

Salat (Prayer)

Benefits, Knowledge and Etiquette of Salat

Prayer and Spirituality

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

- In Chapter 29, verse 46, the Holy Qur'an says "Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book, and observe Prayer. Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil; and remembrance of Allah, indeed, is the greatest virtue. And Allah knows what you do."
- In Chapter 4, verse 104, we are told that "Verily. Prayer is enjoined on the believers (to be performed) at fixed hours."
- In Chapter 23, verses 2-3, the Holy Qur'an says "Surely, success does come to the believers, who are humble in their prayers."

1. ***Why does God want us to pray?*** God, the Self-Sustaining, does not need our prayers. Prayers are a means by which humans can purify their spirit to enable them to become closer to God. Humans need to pray to God to improve their moral condition and to become useful human beings. God has made humans capable of continuous development and spiritual evolution; prayers are a mode of reaching higher spiritual levels.
2. ***Why has God created worship, and what are the advantages of different forms of worship that God has prescribed in Islam?***

There are 4 forms of worship in Islam that are designed to improve the physical, moral, and spiritual condition of the individual so that he can realize his full capabilities that he has been created for.

 - 1) The first type of worship, such as offering 5 daily prayers, sunnah, nawaafil, tahajjad, & Zikr-e-Ilahi, strengthens a believers relationship with God.
 - 2) The second type of worship improves one's physical condition and prepares one to make sacrifices for Allah, for example fasting in Ramadhan and nawaafil-rosa (fasting on other days of the year).
 - 3) The third type of worship, which is performing Hajj and Omrah, strengthens the sense of community and unifies Muslims providing them a center of worship.
 - 4) The last type of worship, paying Zakat and Sadqa, requires sacrifice of wealth and maintains the economic well-being of the community.
3. ***What is the significance of saying salat?*** The Holy Prophet (saws) said on the Day of Judgement the first question is asked about salat. If a person is successful in that part, he is (Ba-Murad) successful otherwise he loses it and becomes a failure. (Tirmizi-Abwabus-Salat)
4. ***What are some blessings of salat mentioned by the Holy Prophet (saws)?***
 - Sins are forgiven, even those sins that we commit and ones we are not aware of.
 - When a person stands for the salat, all of his sin is brought up and put on his body; and when he bows down for Ruku and Sajda, they fall off his body.
 - A person requested the Holy Prophet (saws) to punish him because he committed a sin. Meanwhile, it was time for Salat, and he prayed. After the salat, he repeated the question again. Hazoor asked him if he had prayed. The person responded that he had. Hazoor said that you are forgiven. "Allah has forgiven all your sins." (Bukhari, Katabul-Muharibeen)
5. ***What is the example of the dried leaves Holy Prophet (saws) gave regarding salat?*** In the fall/winter months when leaves fall from the trees, the Holy Prophet (saws) shook two branches of a tree causing dried leaves to start falling. Hazoor said that when a Muslim performs salat to please Allah, his sins start falling down like these leaves are falling from this tree.
6. ***How can salat protect against the fires of hell?*** The Holy Prophet (saws) said that a person who performs salat before sunrise and before sunset will not see the fires of hell.

7. **What if one knowingly misses salat?** The Holy Prophet (saws) said if someone knowingly forsakes the salat, he openly commits Kufar (deny the existence of the God). (Katabul-Salat)
8. **What if I am too busy and do not have time to pray?** Holy Prophet (saws) said if someone forsakes salat and dies in that condition, then he will be presented to Allah in a situation where Allah is extremely angry with him.
9. **I perform salat myself and hope my children will also when they grow up. I ask them to pray now, but sometimes they do not. What should I do?** The Holy Prophet (saws) directed parents to ask children to pray at age seven. If they do not pray by age ten, then parents may use punishment to establish the habit of prayers in their children. (Katabul-Salat, Abu-Daoud) Children should learn the Arabic salat before age seven. Starting at age seven, the child should start saying salat. He might only say one prayer but consistency is important. When the child is regular with one, then increase to the next level and keep watch for regularly saying two. Then, increase to three, four, and five.

