

Islam gives tremendous importance to the Prayer (in Arabic: *Salāh*). It has the highest position after the testimony of faith (which enters a person into Islam). The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“Islam is built on five pillars: That Allah alone is to be worshipped and to disbelieve in the worship of others besides Him, to establish the daily prayers, to pay the Zakāt, to perform the Hajj and to fast the month of Ramadān.”** (*Muslim*, 16)

The Prayer is the first affair that the people will be asked about on the Day of Resurrection. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, **“The first thing that a person will be accounted for on the Day of Resurrection will be the Prayer – if it is sound then the rest of the deeds will be sound, and if it is corrupt then the rest of the deeds will also be corrupted.”** (At-Tabarāni in *Al-Awsat* no. 1859. See *As-Saheehah* no. 1358)

A person’s Islam depends on his Prayer such that if he abandons the prayer, he loses his grasp on Islam. The Messenger (ﷺ) stated, **“Indeed between a person and between polytheism and unbelief is the abandonment of Prayer.”** (*Muslim*, 82)

The Prayer is the barrier between a person and sins, just as Allah (the Most High) said, **“Recite, O Prophet, what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish the Prayer. Indeed, the Prayer keeps away lewd and immoral conduct, and wrongdoing.”** (*Al-‘Ankabūt*, 45)

Its importance is such that during the final hours of the life of the noble Prophet (ﷺ) he advised with it. ‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the last words spoken by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were, **“The Prayer, the Prayer! And fear Allah regarding what your right-hands own.”** (*Saheeh Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 5156)

The five daily Prayers have a tremendous position in Islam, and due to this, there are numerous benefits and bounties attached to it:

1. The Prayer is an expiation for mistakes and sins. Allah (the Most High) stated, **“And establish the Prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds wipe away misdeeds. That**

is a reminder for those who remember.” (*Hūd*: 114) The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“Do you think that if there was a river by the door of any of you, and he bathed in it five times each day, would any trace of dirt be left on him?”** His Companions replied, **“No trace of dirt is left on him.”** So he said, **“That is the likeness of the five daily Prayers — with them, Allah erases sins”** (*Sunan An-Nasā’ī*, 462)

2. The Prayer is a bright guiding light for those who worship Allah. Abu Mālik Al-Ash’ari (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, **“Purification is half of faith, and the utterance *al-hamdulillāh* (praise be to Allah) fills the scale. The words *subhānallāh* (glory be to Allah) and *al-hamdulillāh* (praise be to Allah) fill whatever is between the Heavens and earth. Prayer is a light, charity is proof [of one’s faith], patience is brightness, and the Qur’an is evidence either for you or against you. Each person goes out early in the morning and sells his soul, thereby either setting it free or destroying it.”** (*Muslim*, 223)

3. A Muslim who establishes the Prayer, pays the Zakāh (obligatory charity) and fasts Ramadān can attain the station of the truthful and the martyrs of Paradise. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, “Two brothers came to Allah’s Messenger, and they became Muslims. One was later martyred, whilst the other lived for another year. Talhah Ibn ‘Ubaidillāh (رضي الله عنه) said, ‘I saw Paradise in a dream, and the one who lived longer out of the two entered Paradise before the martyr. I was surprised at that. So when I awoke, I mentioned that to the Prophet (ﷺ). So he responded, **“Why are you surprised at that? Did he not continue to fast after his death, and did he not pray with six thousand bows and with such-and-such a large number of voluntary prayers? The difference between them is greater than the distance between Heaven and earth.”**” (*Musnad Ahmad* 2/333, *Ibn Mājah* 3925)

There are also threats associated with neglecting the Prayer. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to often ask his Companions, **“Did anyone of you see a dream?”** So dreams would be narrated to him. One morning the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“Last night two persons**

