying those glorious supplications of *dhikr* is more likely to be granted by Allah. It is prohibited for a Muslim to raise his hands while invoking Allah after obligatory prayers as some people mistakenly do, for this is an act of innovation in religion; this may sometimes be done after supererogatory prayers. Similarly, A Muslim should not raise his voice while invoking Allah, so as to be nearer to sincerity and submissiveness and far away from ostentation.

In some countries, some people are used to raising their voices and hands chorally while invoking Allah after performing prayer, and sometimes the *imâm* (one who leads people in prayer) invokes Allah while raising his voice and hands, and the attendants reply "Âmîn (amen)," raising their voices and hands as well. Such a practice is an abominable innovation in religion, as it has neither been narrated to have been observed by the Prophet (PBUH) following prayers - be it the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer, the *'Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer, or any other obligatory prayer - nor deemed desirable by any Muslim. **Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah** said[22] in this regard:

"Whoever reported that Imâm Ash-Shâfi`î deemed it desirable (i.e. deemed raising the voices and hands chorally in supplication desirable) must have misquoted him."

According to the above, we have to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet (PBUH) and stick to his *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition), for Allah, Exalted be He, says:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty." (Qur'ân: Al-Hashr: 7)

Allah, Glorified be He, also says:

"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the last day and [who] remembers Allah often."

(Qur'ân: Al-Ahzâb: 21)

Endnotes

1 Muslim (1333) [3/92].
2 The Two *Sahihs*: The Two Authentic Books of Al-Bukhârî and Muslim.
3 Al-Bukhârî (844) [2/420] and Muslim (1337) [3/93].
4 Muslim (1342) [3/94].
5 The *Sunan* refers to compilations of the Prophetic *hadîth*s classified according to the Islamic jurisprudential subjects; the main four compilers of the *Sunan* are Abû Dâwûd, Ibn Mâjah, At-Tirmidhî and An-Nasâ'î.
6 At-Tirmidhî (3484) [5/515].
7 Ahmad (26430) [6/298] and Haythamî mentioned, in his book *Majma` Az-Zawâ'id* (*The Collection of Additional Hadîths*), deemad it *hasan hadîth* (10/108).
8 Ibn Hibban (2023) [5/369].
9 Abû Dâwûd (5079) [5/200].
10 Muslim (1351) [3/97].
11 Verse No. 255 of the Sura of *Al-Baqarah* (*the Cow*); Chapter No. 2 of the Qur'ân.
12 Chapter No. 112 of the Qur'ân.
13 Chapter No. 113 of the Qur'ân.
14 Chapter No. 114 of the Qur'ân, i.e., the last Chapter of the Qur'ân.
15 An-Nasâ'î in his book *`Amal Al-Yawm Wal-Laylah* (Supplications of the Day and Night) (100); At-Tabarânî in his book *Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabîr* (The Great Lexicon) (7532) [8/114] and Ibnus-Sunnî in his book *`Amal Al-Yawm Wal-Laylah* (Supplications of the Day and Night) (124).

16 At-Tabarânî in his book *Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabîr* (*The Great Lexicon*) (2733) [3/83-84].
17 Abû Dâwûd (1523) [2/123]; At-Tirmidhî (2908) [5/171] and An-Nasâ'î (1335) [2/77].
18 *Tahlîl*: Saying, "*Lâ Ilâha illallâh*" (i.e. There is no deity but Allah).
19 *Tasbîh*: Saying, "*Subhân-Allâh*" (i.e. Glory be to Allah).
20 *Tahmîd*: Saying, "*Al-hamdu-lillâh*" (i.e. Praise be to Allah).
21 *Takbîr*: Saying, "*Allâhu-Akbar*" (i.e. Allah is the Greatest).
22 See: '*Majmû`ul Fatâwâ*' (22/512).

CHAPTER

11

Voluntary Prayer

We should know that our Lord, Glorified and Exalted be He, has ordained voluntary prayers, side by side with the obligatory ones, as a means for His servants to draw near to Him. Performing voluntary prayers is considered among the best means of bringing oneself nearer to Allah. It ranks next to jihâd (fighting or striving in the Cause of Allah) and seeking knowledge, for the Prophet (PBUH) always drew himself near to Allah by means of voluntary prayers as he (PBUH) said:

> *"Keep on the right course and (know that) you will not be able to do all good acts; and know that the best of your (good) deeds is prayer."*[1]

Prayer combines different acts of worship such as reciting the Noble Qur'ân, bowing, prostrating, supplicating Allah, being humble and submissive to Him, imploring and glorifying Him, declaring His greatness (by saying *takbîr*), and praying to Him to confer His blessings upon the Prophet (PBUH).

Generally, voluntary prayers are of two types:

The first is called "regular supererogatory prayers," as they have specified times of performance, and **the second** is called "non-regular supererogatory prayers," whose performance is not restricted to certain times. The first type of voluntary prayers has some subcategories of which some are more stressed than others; the most stressed of them are the *Witr* Prayer,[2] the *Tarâwîh* Prayer,[3] the Prayer for Rain, and the Eclipse Prayer respectively. Each of these prayers will be dealt with separately in detail in the following chapters, Allah willing.

Endotes

1 Ibn Mâjah (277) [1/178]; Ahmad (22278) [5/277] and Al-Hâkim. Al-Hâkim graded it as authentic, and Adh-Dhahabî was of the same opinion as that of Al-Hâkim. Al-Albânî also graded it as authentic in his book *'Sahihul Jâmi`'* (952).

2 The *Witr* Prayer: A supererogatory prayer consisting of an odd number of *rak`ah*s (one, three, five, seven, nine, eleven or thirteen) and it is performed any time between the *`Ishâ'* (Night) and the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayers.