The Promised Messiah (as) said:

In my opinion, if a person is mired deep in sins, but offers Salat, then he will still have the chance to recover from this situation. A person who performs Salat with care and fulfills all of its requirements will find a change in himself right away. (Tafseer-e-Kabeer, Sura Ankaboot, pg 652-53)

Responsibility of Ahmadi Muslims:

What have we pledged as Ahmadis regarding salat? In the third condition of the ba'it, we pledge that we "...shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (saws); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the Tahajjud and invoking Darood on the Holy Prophet (saws); that he shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him."

General knowledge (Timings and Types of Prayers)

10. **How many obligatory prayers are prescribed by Islam?**
There are 5 obligatory prayers: Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha.
11. **What are the timings of these prayers?**
Fajr—At dawn, before sunrise
Zuhr—In early afternoon
Asr—In late afternoon
Maghrib—Just after sunset
Isha—In the evening before midnight
12. **When may Prayers not be offered?**
Prayers may not be offered in the following times: 1) during the rising of the sun, 2) when the sun is at its zenith, 3) after asr prayer till sunset, 4) during the setting of the sun, 5) after fajr prayer till sunrise.
13. **Offering of prayers is prohibited at the rising of sun, setting of sun and when the sun is at the zenith at noon. Why is that?** The Holy Prophet (saws) did not like the Muslims to pray at the times when idol-worshippers would pray. But there are exceptions in certain situations.
14. **What does the Arabic word "Fard" mean when referring to prayer?** Fard means obligatory prayers. If possible, these prayers should be performed in congregation behind an Imam at a mosque. However, one can offer fard prayers at home or other places.

15. **What does the Arabic word “Waajib” mean when referring to prayer?** These prayers, the Vitr, Eid-ul-Fitr, and Eid-ul-Adhiya, are considered necessary but not obligatory prayers. One should not intentionally skip Waajib prayers.
16. **What does the Arabic word “Sunnah” mean when referring to prayer?** This refers to additional prayers offered before and after Fard prayers. It was a practice of The Holy Prophet (pbuh) to offer these prayers.
17. **What does the Arabic word “Nafil” mean when referring to prayer?** These are additional but optional prayers. By offering them, one can achieve further blessings from Allah. The Tahajjad prayer is an example of Nafil prayer, and they should be performed two raka’at at a time.
18. **Define “Taraveeh” prayer.**
Taraveeh prayers are performed each night during the month of Ramadhan after Isha’ or at the time of Tahajjad. They are offered in four units of 2 raka’aat each. These nawaafil may be offered in congregation or separately at home.
19. **What is the Qaza prayer (Qadaa prayer or missed prayer), and how is it performed?** If a believer forgets to say his prayers at the appropriate time, then he is allowed to say those prayers in the form of Qaza prayers, as soon as he remembers. If more than one prayer was missed, then the order of the prayers must be preserved. If one forgets the order or the number of missed prayers is more than six then the order is not critical. When offering the Qaza prayer, one skips all the sunnah prayers except for the sunnah prayers of Fajr.
20. **When is Duae Qanoot offered?** Duae Qanoot is offered during Vitr prayer in the third raka’aat, before or after ruku.
21. **Can one recite the Holy Quran during sajda?** No

Ablution

22. **Describe how to perform ablution? Also, state what is the Massah?** 1) Begin by reciting “Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem” and wash hands up to the wrists three times. 2) Rinse the mouth three times. 3) Wash the nostrils three times & blow the nose with the left hand. 4) Wash the face three times. 5) Wash the forearms up to the elbows three times. 6) Perform the Al-Mas-ha (or Massah) which is rubbing wet hands backward & forward only once. Also at this time, rub the ears with wet fingers & the outside ears with wet thumbs. 7) Wash the feet up to the ankles three times. 8) Recite the following prayer after performing ablution: *Alaahumaj alnee minat-tawwaabeena waj alnee minal mutatah-hireen* (O Allah! Make me from among those who repent of their sins and from among those who keep themselves pure and clean.)
23. **If water is scarce, does a believer still have to wash the different parts three times for complete ablution?** No, whether you wash your parts three times depends on the time & quantity of water available. You may wash the different parts twice or even once. (Primer of Islam Book II, p12)
24. **If a believer wears socks after performing complete ablution, does he or she need to rewash the feet for subsequent ablutions?** No, the believer is allowed to simply pass wet fingers over the feet for subsequent prayers for up to 24 hours. While on journey the believer by continue to do this for up to three days. This act may not be performed if the socks are torn exposing three toes of the foot.
25. **What conditions require the believer to redo the ablution?** Ablution needs to be performed again after passing wind, using the bathroom, & falling asleep.

