

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ

And establish salah

(Surah Al Baqarah 2:43)

PART 1



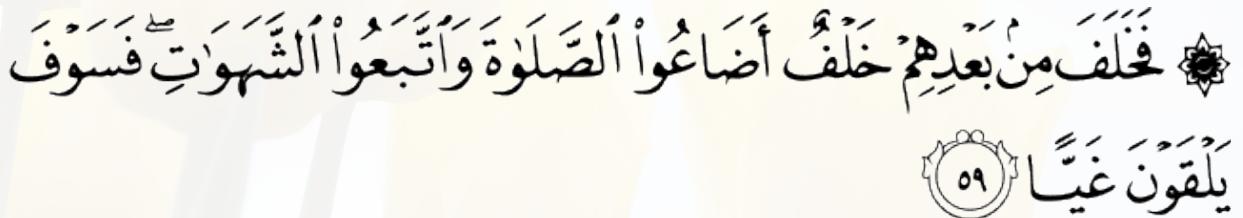
INTRODUCTION

Alhamdulilah- this is a favor of Allah upon us that He is teaching us about the salah. Without reminders from Allah, our life would be limited to 'wordly goals'. We need to have a high goal which is the Pleasure of Allah and Paradise.

Allah tells us to - اقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ - establish your salah. This is my first project- to establish my salah and make it upright. Because the salah is our life, our grave, our Hereafter- it is everything. If your salah is right, everything else will fall in place automatically. The word اِقَامَةٌ means to make it straight. What does الصَّلَاةَ mean? It is pillar of Islam and a pillar of faith. Your salah shows you are a Muslim and you are a believer.

SALAH COMES FIRST.

The salah is the first worship we will be asked about. If your salah is good, then everything else will be good. If the salah is not good, even if you do to much fasting, dawah- and if your salah is not good, nothing is good. This is what gives value for your other good deeds. It is first in the day of judgement. Allah will first look at your salah- you need to feel it. Not feel I need to pray and then I need to go to something else.



But there came after them successors who neglected salah and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil -
(Surah Maryam 19:59)

Those who come after leave the salah more than those before them. This means that we are leaving the salah more than our parents. Those who come after, lose their salah and follow their desire. Leaving the salah makes people follow their desire. We see that our grandparents pray more than us. Salah is being neglected. We need to be aware of this so that we make more effort to establish our salah. We need to feel- my salah is my life. Salah is your connection with Allah. Other deeds are with people. If I am not establishing my relation with Allah, then any other achievement is not a real achievement.

Alhamdulillah- Allah taught us the way to pray- as the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed and not according to our desire. The way to pray should be divine and according to a pattern and not man-made. One cannot say 'I pray in my heart' - there are rules you need to follow and it should not be that everybody is doing anything they want. Pray according to the way of the Prophet (ﷺ). Otherwise everyone will be divided. No mind can invent or make a salah that is suiting Allah so that is why salah needs to be taught and is divine. We need to study and learn about it.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF SALAH? (ما معنی الصلاة)

1- صلة - CONNECTION:

When you are praying then you are on the ground and you are connecting with the One Who rose over the Throne. The one who is not connecting with Allah is the miserable one. Allah is not affected when you don't pray to Him. Allah gave you a big opportunity to connect with Him and if you say no then this shows arrogance and ingratitude. It is as if a King gives you his private number and tells you, 'call me anytime, my line will never be busy for you'. This person should be elated but if he is lazy and says 'I don't need this connection with the King', or 'I have other connections'- what would we consider such a person? Imagine, we are connecting with everyone except Allah out of laziness, and feeling self-sufficient from Him. When Allah gifts you with Islam and taught you how to pray then this is a blessing. You will never find the line 'on hold' or lose the connection. As soon as you say Allahu Akbar, Allah will be in front of your face. He will connect with you, with every word and every step. Yet one says- 'I am not in a mood to pray'. What a loss it is when one knows about the salah yet he leaves it, feeling self sufficient. This connection with Allah needs belief. If people would get money for praying then everyone would pray but our relation with salah is with the unseen.