3 The *Tarâwîh* Prayer: Supererogatory prayer performed after the *`Ishâ'* (Night) Prayer during the month of Ramadân.

CHAPTER

12

Witr Prayer

Let us start with the Witr Prayer since it is important, as it is the most stressed voluntary prayer, and some scholars are of the opinion that it is obligatory to perform it. Generally, the act of worship whose incumbency is disputable is more stressed than any other act which is agreed to be not obligatory. Muslims agree on the legality of the Witr Prayer so it should not be abandoned. The testimony of whoever insists on leaving this prayer is not to be accepted. **Imâm Ahmad says,** *"Whoever abandons (performing) the Witr Prayer intentionally is a bad man whose testimony is not to be accepted."*[1] Ahmad and Abû Dâwûd relate as *marfû`* (traceable) *hadîth* that the Prophet (PBUH) says:

"Whoever does not perform the Witr Prayer does not belong to us."[2]

'The *Witr*' is the name of the *rak`ah* (unit of prayer) separated from its preceding *rak`ah*s, or three, five, seven, nine, or eleven (continuous) *rak`ah*s (performed with only one final *taslîm*). If these *rak`ah*s are separated by two or more *taslîm*s (final *Salâm*s in prayer), the *Witr* is the *rak`ah* separated alone. The time for the *Witr* Prayer starts immediately after the *`Ishâ'* (Night) Prayer and continues until dawn. In the Two *Sahîh*s, `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) says:

> *"Allah's Messenger (PBUH) performed the Witr Prayer at different nights at various hours extending (from the Night Prayer) up to the last hour of the night."*[3]

It is stated in many *hadîths* that the time of performing the *Witr* Prayer is the whole night except the time before the *`Ishâ'* Prayer. If a Muslim is sure to wake up late at the last time of the night, it is desirable for him to perform the *Witr* Prayer then; however, if he is not certain (to be awake at this time), he should perform this prayer before going to bed as recommended by the Prophet (PBUH). Imâm Muslim relates on the authority of Jâbir (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) says:

> *"If anyone of you is afraid that he may not be able to get up at the end of the night, let him perform the Witr Prayer and then sleep. And if he is confident of getting up and performing prayer at night, then let him perform it at the end of it, for the recitation (of the Qur'ân) at the end of the night is witnessed (by angels), which is better."*[4]

The *Witr* Prayer can be as short as one *rak`ah* (unit of prayer) according to the *hadîths* (related to this ruling) and as narrated from ten of the Prophet's Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all). Yet, it is desirable to perform the *Shaf`*[5] before the *Witr* Prayer. The *rak`ahs* of the *Witr* Prayer can be as many as eleven or thirteen, uttering *taslîm* at the end of every two *rak`ahs* and performing the *Witr* with a single *rak`ah*. Imâm Muslim relates that `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrates:

> *"Allah's Messenger (PBUH) used to perform eleven rak`ahs at night, performing the Witr with a single rak`ah."*[6]

In another narration, she says:

> *"...uttering taslîm at the end of every two rak`ahs and performing the Witr with a single one."*[7]

Moreover, a Muslim is permitted to perform eleven continuous *rak`ahs*, with one *Tashahhud* in the tenth *rak`ah* and another *Tashahhud* in the eleventh, and then end his prayer with *taslîm*. Also, he may perform eleven continuous *rak`ahs* with only one *Tashahhud* in the last one (before ending his prayer with *taslîm*). Yet, the first way of performing the *Witr* Prayer is more desirable.

Besides, a Muslim is permitted to perform nine continuous *rak`ahs*, with a *Tashahhud* in the eighth *rak`ah* and another in the ninth, and then end his prayer with *taslîm*. He also may perform seven or five continuous *rak`ahs*, with one *Tashahhud* in the end after which he is to end the prayer with *taslîm*. Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated:

> *"Allah's Messenger (PBUH) used to perform the Witr with five or seven rak`ahs (units of prayer) without talking or uttering taslîm between them."*[8]

A different way to perform the *Witr* Prayer is to perform two *rak`ah*s and say *taslîm* then perform a single (last) one.

It is desirable to recite the Sura of *Al-A`lâ (the Most High)*[9] in the first *rak`ah*, the Sura of *Al-Kâfirûn* (*the Disbelievers*)[10] in the second and the Sura of *Al-Ikhlâs* (*Sincerity of Faith*)[11] in the third.

Therefore, it became evident that it is permitted to perform eleven, thirteen, nine, seven, five, three, or one *rak`ah*, yet the highly desirable is to perform eleven *rak`ah*s and the least desirable is three *rak`ah*s, but it is sufficient to perform only one *rak`ah*. In addition to this, it is desirable to recite *qunût* (invocation) after rising from bowing in the last *rak`ah*, invoking Allah and saying the following supplication related about the Prophet (PBUH):

> *"O Allah! Guide me among those You have guided..."*[12]

Endnotes

1 See: '*Majmû`ul Fatâwâ*' [23/127, 253].
2 Ahmad (9678) [2/443] and Abû Dâwûd (1419) [2/87].
3 Al-Bukhârî (996) [2/626] and Muslim (1734) [3/267].
4 Muslim (1764) [3/277].
5 The *Shaf`*: It generally refers to any prayer consisting of an even number of *rak`ah*s, and it particularly refers to the even number of *rak`ah*s performed before the final *rak`ah* of the *Witr* Prayer.
6 Muslim (1714) [3/259].
7 Muslim (1715) [3/259].
8 An-Nasâ'î (1713) [3/266] and Ibn Mâjah (1192) [2/55].
9 Chapter No. 87 of the Qur'ân.
10 Chapter No. 109 of the Qur'ân.
11 Chapter No. 112 of the Qur'ân.
12 Abû Dâwûd (1425) [2/90]; At-Tirmidhî (463) [2/328]; An-Nasâ'î (1744) [3/275] and Ibn Mâjah (1178) [2/49].

CHAPTER

13

Tarâwîh Prayer

The *Tarâwîh* Prayer (Nightly Supererogatory Prayer during the month of Ramadân) is among what Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has ordained for Muslims in Ramadân, and it is a stressed act of the *Sunnah*. It is called 'the *Tarâwîh*' which means in Arabic 'intervals of relaxation,' because Muslims used to take an interval of relaxation after every four *rak`has*[1] of the *Tarâwîh* Prayer as they used to prolong the prayer. It is more desirable to perform the *Tarâwîh* Prayer in congregation in the mosque, as the Prophet (PBUH) led his Companions in performing the *Tarâwîh* Prayer for some nights then he stopped for fear that it (i.e. the *Tarâwîh* Prayer) might become a burden on Muslims. In the Two *Sahîhs*, `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated:

> *"One night, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) performed prayer in the mosque and some people followed him. The next night he also performed prayer and too many people gathered. On the third or the fourth night, more people gathered, but Allah's Messenger (PBUH) did not come out to them. In the morning he said, 'I saw what you were doing and nothing but the fear that it (i.e. the prayer) might be enjoined on you, stopped me from coming to you."*[2]

In the narration of Al-Bukhârî the words "*...and that happened in the month of Ramadân*" were added. It is well-known that the Companions performed the *Tarâwîh* Prayer after the death of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Muslim nation has accepted and followed this practice.

