

جمعية الدعوة والإرشاد  
وتوعية الجاليات بحي السلامة  
JEDDAH DAWAH CENTER



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

أهمية الصلاة  
باللغة الإنجليزية

# THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

Almighty Allaah said “O mankind, what has deceived you concerning your Lord, the Generous. Who created you, proportioned you and balance you? In whatever form He willed has He assembled you”.

(Qur’aan 82: 6-8)

The Almighty Allaah, Creator of the Heavens and Earth addresses mankind, reproaching them: What has seduced you, O man, into such a state that you neglect the One who created you in love and mercy, inducing you to disobey Him and feel secure from His punishment?, neither admitting His right upon you nor showing gratitude for the countless blessings bestowed upon you...?

“O my people, worship Allaah. You have no deity other than Him” (Qur’aan 11: 84)

That was the message of every prophet sent to mankind. It was not a new message, but a reminder of the inherent truth that all men carry deep in their souls, that Allaah the Creator alone is worthy of worship.

No other form of worship, after proper belief, can be compared to formal prayer or “Salah”. It is the basis of religion, without which there is no religion. Prayer was practiced in some form by the earlier prophets and their followers as an essential part of the religion of God.

Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام asked Allaah’s support in this duty: “O my Lord! Make me an establisher of Prayer, and [many] from descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication.” (Qur’aan 14: 40)

The Almighty Allaah spoke to prophet Musa عليه السلام saying: “Indeed, I am Allaah, there is no deity worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.” (Qur’aan 20: 14)

Prophet Jesus عليه السلام said: “And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me the prayer and charity as long as I remain alive” (Qur’aan 19: 31)

And Allaah ordered prophet Muhammad عليه السلام : “Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish Prayer. Indeed, Prayer restrains from immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allaah is greater. And Allaah knows that which you do.” (Qur’aan 29: 45)

Islam, which is the final religion, the completion and confirmation of monotheistic religion, considers prayer essential. The denial of prayer removes one from the ranks of Islam. Prayer was the first duty ordered of the Muslim community, having been made obligatory upon them in Makkah about three years before the Hijra (emigration) to Madinah.

All Islamic obligations were revealed to prophet Muhammad ﷺ upon the earth, while prayer alone, due to its importance, was ordered in heaven on the night of Israa' and Mi'raj. This is proof enough of the Creator's great concern that this connection between Himself and His servants is established.

Prayer is expected of every Muslim who is sane and of age. It is reported that the prophet ﷺ said: "The pen is raised for three groups [of people]"--that is, they will not be responsible for their actions: "the insane until they become sane, those who are sleeping until they awaken, and the young until they reach puberty." (Ahmad, Abu Dawud).

All others are responsible for their duties before Allaah, and the foremost of these duties is prayer. Prayer is ordered continuously throughout Qur'aan. Allaah, in His mercy emphasizes its importance over and over so there can be no doubt. He tells us:

**"Maintain with care the (obligatory) Prayers and (in particular) the middle prayer and stand before Allaah, devoutly obedient."** (Qur'aan 2: 238)

And He says: **"And When you have completed Prayers, remember Allaah standing, sitting down or lying down on your sides; but when you become secure, re-establish (regular) Prayer. Indeed, Prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times."** (Qur'aan 4: 103)

It should be noted as well that in Islam, the establishment of prayer is emphasized: The Qur'aan does not tell us: "pray", but it tells us: **"establish prayer"**. Prayer should not be merely a series of words and movements practiced occasionally, without thought. But it must be established in the heart, if it is to give the desired result. Prayer is to be established for the individual at its proper times and according to its definite conditions. It is to be established in the home, in the family, and finally in the community as a whole. This is because the prayer, when established and practiced in the proper fashion ties the individual (and the group) to Allaah in a positive and fruitful way. It awakens the believer's heart to his Lord and to himself, and reminds him of that Day on which he will stand before his Creator with nothing between them.

The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said **"The first act that the slave will be accountable for on the Day of Judgement will be prayer. If it is good, then the rest of his acts will be good. And if it is evil, then the rest of his acts will be evil."** (At-Tabarani)

We know from the sayings of the prophet ﷺ, that an important purpose of prayer is to wash away sins.

Another is its effect on the believer's conscience. But most important, as Allaah tells us in Qur'aan, is the remembrance of Himself, for that is the source of all benefit:

**“Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish Prayer. Indeed, Prayer restrains from immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allaah is greater. And Allaah knows that which you do.”** (Qur'aan 29: 45)

The importance of keeping the prayer is affirmed in every situation: at home or while travelling, in security or fear, in peace or war, in health or illness. Even if it is not possible to fulfill the usual required conditions of prayer, such as cleanliness or proper dress, permission to neglect or postpone the prayer altogether is never given. Allaah, in his Mercy, has given us concessions or substitutes in certain circumstances one might face, such as making Tayammum (using dust or soil instead of water) and Kasr wa Jame' (shortening and joining the prayers) during a journey. However, the only permission to neglect the prayer is for women at the time of childbirth or monthly cycles. Even the person too ill to move or threatened by an enemy must pray, if only with his eyes or in his heart - as much as he is able, and as long as his mental faculties are intact. During the last breaths of his life, the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ, in concern for his community continued to remind them: “The prayer ... the prayer...”.

