

AS SALAH: PRAYER AND ITS CLASSIFICATION

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Abstract

Prayer is one of the most obligatory duties and fundamental five pillars of Islam which is next to testimony of faith. It was ordained in the best and the most perfect way for an act of worship. Prayer includes many acts of worship, like the remembrance of Allah, the recitation of the Qur'an, standing humbly before Allah, bowing, prostration, supplication, and takbir. Prayer is also the head of the physical acts of worship. The prime purpose of all forms of ibadah, worship of Allah such as Salah (prayer), sawm (fasting), Zakat (alms giving), Hajj (pilgrimage), dhikr (supplication), or Tilawatul Qur'an (recitation of the Qur'an) is to express servitude, obedience and submission to Allah. As for the benefits which one gets from ibadah (worship) such as self-reform, discipline and so on, these are the results and fruits of ibadah. Prayer, for example is initially to submit and humble yourself before Allah, by bowing and prostrating, and to remember Him. (Allah). Therefore, this paper discusses the two classifications of prayer i.e. the obligatory and voluntary types of prayers.

Introduction

Prayer is one of the obligatory duties and fundamental five pillars of Islam which is next to testimony of faith. It was ordained in the best and the most perfect way for an act of worship. Prayer includes many acts of worship, like the remembrance of Allah, the recitation of the Qur'an, standing humbly before Allah, bowing, prostration, supplication, and takbir. Prayer is also the head of the physical acts of worship, of which none of the religions brought by any Allah's messengers. Prayer, unlike all other acts of worship, was enjoined by Allah's messenger in the night of Mi'iraj (Muhammad P.B.U.H ascension). 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 Ahadith indicating the virtues of prayer and showing its being obligatory on all Muslims. 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

repent, and if he does not after three days, he is to be killed as unanimously agreed upon by Muslim scholars.

Linguistically, Prayer means invocation. Allah the exalted commanded the Prophet to "pray" for believers saying: "And invoke (Allah's blessing) upon them..." (Q9V103).

Prayer starts with takbir and ending with tasleem. It is called prayer because it includes invocations. 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 mi'iraj before hijrah as five prayers to be performed every day and night at a specified times by every legally accountable Muslim. Allah (SWA) says:

"Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers A decree of specified times" (Q4V103)

And establish prayer and give Zakat and bow with those who bow (in worship and obedience)" (Q2V43).

These prayer times are the times specified by Allah's messenger (P.B.U.H) through his words or his deeds i.e. (through the sun nah). Allah (SWA) also says: And they are not commanded except to worship Allah.

...Sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish Prayer (Q98V5).

In addition, in many verses of the Glorious (Qur'an), Allah (SWA) says:

"O (Muhammad), tell my servants who have believed Establish prayer" (Q14V31).

Moreover, Allah the Glorified says:

"So, exalted is Allah when you reach evening and when You reach the morning, and to Him is (due all) praise through the heaven and the earth. And exalted is he at night and at noon" (Q30V17-18).

Therefore, it is obligatory for whoever reaches one of the specified times of prayer, being adult and sane, to observe it, excluding woman in a state of menstruation or post-natal bleeding. Scholars unanimously agreed that, it is not obligatory for a woman in the aforesaid two cases neither 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 he/she has missed when he/she regains consciousness (Al fawzan, 2005). Allah (SWA) says:

"And establish prayer for my remembrance" (Q20V14).

In addition, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said: *"Whoever missed a prayer out of oversleeping or forgetfulness let him perform it once he remembers it"* Bukhari.

Classification of Prayer

1. The Five Daily Prayer

The prayer is of two types, obligatory and voluntary. The obligatory prayers are also divided into two categories, prayer that is obligatory upon each and every individual

and prayer that is only obligatory on the community as a whole.

The prayer that is obligatory upon every legal capable man or woman is, the five daily prayers. Allah (SWA) says; *"Verily the prayers are enjoined on the believers at stated times" (Q4V103).* In another verse Allah (SWA) says:

And they have been commanded no more than this to worship Allah, offering him sincere devotion, being true (in faith) and to establish regular prayer, and to pay the zakat and that is the Religion right and straight (Q98V5).