The Prophet (PBUH) says:

> *"Whoever stands (performing prayer) with the imâm until he finishes prayer, (the reward for) performing prayer all the night will be recorded for him."*[3]

The Prophet (PBUH) also says:

> *"Whoever performs prayer during the nights of Ramadân faithfully out of sincere faith and hoping for Divine reward (not for showing off), all his past sins will be forgiven."*[4]
>
> (Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

Thus, performing the *Tarâwîh* Prayer is a stated (stressed) act of the *Sunnah* that a Muslim should not leave.

Concerning the number of *rak`ah*s (units of prayer) performed in this prayer, nothing definite is narrated about the Prophet (PBUH) and hence Muslims are free to choose. **Shâykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah said:**

> *"A Muslim can perform twenty rak`ahs (in the Tarâwîh Prayer) according to the famous opinion of the Hanbalî and Shâfi`î Schools, thirty six rak`ahs with regard to the Mâlikî School, eleven rak`ahs, or thirteen. Thus, all is good and a Muslim can perform more or less rak`ahs according to the (long or short) time of his standing reciting the Qur'ân."*[5]

When `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) gathered Muslims to perform the *Tarâwîh* Prayer in congregation behind Ubayy Ibn Ka`b, the latter performed twenty *rak`ah*s. Some of the Companions used to perform more *rak`ah*s and other Companions performed less. So, there is no definite text related about the Prophet (PBUH) determining a certain number of *rak`ah*s to be performed in the *Tarâwîh* Prayer. Many *imâm*s of mosques perform the *Tarâwîh* Prayer without paying attention or feeling tranquil while bowing or prostrating. Feeling tranquil is an integral part of prayer and a Muslim must pay attention while standing before Allah, Exalted be He, and learn from the Words of Allah (i.e. the Qur'ân) while they are being recited. Of course, a Muslim cannot fulfill this when performing prayer with detestable haste. It is more befitting to perform ten *rak`ah*s in a state of tranquility and recite the

Noble Qur'ân for a long time than to perform twenty *rak`ah*s with detestable haste. This is because the essence of prayer is to turn one's heart to Allah, Exalted and Ever Majestic be He. Verily, a few *rak`ah*s (with tranquility and reflection) can outweigh so many ones. Also, it is better to recite the Qur'ân with measured recitation than recite it with haste. It is allowable to be quick in reciting the Qur'ân provided that no letter is neglected since it is prohibited to neglect a letter for the sake of quick recitation. However, it is good for an *imâm* (in congregational prayer) to recite the Qur'ân in a way that benefits those performing prayer behind him. Allah dispraises those who recite the Qur'ân without understanding its meaning as Allah, Exalted be He, reveals:

> ***"And among them are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture except [indulgence in] wishful thinking..."***
>
> (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 78)

The verse refers to those people who recite (the Book) without understanding its meaning. Allah has revealed the Qur'ân for Muslims to understand its meaning and carry out its rulings, not only to recite it.

Some *imâm*s of mosques do not perform the *Tarâwîh* Prayer as it should be performed, for they recite the Qur'ân so hastily that they violate the sound reciting of the Qur'ân. Moreover, they do not feel tranquil while standing, bowing, or prostrating though feeling tranquil is an integral part of prayer. Furthermore, they may perform only a few *rak`ah*s (units of prayer). That is, those *imâm*s combine many detestable acts which are performing only a few *rak`ah*s, shortening the time of prayer, and reciting the Qur'ân in a bad way. Thus, they perform worship heedlessly[6]. They must fear Allah, establish their prayer well, and not deprive themselves and those (performing prayer) behind them from performing the *Tarâwîh* Prayer according to the legal way[7]. We invoke Allah to guide all Muslims to success.

Endnotes

1 The *Tarâwîh* Prayer is to be performed in two *rak`ah*s successively the same as *Tahajjud* (the Night Vigil Prayer). Some *imâm*s of mosques who are not well-versed in *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) may not say *taslîm* after every two *rak`ah*s in the *Tarâwîh* or *Tahajjud*, which is wrong and contradictory to the *Sunnah*. Scholars state that whoever stands to perform a third *rak`ah* in the *Tarâwîh* or *Tahajjud* is the same as him who (mistakenly) stands to perform a third *rak`ah* in the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer (which consists only of two *rak`ah*s). Thus, his prayer is invalid. Sheikh `Abdul-`Aziz Ibn Bâz (may Allah have mercy on him) has composed a reply to those people in which he shows their fault.

2 Al-Bukhârî (1129) [3/14] and Muslim (1780) [3/283].
3 Abû Dâwûd (1375) [2/71]; At-Tirmidhî (805) [3/169]; An-Nasâ'î (1363) [2/93] and Ibn Mâjah (1327) [2/122].
4 Al-Bukhârî (37) [1/124] and Muslim (1776) [3/282].
5 See: *'Al-Akhbâr Al-`Ilmiyyah min Al-Ikhtiyarât Al-Fiqhiyyah'* written by Shâykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah.
6 Some of the *imâm*s of mosques raise their voices in recitation of the Qur'ân using loudspeakers, thus, they confuse the people performing prayer in other mosques; a thing which is not permissible. Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah said:

"If there is anyone reciting the Qur'ân while the people are performing supererogatory prayer, he should not raise his voice in a way that may distract their attention. This is because the Prophet (PBUH) came out to his Companions while they were performing prayer in the mosque and said to them, 'O people, everyone of you is calling his Lord, so let no one of you raise his voice in recitation over others.'"