2- دعاء - INVOCATION:

Salah is dua. You are invoking Allah from Allahu Akbar till the salaam. The salah itself is dua. Standing, bowing, sitting, sujood- there is dua in every step. As if you are saying,

'I want Your Pleasure, paradise and I seek refuge in you'. Shaithan gets irritated when you pray because he didn't make one sujood and the son of Adam is praying and connecting with Allah.

Don't feel self sufficient from the salah. Even if you don't always feel- don't leave your prayer and struggle to perfect it. Allah wants to see your determination and sincerity. Struggle and then Allah will give you the fruit of it after time. Then you will feel your salah is coolness of your eyes and feel you are in a different world. In the beginning there is a struggle and then with time you will get the sweetness of it. Allah wants to upgrade you and teach you. You need to struggle and work for it.

3- رحمة- MERCY:

If we don't pray, then we are depriving ourselves from the mercy. This connection and invocation is a mercy- salah by itself is mercy. For example, the one in salah cannot shout. For example, a student may be running around but once he is with the principal, he will sit properly. The longer child is with principal he is disciplined. The more one is in salah, it is mercy for him and for the society. Salah is a mercy. It saves one from so much evil. The five minutes of salah takes us away from doing so much evil.

WHAT DO I NEED FOR THE SALAH? (ماذا احتاج؟)

1- PRESENCE OF THE HEART (حضور القلب)

This is a struggle- to gather your heart. We need to struggle and gather our heart at least in the five time obligatory salah. Don't be absent and negligent. If the heart is present, then the feelings are there and this is a struggle.

2- UNDERSTANDING (الفهم)

This includes understanding the Fatihah, understanding this is sujood, this is ruku', what is سمع الله لمن حمده ? Thoughts come and go especially when you come into salah. You get ideas and remember things you forget. Shaithan will do anything to make you heedless. But we need to struggle and focus to understand what we are doing.

THE FIRST STEP- DUA

Allah tells us in Surah Ibrahim about the dua of Ibrahim (عليه السلام):

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَءَ امِنًا وَأَجْنِبِنِي وَبَنِي
أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ

٢٥

رَبِّ إِنَّنَّا أَضْلَلْنَا كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَعْنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ

٢٦

عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ
رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بَوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَعْ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ
الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْعَدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهُوِي

٢٧

إِلَيْهِمْ وَأَرْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الشَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِي وَمَا نُعْلِنُ وَمَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي

٢٨

الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبْرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ

٢٩

رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ

رَبِّ أَجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنِي وَتَقَبَّلْ

٤٠

دُعَائِي

And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols. My Lord, indeed they have led astray many among the people. So whoever

follows me - then he is of me; and whoever disobeys me - indeed, You are [yet] Forgiving and Merciful. Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make hearts among the people incline toward them and provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful. Our Lord, indeed You know what we conceal and what we declare, and nothing is hidden from Allah on the earth or in the heaven. Praise to Allah , who has granted to me in old age Ishmael and Isaac. Indeed, my Lord is the Hearer of supplication. My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and [many] from my descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication. (Surah Ibrahim 14: 35-40)

This is the dua of Ibrahim for his offspring. He left his wife with his baby son alone in the desert and he is not with them. There is no civilization. They need food and shelter. Allah commanded him take his wife and son, and leave them there. This is a big test and he knows if Allah commands something, then he needs to fulfill it. His first dua for his offspring is not about food, shelter but about their salah- May Allah make them establish their salah. This is the first priority.

When you establish the salah, then the people's heart will incline to them and they will have provision. If you want provision then pray. If you want provision and you are only connecting with others, neglecting your connection with Allah then you will not get the provision. We are taking the long route- salah will bring the provision for you. It will incline the people's heart to you. Make your salah your anchor.

The end of his dua is also- may Allah make my offspring establish the prayer- مقيم الصلاة. They will be productive and safeguard for society. May Allah make me establish the salah. He is a prophet, messenger of determination, father of prophets- yet he did not rely on himself and he made dua.

Make dua first for yourself and your offspring. Before learning about any other aspect about the salah, first we make dua. Ask Allah. When you make dua- Allah will give you presence of the heart and understanding.

WHO ARE YOU STANDING IN FRONT OF?