26. **Describe when and how to perform At-tayammum?** Tayammum is performed when water is not available or when using water will harm the believer, for example when taking a bath in cold weather may endanger the health of a sick person. This is done by 1) striking both hands on pure earth or a surface containing dust, 2) blowing the dust of the hands, 3) and then passing the hands over the face & the back of the hands.

Bathing before prayer

27. **In what instances is bathing required before prayer is offered?** The body should be generally clean before offering prayers. Bathing is required after intercourse & after a course of menses.
28. **What are the minimum requirements for men and women when bathing to be clean for salat.** Three essential actions to be performed during bathing are 1) gargling, 2) cleaning the nose with water, and 3) running water on the entire body. If washing the hair is burdensome on a woman because it is too thick or braided (and undoing the style is cumbersome) or even if cold weather inhibits washing the hair, then instead, she may perform massah by passing wet hands over her head.

Cleanliness of environment

29. **It is essential that the place where Salat is performed should be clean. Give examples of places where prayer should not be performed?** Prayer should not be offered in a public restroom, graveyard, a thorough-fare, roof of the Ka'bah, a slaughter-house, or an animal stable.
30. **If a woman is not praying due to her monthly course, then is she allowed to come to the masjid?** Yes, such a person is allowed to come to masjid to increase her religious knowledge by listening to the imam. But when salat begins, such ladies should not remain in the prayer area; instead, they should stay in an area behind the individuals praying during the salat.

Personal Appearance

31. **What is the appropriate attire when individuals say salat?** Clothing should be clean. The body should be appropriately covered with clean, decent dress. At a minimum, men are required to cover themselves from the navel to just below the knees. Women are allowed to expose only their faces, hands, and feet. The rest of their bodies including the hair, forearms, and legs need to be covered. Wearing see-through or extremely tight garments are not appropriate for women.

Etiquette during Salat

32. **What is the basic etiquette should be observed during prayer?**
- Congregation prayers must be offered in straight lines.
 - No gaps should be present between the believers. If there is a gap evident during the prayer, the believers should eliminate the gap by stepping closer to each other.
 - Lines originate in the center of a row since the object is to stay centered behind the Imam.
 - Talking or any distracting activity is not permitted near the individuals saying the prayers. Nothing should distract the attention of the individual from his prayer. One should even cease reciting the Holy Quran out-loud while others are praying.
 - Prayer area should be clean and clear of distractions. One should not pray in front of pictures of humans, animals, or impertinent scenery.
33. **Is passing in front of those engaged in prayers prohibited? Why?** Passing in front is prohibited because it is distracting and leads to a loss of concentration for persons offering prayer.
34. **Are there any cases when an individual may pass in front of someone saying prayers?** Yes, an individual with a dire need may pass in front of someone offering the prayer if there is significant distance between him and the person praying; this distance is generally considered about

the length of 2 rows. Also in an emergency if there is not enough distance, then the person passing may place an object, such as a cushion, between himself and the person offering the prayer.

35. ***What should be the time length of Salat, and what was the practice of the Holy Prophet (saws)?*** The length of prayer depends on the individual and the situation. When the Holy Prophet (saws) said prayer in congregation he did not make salat unnecessarily long out of consideration for other peoples' obligations. However, when he was alone he would spend a much longer time and devotion. In general, salat should be long enough for an individual to concentrate on the meaning of every word and should be long enough to include the required prayers. Any additional prayers are optional and will effect the length.
36. ***If one is alone in the house, can you answer the door or answer the ringing phone while praying? If so, will you resume the prayers where you left off?*** In emergency situations you may discontinue your prayer and resume it later when the situation has been resolved and there is no longer any interference.
37. ***What special allowances are permitted to people who are sick when praying salat?*** A sick person is allowed to say his prayers while sitting or lying down. In extreme situations when mobility is limited, he should still perform the salat and the change in positions can be signified with any possible movement, such as bowing the head slightly.
38. ***Can one recite the prayer out loud?*** Generally, prayer should not recited out loud or in a manner in which it may disturb and distract others who are also praying.