7 Some of the *imâm*s of mosques become in haste while reciting the Qur'ân in the *Tarâwîh* Prayer in order to finish reciting all the Qur'ân by the beginning of the last ten days of Ramadân or by the middle of them (the last ten days of Ramadân). When he finishes the Qur'ân, he leaves the mosque and travels to perform *`Umrah* (Lesser Pilgrimage) leaving another *imâm* instead of him who may not be fit to undertake the duties of the *imâm*. This is a great mistake that wastes the duty he is assumed to undertake, which is leading the people in prayer until the end of Ramadân. Doing his duty (i.e. leading the people in prayer) is a duty upon the *imâm* while performing *`Umrah* is only a desirable act. Thus, it is not right to abandon a duty for the sake of a desirable act. This is because staying at his mosque to perform the duty he is charged with is better than performing *`Umrah*. Some other *imâm*s start shortening the time of prayer and the recitation when they finish reciting the Qur'ân. They do this in the last nights of Ramadân which are the nights of emancipation from the Hellfire. It is as if these *imâm*s consider that what is meant from the *Tarâwîh* Prayer and *Tahajjud* (Night Vigil Prayer) is only finishing the recitation of the Qur'ân not spending these blessed nights in standing for prayer, following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) and seeking to have the merit of these nights. This is a sign of their ignorance, which shows their heedlessness to acts of worship. We ask Allah to return them to what is right.

CHAPTER

14

Sunnah Râtibah: Prayers Performed along with Obligatory Prayers

You should know, my dear Muslim brothers, that a *sunnah râtibah* (a regularly-observed supererogatory) prayer ought to be performed and it is detestable to abandon it. Whoever keeps leaving the *sunnah râtibah* commits a sin and, according to some Imâms, nullifies his uprightness because his leaving such worship implies carelessness and weakness in his faith

There are ten *rak`ah*s (units of prayer) (or twelve according to some scholars) considered as *sunnah râtibah* prayers:

- Two *rak`ah*s before the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer (or four *rak`ah*s according to some scholars)
- Two *rak`ah*s after the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer

- Two *rak`ahs* after the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer
- Two *rak`ahs* after the *`Ishâ'* (Night) Prayer
- Two *rak`ahs* before the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer

The proof of these aforementioned *sunnah râtibah* (regularly-observed supererogatory) prayers is the *hadîth* reported on the authority of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

> *"I remember ten (supererogatory) rak`ahs from Allah's Messenger (PBUH). (He used to perform) two rak`ahs before the Zuhr (Noon) Prayer and two rak`ahs after it, two rak`ahs after the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer in his house, and two rak`ahs after the `Ishâ' (Night) Prayer in his house, and two rak`ahs before the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer and at that time nobody would enter the house of the Prophet (PBUH). Hafsah (the wife of the Prophet) told me that when the prayer caller (muezzin) pronounced the prayer call (adhân) and the dawn began to break, the (the Prophet) used to perform two rak`ahs."*[1]
>
> (Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

In *Sahîh Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth)*, `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

> *"Before the Zuhr (Noon) Prayer, the Prophet (PBUH) used to perform four rak`ahs in my house; then he would go out and lead the people in prayer; then come in and perform two rak`ahs."*[2]

This *hadîth* implies that it is more desirable to perform the *sunnah râtibah* prayer at home than to perform it in the mosque, for the sake of some benefits, such as:

- Keeping away from ostentation and self-conceit and screening acts of worship from the eyes of people
- Perfection of submissiveness and sincerity (to Allah)
- Maintaining the house, where prayer is performed, through remembrance of Allah and prayer which causes mercy to descend upon the people living therein, and keeps Satan away. The Prophet (PBUH) says:

  "Perform some of your (supererogatory) prayers at home, and do not take your houses as graves."[3]

The most stressed of the aforementioned *sunnah râtibah* (regularly-observed supererogatory) prayers are the two *rak`ah*s (units of prayer) before the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer, for `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) says:

> *"The Prophet (PBUH) was never more regular and particular in performing any supererogatory prayer than the two (supererogatory) rak`ahs of the Fajr Prayer."*[4]
>
> (Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

The Prophet (PBUH) also said:

> *"The two (supererogatory) rak`ahs of the Fajr Prayer are better than the world and (all) that it contains."*[5]

So, the Prophet (PBUH) used to keep these two *rak`ah*s before the *Fajr* Prayer as well as the *Witr* Prayer both in residence and on journeys[6].

On journeys, it is not narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) performed any regularly-observed supererogatory prayers (*sunnah râtibah*) other than the two *rak`ah*s before the *Fajr* Prayer and the *Witr* Prayer. When **Ibn `Umar** (may Allah be pleased with them) was asked about the supererogatory prayer of the *Zuhr* Prayer, he said:

> *"Were I to perform supererogatory prayer, I would have completed the obligatory prayer (for during journey, one is not asked to perform supererogatory prayer and he is to shorten obligatory prayer)."*[7]

Besides, **Ibnul-Qayyim** (may Allah have mercy on him) stated:

> *"On journeys, it is a practice of the guiding Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) that he used to perform obligatory prayers only. It is not narrated about him (PBUH) that he performed, on his journeys, any regularly-observed supererogatory prayers other than the two rak`ahs before the Fajr Prayer and the Witr Prayer."*[8]

It is an act of the *Sunnah* to make the two *rak`ah*s before the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer light, as `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated:

> *"The Prophet (PBUH) used to make the two rak`ahs before the Fajr Prayer very light."*[9]

It is also an act of the *Sunnah* to recite the Sura of *Al-Kâfirûn* (*the Disbelievers*)[10] after the Sura of *Al-Fâtihah (the Opening Chapter of the Qur'ân)* in the first *rak`ah*, and the Sura of *Al-Ikhlâs* (*Sincerity of Faith*)[11] in the second. The Prophet (PBUH) also used to recite the verse, ***"Say, [O believers], 'We have***

believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us ...' " (Qur'ân: Al-Baqarah: 136) in the first *rak`ah* and the verse, ***"Say, 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you ...'*** " (Qur'ân: Âlu `Imrân: 64) in the second *rak`ah*.