We need to know Whom we are speaking with. You are in connection with the King of Kings, the Provider, Sustainer, belongs to Him all the Most Beautiful Names. You are in connection with Allah- full of beauty and majesty. Allah wants mercy for you- you are in connection with One Who is full of mercy. You are not in connection with one who will misunderstand you or neglect you. Nobody can be available 24 hours and listen to you always. But when you connect more with Allah- you get more mercy. Salah organizes you and your life. It teaches you discipline and puts you in a system.

You are in connection with the one you said-

كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الْرَّحْمَةَ

He has prescribed Mercy for Himself. (Surah Al An'am 6:12)

You are in connection with the one you said-

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ أَدْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

And your Lord said: "Invoke Me, I will respond to your (invocation). (Surah Ghafir 40:60)

It is enough for us that when we say Allahu Akbar- He will place His Face in front of us. We cannot see Him because we cannot take it- our heart will stop. He covers Himself. He is Unseen yet He is so apparent. You don't need to see Him now because you cannot take it now. When you pray, He will be in front of your face, full of beauty and majesty. When you say Allahu Akbar- He will be in front of your face- not far from you. He will be in front of your face as long as you are present. When I turn, He will turn. When someone doesn't give us the complete face- we don't like it. I don't want to lose this priceless opportunity due to my ignorance, foolishness and laziness. Salah is the most beautiful thing in this world if we understand. Imagine, He will be in front of you and He says He will give you anything you want.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said-

وَحَدَّثَنَا قَتْبَيْهُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا لَيْثٌ، حَوْقَالَ قُتْبَيْهُ حَدَّثَنَا بَكْرٌ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ مُضَرَّ - كِلَّاهُمَا عَنِ ابْنِ الْهَادِ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ وَفِي حَدِيثِ بَكْرٍ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ "أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ أَنَّ هَرَبَ بَيْبَابِ أَحَدِكُمْ يَغْتَسِلُ مِنْهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ خَمْسَ مَرَّاتٍ هَلْ يَقْنَعُ مِنْ دَرَنِهِ شَيْءٌ" . قَالُوا لَا يَقْنَعُ مِنْ دَرَنِهِ شَيْءٌ . قَالَ "فَذَلِكَ مَثُلُ الصلَواتِ الْخَمْسِ يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِهِنَّ الْخَطَايَا" .

In the hadith narrated of the authority of Abd Huraira the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is reported to have said. while in the hadith narrated by Bakr (the words are like this):

He heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying: just see, can anything of his filthiness remain (on the body of) any one of you if there were a river at his door in which he washed himself five times daily? They, said: Nothing of his filthiness will remain (on his body). He said: That is like the five prayers by which Allah obliterates sins. (Sahih Muslim 667)

Salah is making the person more pure. Allah will forgive all the sins. One may say, 'how can I face Allah, I am full of sins'. But we need to have hope. Even if you are full of sins- you are still invited to stand in front of Allah. This invitation is not only for pious people. Allah tells us in Surah Az Zumar-

﴿ قُلْ يَعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا نَقْنُطُوا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الْذُنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾

٥٣

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah . Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

Salah is a connection with Allah for all- the Messengers, muslims, believers and even for sinners. A non Muslim needs to correct his heart, believe in Allah and then pray. Salah is purifying a person. Allah's mercy encompasses everything. When you pray, you need to hope for the mercy of Allah- May Allah have mercy on me. Don't pray just to check it off your to-do list.

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَىُ اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. (Surah Fatir 35:28)

When we pray, we also need fear- I am not doing well. I know myself.

CONDITIONS OF THE SALAH (شروط الصلاة):

These are conditions you need before you pray-

1- TO BE A MUSLIM.

To enter Islam, a person needs to say shahada and then the next step is to pray.

2- SOUND MIND.

The person needs to have a sound mind and have the understanding. The pen is lifted from the insane- there is no accountability for them.

3- AGE OF UNDERSTANDING.

