

Chapter 9: Prayer

9.1 The significance of prayer

Qur'anic ayat on the significance of prayer

1. Maintain prayer at both ends of the day – and the early hours of night.

For it is through good deeds that bad deeds are effaced. (Qur'an 11:114)

2. He is glorified in the morning and the evening by those – not distracted from remembrance of Allah by bargain or trade – who maintain the prayer and give zakah. For they fear a day in which hearts and sights are transformed. (Qur'an 24:37)

3. Allah will surely help those who help Him. For Allah is All-Powerful, Almighty. If We would grant them power over the land they would maintain the prayer, give zakah, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong– for the outcome of all matters rests with Allah. (Qur'an 22:40–41)

4. Certainly, it is the faithful who attain salvation – those who are humble in prayer and baulk at all conceit. (Qur'an 23:1–3)

The significance of prayer from Nahjul Balaghahh

1. Commit yourself to maintain prayer. Offer them as frequently as possible in order to seek nearness to Allah. For prayer casts off sin as trees do their leaves. The Messenger of Allah likened it to the availability of a hot bath that, used five times a day, cleanses one of all dirt. [1](#)

2. For the God-fearing, prayer is the means by which to seek closeness to Allah. [2](#)

3. Keep Allah in mind apropos the Qur'an. No one should excel you in acting upon it.

Keep Allah in mind apropos prayer, because it is the pillar of your religion.

Keep Allah in mind apropos Your Lord's House [Ka'bah], do not forsake it while you remain alive ...

Imam Ali's (a.s.) last words to his sons

4. Sleep, in a state of firm belief, is better than prayer in a state of doubt.

Imam Ali's (a.s.) comment at seeing a *Kharijite* offering the midnight prayer

Imam Sadiq (a.s.), on the significance of prayer

1. When people stand for prayer Allah's mercy rains down upon them. Angels surround them as one of their number comments, If people comprehended the full benefit of prayer, their prayers would never cease.³

2. When anyone praised another in the presence of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) his sole interest was to know about her/his prayer.⁴

3. Prayer may be likened to a tent pole that is maintained in an upright position by guy-ropes and tent pegs. However, if the pole breaks, neither ropes nor pegs are able to afford it further support.⁵

(All quotations attributed to any of the 12 error-free Imams of the progeny of Allah's Holy Messenger (S) refer to what was said by the Messenger of Allah (S) himself.)

9.2 Introduction to prayer

All of us are able to exercise and develop our muscles. Some do so to keep fit, some to participate in a particular sport and others to shape and sculpt their bodies. Whatever our motive, success is only achieved by way of sustained application and effort. This applies equally to intellectual development, with academic qualifications being awarded after years of diligent study, and, it follows, to the development of our innate spiritual capacities. While it is apparent that the body requires nourishment, care and protection to grow and flourish, precious few consider the soul's need for similar nourishment, care, protection and growth.

As though bedazzled by the 'limousine' that they are happy to refill, wash and securely house, many appear blind to the 'essence' of the entity it carries through this life. Like children who do not understand that education is an investment for the future, they do not grasp that this material world affords the soul the opportunity to realize its true potential and achieve its objective.

They are able to register and respond to stimuli that materially affect their 'world-space' or 'worldview' but, as spiritual life does not exist for them, they are not able to register or respond to spiritual stimuli. For similar reasons, a pack of wild wolves only equipped to register other creatures as potential meals is not able to register and respond to stimuli – such as status, gold ornaments or 'state-of-the-art' electronic equipment – that for them do not exist in any meaningful sense.

However, the fact that, to some people, a thing may seem not to exist does not prove that it is in fact

non-existent. During routine eye tests those with astigmatism are often surprised to perceive details not previously apparent to them, as are those with stereopsis when enabled to see with full three-dimensional vision. And, although it may stare them in the face, those who are 'color blind' do not see numerals formed by tonal dots within fields of similarly toned colored dots.

To some extent, lack of awareness may also result from upbringing, as William Wordsworth – appointed Poet Laureate in 1843 – expresses so beautifully in these few lines from his ode, *Intimations of Immortality*,

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, Hath had elsewhere its setting, And cometh from afar;

Not in entire forgetfulness, And not in utter nakedness, but trailing clouds of glory do we come from God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy! Shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy,

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows, he sees it in his joy;

The Youth who daily farther from the east must travel, still is Nature's priest and by the vision splendid, is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away, and fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own; Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,

And, even with something of a mother's mind, and no unworthy aim, the homely nurse doth all she can to make her foster-child, her inmate Man, forget the glories he hath known, and that imperial palace whence he came...

Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,

Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke the years to bring the inevitable yoke, thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?

Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight, and custom lie upon thee with a weight heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.

Despite this, the works of painters such as Edward Hopper eloquently illustrate the soul's yearning to transcend the mundane and emerge into celestial light.

Jallaludin Rumi also refers to this in his lines:

Hearken to this Reed forlorn,

Breathing, ever since was torn

*From its rushy bed,
a strain of impassioned love and pain ...[6](#)*

Having revealed the outward manifestations of the faith – its practical, ethical and social precepts – and having summoned humankind to His side, to His Inner Reality, Allah Almighty has also provided a link between the outward aspects of faith and the position of the spirit. The only nourishment needed by a soul in order to hone its ability to see everything with the help of Allah – 'Light of the Heavens and the Earth' – is 'communication with the Creator' who has granted each one the non-materialistic attribute referred to as the soul's 'eye'.