Concerning the two supererogatory *rak`ah*s after the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer, it is also an act of the *Sunnah* to recite the Sura of *Al-Kâfirûn* after *Al-Fâtihah* in the first *rak`ah*, and the Sura of *Al-Ikhlâs* in the second. Al-Bayhaqî, At-Tirmidhî and other compilers of *Hadîth* related that Ibn Mas`ûd said:

> *"I cannot count (the number of times) I heard Allah's Messenger (PBUH) reciting the Sura of Al-Kâfirûn and the Sura of Al-Ikhlâs in the two (supererogatory) rak`ahs after the Maghrib Prayer and the two (supererogatory) rak`ahs before the Fajr Prayer."*[12]

If you miss any of the aforementioned supererogatory prayers (of *sunnah râtibah*), it is an act of the *Sunnah* to make up for it. This also is to be done with regard to the *Witr* Prayer, for it is an act of the *Sunnah* to make up for it during the day, as the Prophet (PBUH) made up for the two supererogatory *rak`ah*s before the *Fajr* Prayer along with the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer when he slept and could not get up to perform them[13]. Also, it is narrated that when the Prophet (PBUH) was (so) busy that he missed the two supererogatory *rak`ahs* before the *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer, he made up for them after the *`Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer[14]. So, a Muslim can make up for the rest of supererogatory prayers by means of analogical deduction, when missing any of them. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"If anyone oversleeps and misses the Witr or forgets it, he may perform it when he wakes up or when he remembers."*[15]
>
> (Related by Abû Dâwûd and At-Tirmidhî)

The *Witr* Prayer along with its preceding *Shaf`* are to be made up for, when missed, as stated in *Sahîh Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth)*, on the authority of `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) who said:

> *"When sleep or pain overpowered the Prophet (PBUH) and he could not perform the night vigil supererogatory prayer, he used to perform twelve rak`ahs (units of prayer) during the day."*[16]

So, a Muslim ought to keep the aforementioned *sunnah râtibah* (regularly-observed supererogatory) prayers to follow the excellent pattern of the Prophet (PBUH) as Allah says:

"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the last day and [who] remembers Allah often."

(Qur'ân: Al-Ahzâb: 21)

Keeping these supererogatory prayers compensates for any fault committed in the obligatory Prayers, as man is fallible and needs to compensate for his faults. Hence, a Muslim should not neglect this *sunnah râtibah* as it will result in more rewards prepared by the Lord (to be given to the Muslim on the Day of Resurrection). Likewise, along with every obligatory act of worship, Allah has ordained a supererogatory act of the same type to compensate for any faults committed in the obligatory act of worship, i.e. Prayer, Fasting, *Zakâh* and *Hajj* have supererogatory acts of worship. No doubt, these (above-mentioned) ordinances are favors of Allah upon His servants. Allah has varied His ordained acts of worship in order to raise in degrees His servants and remove from them their misdeeds. We invoke Allah to grant us success in all that pleases Him. Verily, He is Hearing and Responsive to supplications.

Endnotes

1 Al-Bukhârî (1180) [3/75] and Muslim (1695) [3/252].
2 Muslim (1696) [3/253] and Al-Bukhârî (1182) [3/76].
3 Al-Bukhârî (432) [1/684] and Muslim (1817) [3/308].
4 Al-Bukhârî (1169) [3/59] and Muslim (1683) [3/248].
5 Muslim (1685) [3/248].
6 This was mentioned by Ibnul-Qayyim in his book "*Zâdul-Ma`âd* (*Provisions for the Hereafter*)" and this *hadîth* was related by Al-Bukhârî (1159).
7 Abû Dâwûd (1223) [2/15].
8 See: "*Zâdul-Ma`âd* (*Provisions for the Hereafter*)".
9 Al-Bukhârî (1171) [3/60] and Muslim (1681) [3/247].
10 Chapter No. 109 of the Qur'ân.
11 Chapter No. 112 of the Qur'ân.
12 At-Tirmidhî (431) [2/296], Al-Bayhaqî (4878) [3/62] and Muslim (1687) [3/249].
13 Muslim (1559) [3/189].
14 Al-Bukhârî (1233) [3/136] and Muslim (1930) [3/358].
15 Abû Dâwûd (1431) [2/93], At-Tirmidhî (464) [1/330] and Ibn Mâjah (1188) [1/53].
16 Muslim (1736) [3/268].

CHAPTER

15

Duhâ (Forenoon) Prayer

You should know, my Muslim brothers, that there are many *hadîths* pertaining to the *Duhâ* (Forenoon) Prayer. In the Two *Sahîhs*, Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

> *"My friend (i.e. the Prophet) advised me to do three things and I shall not leave them until I die (and they are) to fast three days every month, to perform the Duhâ Prayer, and to perform the Witr before sleeping."*[1]

Also, Abû Sa`îd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

> *"The Prophet (PBUH) used to perform the Duhâ Prayer (so regularly) that we said, 'He will never give it up,' and sometimes he completely gave it up until we said, 'He will never perform it again.' "*[2]

The *Duhâ* Prayer can be as short as only two *rak`ahs* (units of prayer) as the Prophet (PBUH) says, "*...the two rak`ahs of the Duhâ Prayer...*" in the aforementioned *hadîth* on the authority of Abû Hurayrah. Besides, Abû Dâwûd

related on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"If anyone sits in his place of prayer after finishing the Subh (Morning) Prayer until he performs the two rak`ahs of the Duhâ Prayer, saying nothing but what is good, his sins will be forgiven even if they are more than the foam of the sea."*[3]
>
> (Related by Abû Dâwûd)

The Duhâ Prayer can be as long as eight *rak`ah*s, for Umm Hâni' (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

> *"On the day of the Conquest of Mecca, the Prophet (PBUH) performed eight rak`ahs as the Duhâ Prayer."*[4]
>
> (Related by the Group of Compilers of Hadîth)

Imâm Muslim also related on the authority of `Â'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that:

> *"The Prophet (PBUH) used to perform the Duhâ Prayer with four rak`ahs and sometimes he used to perform as more rak`ahs as Allah willed."*[5]

The time for the Duhâ Prayer begins when the sun is about a spear's length above the horizon and it continues until the sun approaches the meridian. It is desirable to delay it until the sun has risen high and become hot. Imâm Muslim relates that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"The prayer of those who are penitent is to be performed when the young (weaned) camel feels the heat of the sun."*[6]

That is, when it becomes so hot that the young (weaned) camels kneel down because of the heat of the sun.