In Suratul Rum, Allah (SWA) calls the attention of Muslims to keep on praying in both sides of the rotation of earth from sunrise to sunset where Allah (SWT) says:

"So, glory (give) to Allah, when you reach the evening (for sunset

And night prayers) and when you raised in the morning to Him

Be praised, and in the late afternoon and when they begins to decline (for the noon prayer" (Q30V17-18).

However, the prayer that is obligatory upon the community as a whole includes the other obligatory prayers and aspects related to the prayers such as the call to prayer, the eclipse prayer and funeral prayer (Gaanirn, 1999).

2. Congregational Prayer

The prayer in congregation is obligatory upon free, capable Muslim servant, whether resident or travelling. This is based on Allah's statement;

When you (o messenger) are with them and stand to lead them in prayer, let one party of them stand up (in prayer) with you" (Q4V102).

But the command in the verse implies obligation in the time of safety. While in a state of fear, the obligation to pray in congregation does not apply.

Shortening the Prayer (QASR)

Shortening the prayer while travelling means to perform the four raka'at prayers shorten to two raka'ats. This law is in consideration of the need and circumstances of the Muslims and to make things easier upon them. Shortening the prayer is sanctioned in the book of Allah, Prophetic Sunnah and is permissible according to the agreement of the leading scholars. It is sanctioned according to the book of Allah, where Allah (SWT) says:

when you travel through the earth, there is no blame on you If you shorten your prayers, for fear that the unbelievers may attack you, for the unbelievers are unto you open enemies” (Q4V201).

Voluntary Prayer

Almighty Allah has sanctioned to men what will complete their obligatory duties and would be a substitute for them. Among such sanctioned acts are the voluntary prayers. It is confirmed from the messenger of Allah (P B U H) that, the voluntary prayers complete the obligatory prayers when the person has not performed them in their complete sense. Allah (SWT) says:

Allah will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and) degrees, those of you who believed and those who have been granted Knowledge (Q58V11).

Moreover, the prophet (SAW) comments that, the most virtues acts of worship is prayer, where He says:

After half of the night or two third of it have passed, our Lord the blessed and exalted, descends to the lowest heaven. (Muslim)

The voluntary prayers can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Night prayer (Tahajjud)
- 2- Dhuha prayers (Salat ad-duha)

3- Prayer for greeting the mosque (Tahiyyat al-masjid)

4- Prostration while reading specific verses of the Qur'an (Sujud al-tilawah)

5- Prostration for thankfulness (Sujud ash-shukur)

6- Taraweeh prayer (salat at-tarawih)

7- The witr prayer (salat al-witr)

8- The regular daily Sunnah prayer (sunan al-rawatib)

As the prophet (SAW) declared that:

The two raka'at of fajr (before the obligatory Fajr prayer) are better than the world and what It contains (Muslim & Tirmidhi)

The Friday Prayer

Friday is among the special day of the week. For that reason, Allah has particularly guided the Muslims to it and ordained their gathering to be on this day. The wisdom behind that includes an opportunity for the Muslims to get together, know each other, and display mercy and assistance for one another. Friday is like a weekly celebration or festival. It is the best day upon which the sun rises. The Friday prayer is obligatory as Allah (SWT) said:

O you who believed when the call is proclaimed to pray On Friday, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of Allah, and leave off business (and trade)... (Q62V9).

It consists of two raka'ats, it is recommended to make gusl (*ritual bath*) for it and to leave early for it. There are five conditions attached to the validity of the Friday prayer:

- 1- Observing it at the stipulated time
 1. The intention
 - 2- Its observance while a person is not travelling.
 2. The presence of the minimum required gathering
 3. The two sermons (Khutbah) before the Friday prayer

Eid Prayer

The Eid prayer is one of the physical worships in Islam and particular characteristic of the Muslim. A Muslim fulfils one of the thanks to the Lord for the ability to fast the month of Ramadan, or make a pilgrimage to the sacred house of Allah. Furthermore, it promotes mutual compassion and mercy among the believers. It is an all inclusive gathering and a means of purification of the soul.

Allah (SWT) says:

Allah wants you to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you (Q2V185).

Ibn Umar used to explain the greatness of Allah during the entire time of two eids. As far as making the remembrance of Allah during the first ten days of dhul hijjah, Allah (SWA) says: "And celebrate the name of Allah, through the days appointed... (Q22V28).