Traveling

39. ***What is the protocol concerning salat while travelling?*** When travelling, the Sunnah raka'at are dropped in every prayer except Fajr prayer. The four Fard raka'at of Zuhr, Asr, and Isha' are reduced to two raka'at each. It is also permitted to combine Zuhr and Asr or Maghrib and Isha' while travelling.
40. ***What places can a traveler visit where he has option of whether or not to shorten the prayer?*** When the traveler visits a Muslim religious center such as Mecca, Medina, Qadian, Rabwah, or the place where the Khalifa is, he has the option to say either the shortened or complete prayer. This option also applies when an individual visits a place that he considers a second home such as the parents' home or in-laws' home.
41. ***Can a traveler be an Imammu-Salat and lead the residents in Salat?*** Yes, a traveler Imam may lead the residents in prayer. The traveler Imam may shorten his prayer by saying Salam after two Rakaats; meanwhile, the residents continue to say remainder of the prayer. However, when the traveler is following the resident Imam, then the traveler has to say the complete prayer.
42. ***Does a traveler have to face Qibla while riding or traveling in a car, train, or airplane?*** No, the traveler is not required to face towards the Qibla because his direction while in travel might be changing.
43. ***What is the length of time of a trip that is considered appropriate for shortening the salat?*** Salat can be shortened on a trip where one is away for 15 days or less.

Correcting mistakes during salat

44. ***Describe when and how to perform Sajdat-us-Sahwi?*** Sajdat-us-Sahwi is also known as the rectifying prostration, and it is performed by making two sajdas before ending the prayer. In

congregation the followers can point out that the imam made a mistake by saying “Subhanullahi” during the prayer. The imam may correct the mistake and perform the rectifying prostration before ending the namaz. If the imam does not perform the sajda thinking he did not make a mistake then the followers should not perform the sajda. When a person is praying himself and realizes he made a mistake he should perform the two sajdahs as well.

45. **How do men acknowledge a mistake in the Imam’s recitation differently than women?** Men say “Subhaan-Allah” out loud to draw attention to the Imam’s error. Women are not allowed to speak out loud, however, they may clap to acknowledge the mistake.

Joining congregational prayers already in progress

46. **What if you arrive late (i.e. others have already finished some raka’aat) during congregational prayers – what should you do?** You should immediately join the prayers. Do not say the salutation with the others but remain in the salat position. Stand up after the salutation and complete your prayer by performing the raka’aat(s) that you missed.

47. **In certain instances a Muslim who has not offered his prayers will come to the mosque when congregation prayers are in progress. He is not aware of which prayer is being offered or if 2 prayers are being joined.**

A) What should the Muslim do?

The Muslim should join-in the congregation prayers.

B) After the prayer the Muslim realizes that he joined-in with Asr prayer while he had not offered his Zuhr prayer, then what becomes of his Zuhr prayer?

The believer may say his Zuhr prayer after reciting the Asr prayer with the congregation since he was not aware that he joined with Asr.

However, if the believer is informed that the congregation is reciting Asr prayer, then the believer should perform the Zuhr prayer first, while the congregation continues with Asr prayer. After completing his Zuhr prayer, then the believer may join-in the remainder of the Asr prayer with the congregation and then complete the missed portion of Asr appropriately.

Immamu-Salat

48. **Can a woman lead Salat? If so, under what circumstances and describe the procedure for a woman to lead other women in congregational prayers?** A woman can lead prayers only in a woman’s congregation. She should stand in the middle of the first row among the other women (not ahead of the first row).

49. **What is the criterion for the selection of an Imam?** The Imam should be a pious individual who possesses religious knowledge especially knowledge of the Holy Quran.

Quibla

50. **In North America, in what general direction are prayers offered?** Prayers should be offered towards the north-east.

51. **In case a believer finds out prayers were said in a direction that does not face the Ka’bah, does the believer have to repeat her prayers?** No.

52. **What if the believer finds out the correct direction of the Ka’bah while performing his prayers in the incorrect direction?** The believer is allowed to turn to the right direction even during his prayers.