Endnotes

1 Al-Bukhârî (1178) [3/73] and Muslim (1669) [3/241].
2 Ahmad (476) [2/342] and At-Tirmidhî (1172) [3/21].
3 Abû Dâwûd (1287) [2/43].
4 Al-Bukhârî (1103) [2/746]; Muslim (763) [2/252]; Abû Dâwûd (1290) [2/44]; An-Nasâ'î (225) [1/137] and Ibn Mâjah (614) [1/340].
5 Muslim (1660) [3/236].
6 Muslim (1743) [3/271].

CHAPTER

16

Prostration of Recitation

The prostration of recitation is one of the Prophetic practices and it is thus called as it relates to the recitation of the Qur'ân. It is an act of worship that is ordained by Allah and His Messenger to be done when reciting the verses of the Qur'ân or listening to them, as a means of drawing near to Allah, subjecting oneself to His Majesty and showing submissiveness to Him.

This act of prostration is enacted as an act of the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Tradition) for both the one who recites and the one who listens to the Qur'ân. Scholars unanimously agree on its legality. Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

> *"When the Prophet (PBUH) recited a sura of the Qur'ân that contains the prostration, he would prostrate and we would do the same and some of us (because of the heavy rush) could not find a place for prostration."*[1]
>
> (Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

Imâm Ibnul-Qayyim,[2] the great scholar (may Allah have mercy on him), said, *"Positions of prostrations are what is reported to us and what is commanded for us to do."* That is, Allah tells us about the prostration of His creatures generally or at specific situations. So it is enacted, for the one who recites the Qur'ân and the one who listens to it, to act like them (Allah's creatures) when reciting or listening to the verses of prostration, and with greater reason the verses that actually command prostrating.

Abû Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, as a *marfû`* (traceable) *hadîth*, that the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"When the son of Âdam (Adam) recites a verse of prostration and then falls down in prostration, Satan goes into seclusion weeping and saying, 'Woe unto me!' The son of Âdam is commanded to prostrate and he has prostrated, so Paradise is entitled to him, and I was commanded to prostrate, but I refused, so I am doomed to Hell.' "*[3]

(Related by Muslim and Ibn Mâjah)

The prostration of recitation should be performed by both the one reciting and the one listening (to the Qur'ân). What is stated in the previously mentioned *hadîth* of Ibn `Umar, namely *"When the Prophet (PBUH) recited a sura of the Qur'ân that contains the prostration, he would prostrate and we would do the same,"* proves the legality of the prostration of the one who is listening. As for the hearer (i.e. the one who is not attentively listening), it is not obligatory upon him to perform the prostration of recitation. Al-Bukhârî related:

> *"`Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with him) passed by a reciter who recited a verse involving prostration to make `Uthmân perform prostration along with him, but `Uthmân did not perform prostration and said, 'The prostration should be performed by him who listens to it.' "*[4]

This act was reported about other Companions.

The suras of the Qur'ân that involve verses of prostration are *Al-A`râf*[5] *(the Elevations), Ar-Ra`d (the Thunder),*[6] *An-Nahl (the Bees),*[7] *Al-Isrâ' (the Night Journey),*[8] *Maryam (Mary),*[9] *Al-Hajj (the Pilgrimage),*[10] *Al-Furqân (the Criterion),*[11] *An-Naml (the Ants),*[12] *As-Sajdah (the Prostration),*[13] *Fussilat (Detailed),*[14] *An-Najm (the Star),*[15]

Al-Inshiqâq (the Split),[16] and *Al-`Alaq (the Clinging Substance)*[17]. Concerning the prostration in the Sura of *Sâd*,[18] there is disagreement between scholars, whether it is a prostration of thankfulness or recitation; and Allah knows best.

On performing the prostration of recitation, one should pronounce *takbîr* (saying, "*Allâhu-Akbar*" i.e. "Allah is the Greatest"). This act is stated according to the *hadîth* of Ibn `Umar in which he said:

> *"Allah's Messenger (PBUH) used to recite the Qur'ân to us and whenever he recited a verse that contains a prostration, he used to say takbîr and prostrate, and we also used to prostrate along with him."*[19]
>
> (Related by Abû Dâwûd)

One should say in prostration, *"Subhâna Rabbiyal-A`lâ" (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High)*, the same as one says when prostrating during performing prayer. If one says, *"My face has prostrated before Allah, Who created and fashioned it, created in it hearing and vision by His Power and Might. O Allah! Reward me for it (the act of prostration), remove sins from me by it, reserve it for me, and accept it from me as You did from Your servant Dâwûd (David),"* it will be acceptable. To perform the prostration of recitation from the position of standing is better than performing it while sitting.

O Muslim, you should know that there are many ways of doing good acts, so make your best to follow them, and be loyal and faithful in both actions and words, that Allah may record you among the happy people.

Endnotes

1 Al-Bukhârî (1075) [2/718] and Muslim (1295) [3/75].
2 See: '*Madârij As-Sâlikîn*' [1/106].
3 Muslim (240) [1/257] and Ibn Mâjah (1052) [1/549].
4 Al-Bukhârî (2/719) and `Abdur-Razzâq in his book '*Al-Muṣanaf*'. `Abdur-Razzâq related the same action about other companions such as `Umar, his son, Ibn Mas`ûd and Ibn `Abbâs. See; '*Al-Muṣanaf*' (3/344) and '*Sunan Al-Bayhaqî*' (2/458).
5 Chapter No. 7 of the Qur'ân.
6 Chapter No. 13 of the Qur'ân.
7 Chapter No. 16 of the Qur'ân.

8 Chapter No. 17 of the Qur'ân.
9 Chapter No. 19 of the Qur'ân.
10 Chapter No. 22 of the Qur'ân.
11 Chapter No. 25 of the Qur'ân.
12 Chapter No. 27 of the Qur'ân.
13 Chapter No. 32 of the Qur'ân.
14 Chapter No. 41 of the Qur'ân.
15 Chapter No. 53 of the Qur'ân.
16 Chapter No. 84 of the Qur'ân.
17 Chapter No. 96 of the Qur'ân.
18 Chapter No. 38 of the Qur'ân.
19 Abû Dâwûd (1413) [2/85].