This means a child who has the understanding- this is 7 years old. You need to get the child in the routine of salah before puberty. Though there is no accountability for the child, he will be rewarded if he prays. If you teach your child to pray, he will be rewarded and so will you. We need to get them in the routine. If you leave children till they reach puberty, it is very difficult for them to pray, except those who Allah has mercy on. Shaithan whispers less to a child before puberty. But once they hit puberty- then shaithan makes it hard on them. If you leave them when they are young, there will be too many battles once they reach puberty. That is why it is better to get them in a system before they reach puberty. Don't make it more hard on them when they reach puberty- be gentle on them because they have more attack from shaithan and bad companions. So we need to be more gentle on them. Don't wait till they are older and then tell them to pray or read Qur'an. From when they are young, tell them little things- pray and read one page, or one ayah. But put them in system from when they are young, so as they grow older, they will build on these and establish it. Before the child is 7 years old he watches you pray. Connect salah with good memories for them and not make them think my mother prayed and then she shouted at me.

4- ENTER THE TIME

You cannot pray before the time for salah. If anybody pray before the time, it is not valid. The salah has a beginning and end. The best is at the beginning time. When there is a salah- put yourself in discipline, put everything else on hold and pray. The earlier

you pray, the better it is. If you delay it, you will be lazy. Remember that the foremost are better than those who come later.



إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْقُوتًا

Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours. (Surah An Nisa 4:103)

Allah kept a fixed appointment time for the salah. One should always strive to pray at the earliest time unless he has a genuine reason such as an emergency or if he is travelling. If there is not a genuine reason to delay the prayer, then push yourself and pray at the earliest time. It is always better to pray early.

Once the adhaan has been called and the muaddhin says Allahu Akbar- the time for prayer has entered and you can pray.

The end time for Fajr salah is at sunrise. The end of Dhuhr salah is at Asr. The end time for Asr salah is around half an hour before Magrib when the length of the shadow is double and the sun is yellowish. The end time for Magrib salah is at Isha salah. Isha is when there is no red color in the sky. The end of Isha is the middle of the night. It is not at midnight. If Magrib is at 5pm and Fajr is at 5am then the night is for 12 hours. So half the night is 6 hours after margin which is at 11pm this is the end time for Isha salah. After this time is 'emergency' time to pray Isha. These end times are for those who have a genuine reason to delay the salah. It is better to pray at the earliest time because you don't know some decree may come.

As long as you are waiting for salah then you are in salah. Have that intention all the time. After Fajr, wait for Dhuhr then after Dhuhr, wait for Asr; then after Asr wait for Magrib; then after Magrib wait for Isha- the person will be constantly in salah.

If you forget to pray or you overslept, then you pray immediately even if it is in forbidden time. This is for obligatory salah. Even if you wake up at sunrise for Fajr, you pray even though it is a forbidden time to pray because Fajr is an obligatory prayer. Always hasten and race to do good deeds.

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray at the earliest time. Though there were some exceptions- in summer he used to delay praying Dhuhr due to the heat- though we have air conditioning everywhere now. He also used to pray Isha later, but if you feel you will be tired, then it is better to pray early.

5- COVER YOUR AWRAH ستر العورة



Take care of its cleanliness. Put perfume.. Make a nice clean place. Cover your feet. Don't show hair or neck. You can show your hands. Also do not show the shape of your body when you pray- wear loose clothing.

6- FACING THE QIBLA (استقبال القبلة)

If a person prays without facing the qibla intentionally, then his salah is not valid. If during salah, you find out your qibla is wrong, you can turn to the correct direction during the salah. If you see someone praying and he is not facing the qiblah, then slowly without making them afraid, tell them and turn them to the correct direction. If you searched for the qiblah, prayed and then after prayer you found out it was wrong,- it is ok, your salah is valid. If you are in fear, eg- lion is chasing you then you pray while you are running. This shows the importance of salah. You pray even if you are not facing qiblah. Also the one in jail, chained, hanged, can still pray in that situation without facing the qiblah. Don't lose your salah in any situation. A sick person can pray without facing the qibla while he is lying down. Even those who are completely paralyzed, can pray with their eyes.

Imagine, if we can stand, bow and prostrate and yet we don't pray. This is a great loss. Why do we neglect our salah? Why are we not making it our priority? The deprived one is the one who Allah gave that chance but he is not praying and taking that chance. If you are not praying, start from today. If you are praying, but it is not good- work on it. If you are establishing the salah- be firm on it and hold on to it.