There are several authentic sayings of the prophet ﷺ defining the abandonment of prayer as “kufir” or disbelief, which as we know, subjects the person to eternal punishment in the hereafter. Among the most well known of these sayings are: **“Between a person and disbelief is discarding prayer.”** (Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawud,)

And: **“The covenant that is between us and them is the prayer, so he who abandons it, has disbelieved).”** (Ahmad, Tirmidhi)

Some scholars have interpreted this to mean that anyone who does not pray is to be considered from the kuffar or non-Muslims. They hold the view that the person who denies the words of Allaah and His messenger that prayer is obligatory upon him and refrains from it deliberately removes himself from Islam because of his disbelief.

Sheikh of Islam, Ahmad bin Taimiyyah said: “But most people perform prayers at times and leave them at times, not keeping to it regularly. These are the ones who come under the threat, and it is them about whom the saying of the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ came:

“Allaah has laid five prayers upon His slaves. Whoever fulfills them and does not miss any of them will have a pact with Allaah that He will let him enter Paradise. Whoever does not come with them will have no pact with Allaah. If He wishes, He may punish him, and if He wishes, He may forgive him.” (Ahmad, Abu Dawud)

So the keeper of prayer is the one who prays at its given times, as Allaah has ordered, and does not postpone it or neglect its essential parts. The one who neglects the times or essentials of the Prayer is subject to the punishment of Allaah the Exalted.

Alhamdulillah (all praise is due to Allaah alone) that we might have some extra prayers (nawafil) to complete any shortcomings in our obligatory prayers...

The prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: “The first thing about which the people will be called to account out of their actions on the Day of Judgment is Prayer. Our Lord, the Exalted, will say to the angels - though He knows better: “Look into the prayer of My servant and see whether he has offered it perfectly or imperfectly.” If it is perfect, that will be recorded perfect. If it is defective, He will say: “See if there are some optional prayers offered by My servant.” If there are voluntary prayers to his credit, He will say: “Compensate the obligatory prayers with the voluntary prayers for My servant.” Then all the actions will be considered similarly.” (Abu Dawood)

Any person, who has never been informed of his duties in Islam and therefore is ignorant, is not responsible until he has this knowledge. But once he knows that prayer is binding upon him as a Muslim, he is to be judged according to his response.

Refusing the invitation of our Creator to establish this essential relationship with Him is the ultimate ingratitude and rejection of His mercy. On the contrary, the person who responds and strives to please his Lord will be loved by Him and gain the happiness of both worlds. As the above hadeeth said, he is the only one who has a covenant with Allaah. The rewards of the righteous servants of Allaah are mentioned in His book:

**“And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for eyes [i.e., satisfaction] as reward for what they used to do.”** (Qur’aan 32: 17)

Finally, no soul should despair because of sin. The door of repentance is open to all, regardless of their previous condition. It is well established that sincere repentance and regret for the past and determination to correct the situation is all that is needed to be accepted by Allaah. One can start anew at any time, without the burden of compensation for years of past neglect.

Abu Bakr reports: I heard the prophet ﷺ saying: “Allaah forgives the man who commits a sin (then feels ashamed), purifies himself, offers a prayer and seeks His forgiveness.” Then he recited the verse : “And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves, remember Allaah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allaah? – and who do not persist in what they have done while they know, those – their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens underneath which rivers flow [in paradise], wherein they will abide eternally; and excellent is their reward of the [righteous] workers.” (Qur’aan 3: 135-136)

Allaah said in the Qur’aan: “Say: O my servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the Mercy of Allaah. Indeed, Allaah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.” (Qur’aan 39: 53)

“And when those come to you who believe in Our verses, say, “Peace be upon you”. Your Lord has decreed upon Himself mercy: that any of you who does wrong out of ignorance and then repents after that and correct himself– indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.” (Qur’aan 6:54)

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Edited and revised by

**Hamadi Al-Aslani**

Manager of Editing and Translation

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المملكة العربية السعودية - جدة - حي السلامة  
ص.ب. ٦٨٩٧ جدة ٢١٤٥٢ - هاتف : ٦٨٢٨٨٨٨ فاكس : تحويلة ١١١  
Saudi Arabia - P.O.Box 6897 Jeddah 21452  
Tel. 6828888 Fax. Ext. 111 www.jdcidawah.org