CHAPTER

17

Non-Regular Supererogatory Prayer

The Compilers of the *Sunan* related that the Prophet (PBUH) was asked which prayer was most excellent (concerning reward) after the prescribed ones. He (PBUH) said:

> *"Performing prayer in the middle of the night."*[1]

He (PBUH) also said:

> *"There is an hour in the night during which no Muslim person asks Allah for good in this world and the Hereafter but Allah will grant it to him; and that applies to every night."*[2]

Moreover, the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Adhere to (the performance of) the night vigil supererogatory prayer, for it is the habit of the righteous people before you. Verily, the night vigil supererogatory prayer is a means of nearness*

to Allah and the way by which sins are removed and one stops committing sins."[3]

(Related by Al-Hâkim)

Allah, Exalted be He, praises those who stand for the night vigil supererogatory prayer, as He says:

> ***"...Indeed, they were before that doers of good. They used to sleep but little of the night, and in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness..."*** (Qur'ân: Adh-Dhâriyât: 16-18)

Praising such righteous servants, Allah, Exalted be He, also says:

> ***"Their sides part [i.e. they arise] from [their] beds; they supplicate their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend. And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for (the) eyes [i.e. satisfaction] as reward for what they used to do."*** (Qur'ân: As-Sajdah: 16-17)

So many are the religious texts that refer to the virtue of the night vigil supererogatory prayer. The night vigil supererogatory prayer is the most excellent act of worship among voluntary prayers. This is because the night vigil supererogatory prayer is characterized by more secrecy and is closer to sincerity. Moreover, it is to be performed while people are sleeping. In addition, it involves the preference of obedience to sleep or taking rest.

It is desirable to perform supererogatory prayers at all times, excluding the forbidden times. The night vigil supererogatory prayer is more preferable than that performed at the daytime, as mentioned before. The most preferable, concerning the night vigil supererogatory prayer, is that it is performed at the third of the night, which is directly after the middle of the night until the last sixth of the night. This is stated in *Sahîh Muslim (Muslim's Authentic Book of Hadîth)* as a *marfû'* (traceable) *hadîth*, in which the Prophet (PBUH) says:

> *"The most beloved prayer to Allah is that of Dâwûd (David). He used to sleep for (the first) half of the night, perform prayer during the third of it, and (again) sleep for the sixth of it."*[4]

Dâwûd used to sleep for the first half of the night to have rest and then get up at the time when Allah calls saying, *"Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him what he asks for?"*[5] Then Dâwûd would sleep for the sixth part of the night to have rest to be fully active by the *Fajr*

(Dawn) Prayer. So this is the best time for one to perform the night vigil supererogatory prayer. However, the whole night is a time for performing the night vigil supererogatory prayer. **Imâm Ahmad** (may Allah have mercy on him) said, *"One may perform the night vigil supererogatory prayer from the time of sunset to the break of dawn."* Accordingly, the supererogatory act (of prayer) performed between the *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer and the *`Ishâ'* (Night) Prayer is considered among the night vigil supererogatory prayer, but it is better to delay performing the night vigil supererogatory prayer to the last part of the night as mentioned before. Allah, Exalted be He, says, ***"Indeed, the hours of the night are more effective for concurrence [of heart and tongue] and more suitable for words."*** (Qur'ân: Al-Muzzammil: 6) Here, the phrase "hours of the night" refers to performing the night vigil supererogatory prayer after sleeping.

A Muslim person should intend to perform the night vigil supererogatory prayer and he should (set some time to) get a share of (the reward for) performing the prayer at night, which he should keep to, even though it is a little. So when a Muslim gets up (to perform the night vigil supererogatory prayer), he should use the *siwâk* (tooth-stick) and mention Allah saying:

> *"There is no deity but Allah Alone Who has no partner. To Him belongs dominion, and to Him belongs (all) praise, and He is over all things Omnipotent. All praise be to Allah, all glory be to Him and there is no deity but Allah. Allah is the Greatest and there is no power or might except with Allah."*

He should also say:

> *"All praise be to Allah, Who gave me life after causing me to die (sleep) and to Him is the Resurrection. (All) praise be to Allah, Who restituted my soul back unto me and made my body sound and permitted me to mention Him."*

It is more desirable for the Muslim to begin his optional night prayer with two light (short) *rak`ahs* (units of prayer) for it is narrated by Abû Hurayrah that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said:

> *"When any of you stands up at night to perform the night vigil supererogatory prayer, let him begin his prayer with two short rak`ahs."*[6]
>
> (Related by Muslim and other compilers of *Hadîth*)

Moreover, one performing the night vigil supererogatory prayer should pronounce *taslîm* (i.e. final salutations in prayer) at the end of every two *rak`ah*s, as the Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"The night vigil supererogatory prayer should be performed two rak`ahs after two."*[7]
>
> (Related by the Group of Compilers of *Hadîth*)

Thus, the night vigil supererogatory prayer is to be performed in two *rak`ah*s by reciting *Tashahhud* and pronouncing *taslîm* at the end, as it is a two-*rak`ah* prayer.

Furthermore, a Muslim should prolong the night vigil supererogatory prayer when standing, bowing and prostrating. In addition, the night vigil prayer should be performed at one's home. Scholars unanimously agree that supererogatory prayers are better to be performed at home, as the Prophet (PBUH) used to perform them at home. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"... Perform (supererogatory) prayer at your homes, for the best prayer of a person is the one which he performs at home, except the compulsory (congregational) prayer."*[8]

This is because performing it at home implies true devotion.

To perform the supererogatory prayer while standing is better than performing it while sitting with no excuse. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"Whoever performs prayer sitting gets half the reward of that who performs prayer while standing."*[9]
>
> (Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

However, he who performs the supererogatory prayer while sitting, but with an excuse, will get reward similar to that of the one who performs it while standing. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

> *"When the servant (of Allah) falls ill or travels, then he will get reward similar to that he gets for good deeds practiced in residence when in good health."*[10]

There is a unanimous agreement on the permissibility of performing supererogatory prayers in the sitting position though being able to perform it standing.