Prayer for the Rain (Al Istisqa) and Eclipse Prayer (Al Khusuf)

This is a kind of supplication that people seek for rain through prayers. This is done through seeking Allah's forgiveness. The eclipse (khusuf) applies to either a full or partial solar or lunar eclipse, where a portion or all of the sun or moon's light is eclipsed. These events are from the signs of Allah that should encourage people to prepare for the hereafter and to realize Allah's watchfulness over them. It should lead them to turn to Him under all circumstances and to think about the greatness of His excellence in His creation and, it will make a person to realize that He alone is worthy of worship (Ganim, 1999). In a situation where there is a solar or lunar eclipse, it is Sunnah to perform eclipse prayer in congregation. Allah (SWT) says:

Among his signs are the night and the day and the Sun and the moon. Prostrate not to the sun and the moon. But prostrate to Allah, who created them. If it is (truly) Him you worship (Q41V37).

Funeral Prayer

Shari'ah, the Islamic law being perfect and comprehensive, covers all human affairs related to life as well as death. Among the issues that the Islamic shari'ah covers are the rulings on deathbed and death. So, ruling from one's illness and death, one's burial, the Shari'ah also covers the ruling on visiting a dying person and instructing him to say the kalimat shahada "There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah", washing the body of the dead, enshrouding his body and performing the funeral prayer over him, burying him, settling his debts, carrying out his will, distributing his properties to legal heirs and assuming guardianship over his young children. It is desirable and highly recommendable in Islam to pray to Allah and ask Him for recovery. Prophet Ayyub (P B U H), for example prayed to his Lord, as revealed by Allah (SWA) in the Qur'an:

"Indeed adversity has touched me and you are the most Mercy of the merciful (Q21V83).

It is not permissible for a Muslim to wash the dead body of a non-believer, or to carry his coffin to the grave, or enshroud his body, or perform the funeral prayer, over him, or attend his funeral procession. This is because Allah (SWT) says:

O you who believed, do not make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry (Q63V18).

The general meaning of the verse indicates that it is prohibition to wash the dead body of the decease (disbelievers), or carry his coffin, or follow his funeral procession. In addition, Allah (SWA) said:

And do not pray (The funeral prayer o Muhammad) over any of them who has died ever or stand at his grave. Indeed they disbelieved in Allah (Q9V84).

Allah (SWT) also says:

It is not for the prophet and those who have believed to ask forgiveness for the polytheist (Q9V113).

The scholars of Islam laid some conditions for funeral prayer which are as follow:

1. Intention, one must have the intention of performing it.
2. Facing the qibla
3. Concealing one's awrah (private parts) when performing it.
4. The ritual purity (wudu) of both the one performing it and the deceased.
5. Avoidance of any physical impurity
6. Both the one performing it and the deceased must be Muslims
7. Attending the funeral procession after offering the funeral prayer,
8. Being legally accountable (matured, sane, free from slavery).

There are also essential acts of the funeral prayer which are as follow:

1. Standing upright
2. Saying four takbir
3. Reciting the surah Al fatiha (The opening chapter of Qur'an)
4. Asking Allah to confer his blessing upon the Prophet (P.B.U.H)
5. Praying for forgiveness for the deceased.
6. Performing these acts in sequence
7. Ending the prayer with taslim (saying: As-salamu alaikum)

Conclusion

The purpose of human creation on earth is that people should know their Lord and worship Him as He should be worshipped. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

"I have only created Jinn and man that they may serve me". The prime purpose of all forms of ibadah, worship of Allah such as Salah (prayer), sawm (fasting), Zakat (alms giving), Hajj (pilgrimage), dhikr (supplication), or Tilawatul Qur'an recitation of the Qur'an is to express servitude, obedience and submission to Allah. As for the benefits which one gets from ibadah (worship), such as self reform, discipline and so on, these are the results and fruits of ibadah. Prayer, for example is initially to submit and humble yourself before Allah, by bowing and prostrating, and to remember Him. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an: *"Establish prayer for my remembrance"* He also says: *Prayer restrains from indecent and evil deeds, but verily remembrance of Allah is more important".*

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