came to me in a dream and woke me up and said to me, ‘Proceed!’ I set out with them and we came across a man lying down, and behold, another man was standing over his head, holding a big rock. He was throwing the rock at the man’s head, injuring it. The rock rolled away and the thrower followed it and took it back. By the time he reached the man, his head returned to the normal state. The thrower then did the same as he had done before. I said to my two companions, ‘Glorified be Allah! Who are these two persons?’ They said, ‘Proceed!’ So we proceeded and came to a man lying flat on his back and another man standing over his head with an iron hook. And behold, he would put the hook in one side of the man’s mouth and tear off that side of his face to the back of the neck, and similarly tear his nose from front to back and his eye from front to back. Then he turned to the other side of the man’s face and did just as he had done with the first side. He hardly completed this side when the first side returned to its normal state. Then he returned to it to repeat what he had done before. I said to my two companions, ‘Glorified be Allah! Who are these two persons?’ They said to me, ‘Proceed!’ So we proceeded and came across something like a kind of baking oven. In that oven, there was much noise and voices.” The Prophet (ﷺ) added, **“We looked into it and found naked men and women, and behold, a flame of fire was reaching to them from underneath, and when it reached them, they screamed aloud. I asked, ‘Who are these people?’ They said to me, ‘Proceed!’ And so we proceeded and came across a river, red like blood.”** The Prophet (ﷺ) added, **“In the river, there was a man swimming, and on the bank, there was a man who had collected many stones. As the swimmer went near the bank, he opened his mouth, and the man on the bank threw a stone into his mouth whereupon he went away swimming. He returned, and every time the performance was repeated. I asked my two companions, ‘Who are these people?’ They replied, ‘Proceed!’ And we proceeded till we came to a man with a repulsive appearance, the most repulsive appearance you ever saw in a man! Beside him, there was a fire, and he was kindling it. He was running around it. I asked my companions, ‘Who is this man?’ They said to me, ‘Proceed, proceed!’ So we proceeded till we reached**

a garden of deep green and dense vegetation, having all sorts of spring colours. In the midst of the garden, there was a very tall man, and I could hardly see his head because of his great height, and around him, there were children in such large numbers as I have never seen. I said to my companions, 'Who is this?' They replied, 'Proceed, proceed!' So we proceeded till we came to a huge majestic garden, greater and better than I have ever seen! My two companions said to me, 'Go up', so I went up. We ascended till we reached a city built of gold and silver bricks. We went to its gate and asked the gatekeeper to open the gate, and it was opened. We entered the city and found in it men with one side of their bodies as handsome as the most handsome person you have ever seen, and the other side as ugly as the ugliest person you have ever seen. My two companions ordered those men to jump into the river. There was a river flowing across the city, and its water was like milk in whiteness. Those men went and jumped into it and then returned to us and the ugliness of their bodies had disappeared, and they became the best of forms. My two companions (who were Angels) said to me, 'This place is the Paradise or the Garden of Eden, and it is your place.' I raised up my sight, and behold; there I saw a palace like a white cloud! My two companions said to me, 'That palace is your place.' I said to them, 'May Allah bless you both! Let me enter it.' They replied, 'As for now, you will not enter it, but you shall enter it one day. I said to them, 'I have seen many wonders tonight. What does it all mean?' They replied, 'We will inform you. As for the first man you came across whose head was being injured with the rock, he was one who studied the Qur'an and then neither recited it nor acted on its orders, and he slept, neglecting the prescribed Prayers. The man you came upon whose mouth, nostrils and eyes were torn from front to back, he is the man who went out of his house in the morning and told so many lies that they spread all over the world. Those naked men and women whom you saw in a pit resembling an oven, they are the adulterers and the adulteresses. The man whom you saw swimming in the river and given a stone to swallow, is the one who deals in usury (interest). The repulsive-looking man whom you saw kindling fire and going around it, is Mālik (an

Angel), the gatekeeper of Hell. The tall man whom you saw in the garden, is Ibrāheem and the children around him are those children who died young upon the innate nature of Allah's worship with which every child is created." The narrator added, "Some Muslims asked the Prophet, 'O Allah's Messenger! What about the children of pagans?' The Prophet responded, 'And also the children of pagans.'" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "My two companions added, 'The men you saw half handsome and half ugly were those persons who had mixed an act that was good with another that was bad, but Allah forgave them.'" (Al-Bukhāri, 7047)

The Five Daily prayers must not be neglected. The most difficult of prayers upon the hypocrites who profess faith are 'Ishā (last prayer at night) and Fajr (the prayer before sunrise). Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are the 'Ishā and Fajr. If only they knew what reward there is in them, they would come to them even if they had to crawl." (Ibn Mājah, 797)

A Muslim should never underestimate the importance of the Prayers. Each prayer out of the five daily Prayers consists of a fixed number of *rak'ahs* (or units) that have a sequence of movements and sayings. So the dawn prayer (Fajr) has two *rak'ahs*, the early afternoon prayer (Dhuhr) has four, the mid-afternoon prayer ('Asr) has four, the after-sunset prayer (Maghrib) has three and the late evening prayer ('Ishā) has four. Every Muslim is obligated to know how to perform these prayers and to pray them wherever they are: work, school, college, home, hospital, countryside, etc. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The whole of the earth has been made for me as a place of purification and prayer." So an adult, sane Muslim has no excuse to miss the prayer.

—Written by Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Wahid

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PRAYER IN ISLAM

“
THE FIRST THING THAT A
PERSON WILL BE ACCOUNTED
FOR ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION
WILL BE THE PRAYER
”

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