The one performing night vigil supererogatory prayer should end it with *Witr* as the Prophet (PBUH) used to end his prayer at night by performing *Witr*

prayer[11]. Moreover, he commanded, in several *hadîths*, that it (*Witr*) should be performed[12]. It is desirable for the one who misses the optional night prayer to perform it before noon. This came in the *hadîth* stating:

> *"Whoever is overpowered by sleeping and misses the (regular) portion (of prayer or recitation) and he performs it in the period between the Fajr Prayer and the Zuhr Prayer, it will be recorded for him as reciting it during night."*[13]

O Muslim brother, do not deprive yourself of (the reward for) the night vigil supererogatory prayer. You should get a share of it, even though it is a little, for yourself that you may keep in order to get the reward of those who stand (for night vigil prayer) and seek forgiveness (from Allah) before dawn. That which is little may lead you to have much (reward) and do much acts of obedience, for Allah does not allow the reward of the doers of good to be lost.

Endnotes

1 Muslim (2748) [4/296].
2 Muslim (1767) [3/278].
3 Al-Hâkim (1157) [1/308].
4 Al-Bukhârî (1131) [3/22] and Muslim (2731) [4/287].
5 Al-Bukhârî (1145) [3/38] and Muslim (1771) [3/280].
6 Muslim (1804) [3/296], Ahmad (9155) [2/525] and Abû Dâwûd (1323) [2/55].
7 Al-Bukhârî (990) [2/615], Muslim (1745) [3/272], Ahmad (4849) [2/41], Abû Dâwûd (1326) [2/55], At-Tirmidhî (437) [2/300], An-Nasâ'î (1693) [2/259] and Ibn Mâjah (1319) [2/118].
8 Al-Bukhârî (6113) [10/635] and Muslim (1822) [3/310].
9 Al-Bukhârî (1116) [2/756] and Muslim (1712) [3/257].
10 Al-Bukhârî (2996) [6/165].
11 As it was related in Muslim (1726) [3/265].
12 As it was related in Al-Bukhârî (998) [2/628] and Muslim (1752) [3/274].
13 Muslim (1742) [3/271].

CHAPTER

18

Times When Prayer Is Forbidden

We have introduced above some of the rulings on the supererogatory prayers and now we are going to point out that there are certain times at which prayer is forbidden as narrated to have been pointed out by the Prophet (PBUH). However, there are some exceptions concerning this judgment.

There are five times at which performing prayer is forbidden:

1- **The first time** starts from the second (the factual) time of dawn to sunrise. The Prophet (PBUH) said:

"When the dawn breaks, no prayer is to be performed except the two rak`ahs (units of prayer) of the Fajr Prayer (i.e. the supererogatory rak`ahs of the Fajr Prayer)."[1]

(Related by Ahmad, Abû Dâwûd, and other compilers of *Hadîth*)

Therefore, when the dawn breaks, one should not perform any supererogatory prayer except the two *rak`ahs* of the *Fajr* Prayer.

2- **The second time** starts from the time of sunrise until the sun reaches the height of a spear, in one's sight, above the horizon.

3- **The third time** starts from the time when the sun is at its height at midday until it passes over the meridian. This time is known as the time when 'shade stops' i.e. it does not increase nor does it decrease; until it starts moving toward the west. `Uqbah Ibn `Âmir narrated,

"There are three times at which Allah's Messenger (PBUH) forbade us to perform prayer, or bury our dead (and they are) (i) when the sun begins to rise until it is fully up; (ii) when the sun is at its height at midday until it passes over the meridian; (iii) and when the sun draws near to setting until it sets."[2]

(Related by Imâm Muslim)

4- **The fourth time** starts from the time of the *`Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer until the sun sets, as the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"No prayer should be performed after the Fajr Prayer until the sun rises, and no prayer should be performed after the `Asr Prayer until the sun sets."[3]

(Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

5- **The fifth time** starts from the time when the sun starts setting until it sets.

The Muslim person should know that it is permissible for one to make up for missed prayers at such (forbidden) times. This is based on the Prophet's *hadîth*:

"If anyone misses a prayer out of oversleeping or forgetfulness, he must perform it once he remembers"[4].

(Related by Al-Bukhârî and Muslim)

It is also permissible for one to perform the two *rak`ah*s of *tawâf* (circumambulating the Ka`bah) at such times, as the Prophet (PBUH) said:

"Do not prevent anyone from circumambulating this House (i.e. the Ka`bah) and from performing prayer any moment he desires by day or by night."[5]

(Related by At-Tirmidhî who deems it a *sahîh* (authentic) *hadîth*)

So this is regarded as a permission from the Prophet (PBUH) to perform circumambulation at all times at which prayer is forbidden. This is because, circumambulation is permissible at all times, and so are its two *rak`ah*s.

According to the most acceptable opinion of scholars, it is permissible at these times to perform prayer that have special causes, such as Funeral Prayer, Mosque Greeting Prayer (which is performed on entering the mosque) and Eclipse Prayer. There are legal proofs supporting this permissibility which are considered specific exceptions to the general rule of forbidding performing prayer at such times. Thus, forbidding performing prayer at such times means that it is forbidden to perform prayer with no special reason. Accordingly, it is not permissible to perform a supererogatory prayer, which has no specific reason, at such times.

Furthermore, it is permissible to perform the two supererogatory *rak`ah*s (units of prayer) of the *Fajr* Prayer after performing the *Fajr* Prayer. It is also permissible to perform the two supererogatory *rak`ah*s of the *Zuhr* Prayer after performing the *`Asr* Prayer, especially when one combines both the *Zuhr* and *`Asr* Prayers. This is based on the fact that the Prophet (PBUH) made up for the two supererogatory *rak`ah*s of the *Zuhr* Prayer after the *`Asr* Prayer.

Endnotes

1 Ahmad (4695) [2/27]. There are *hadith*s related with the same meaning such as Abû Dâwûd (1278) [2/40] and At-Tirmidhî (419) [2/278].
2 Muslim (1926) [3/354].
3 Al-Bukhârî (586) [2/80] and Muslim (1920) [3/35].
4 Al-Bukhârî (597) [2/93] and Muslim (1566) [3/198].
5 Abû Dâwûd (1894) [2/308], At-Tirmidhî (868) [3/220], An-Nasâ'î (584) [1/308] and Ibn Mâjah (1254) [2/86].