Thus, the objective of the inner and outward aspects of the faith of Islam extends beyond the life of this world. The term 'nearness to Allah' stretches beyond physical nearness to the lords of wealth and power of this world, for those who step on the path of human destiny travel a straight path to 'Nearness to Ultimate Truth' – *Al-Haqq*. Beings who exist in this world should not imagine that success is limited to excellence in the sciences, arts, skills, customs or traditions that confer status in society. Real success can only be achieved through the refinement of the soul, and appreciation that its ultimate goal is the Purified Essence of Unity.

Allah gave the Prophet Muhammad (S) access to His religious commandments and Divine precepts so that he would focus our attention on the destination of this life's journey. He taught us how these relate to our 'well-being' or 'wretchedness' in the next world; how the blessing of everlasting happiness is achieved by putting those Divine precepts into practice; how dedicated and determined effort brings us closer to Allah; and how, at the higher stages of closeness, human spirituality may approach truth and reality.

Thus, to travel the 'Path to Nearness' is to tread the path of servitude, humility, self-annihilation and non-being rather than mastery over the things of this world. Those who travel this route are like jewels with Allah's power and strength at their core.

This is the position that Allah refers to in the Qur'an when He talks about the Prophet Muhammad (S):

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example for those who consistently remember Allah and place their hope in Allah and the Last Day. (Qur'an 33:21)

Say, if you love Allah follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins... (Qur'an 3:31)

In these *ayat*, the Prophet Muhammad (S) is introduced as our exemplar for behavior and morality – whose example we should take as our precedent.

It evidences the Prophet's freedom from sin and error, for had this not been so, there would have been no value in Allah Almighty presenting him as a leader and as a precedent. This position was passed from the Prophet to his Household, as is witnessed by *ahadith* reported by many scholars:

I leave among you two precious things: the book of Allah and my progeny. These two will not be separated until they meet together at the pool of Kawthar [in paradise]. Always follow them otherwise you will perish, and do not attempt to instruct them, for they are wiser than you. [7](#)

The Prophet (S) said:

I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; so whoever wants to enter the city should come through the gate. [8](#)

Hubshi ibn Janadah reported that the Prophet (S) said:

Ali is from me and I am from Ali and no one represents me but Ali. [9](#)

The Prophet said to Ali (a.s.), Fatimah (a.s.), Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.)

I am at peace with those whom you are at peace with; and I am at war with those whom you are at war with. [10](#)

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (S) said:

Whoever loves Hasan (a.s.) and Husayn (a.s.) loves me, and whoever hates them hates me. [11](#)

In the language of the Qur'an, the holder of 'the degree of nearness' – the one who links humankind to its Inner Reality – is called Imam. It is therefore the Prophet (S) and error-free Imams (a.s.) who hold the reins of spiritual guidance on Allah's behalf, who transmit the light of Allah to our hearts.

So believe in Allah and His messenger and the light We have sent down ... (Qur'an 64:8)

From the ayah below it is clear that Allah ordered the Prophet Muhammad (S) to direct Muslims to establish a special closeness vis-a-vis his progeny:

Say (O Muhammad(S)): I do not ask you for any reward [for the toils of Prophethood] but love of my progeny. (Qur'an 42:23)

This facet of *wila* – closeness – that relates to his progeny is reiterated in the *hadith* of Ghadir Kumm in which the Prophet (S) said:

For those of whom I am mawla [those over whom I have authority] Ali (a.s.) is also mawla [12](#)

It also appears in the Qur'anic ayah:

Truly, truly, your guardian [waliy] is Allah, His messenger [Muhammad] and those who believe, establish the prayer, and give to the poor while they bow [in prayer]. (Qur'an 5:55)

No Muslim scholar understands this ayah to be a universal instruction for all Muslims to give *zakat* while

in *ruku*. Al-Tabari, Al-Zamakhshari and Fakhru'd-Din al-Razi clarified that 'pay *zakat* while they bow in prayer' refers specifically to the occasion on which, while, bent directly forwards from the waist during prayer – *ruku* – Ali (a.s.) was asked for charity – and took off his ring and gave it. The revelation of this *ayah* identifies the specific person who, in addition to Allah and His Messenger (S), is the leader of the Muslims. Leader in this sense denotes 'guardian of', or 'one who has authority over the affairs of others ...'

Another facet of closeness refers to the '*Wila* of Love' – *mababbah* – and the '*Wila* of Kinship' – *qarabah*. The '*Wila* of Love' and the '*Wila* of Kinship' indicate that people should cultivate love and closeness to the Prophet's progeny over and above the love and closeness they should have for other Muslims. Qur'anic and *ahadith* references, narrated by all Muslim sources, confirm that love for the Prophet's progeny is a basic precept of Islam.

Every Islamic precept has an underlying philosophical and spiritual reason. The reason and benefit of the need to love and feel close to the Prophet's progeny is that it is bonds of love that truly connect people to 'them'. It is those bonds that make people yearn to learn from them, to emulate their behavior and manner, and to draw benefit from their purity and closeness to Allah. Two famous scholars, Al-Zamakhshari and Fakhru'd-Din al-Razi, both narrate the *hadith* on the '*Wila* of Love'. Al-Razi quoting al-Zamakhshari relates that the Prophet (S) said:

Whoever dies while in love with the progeny of Muhammad (S)– has died a martyr;

Whoever dies while in love with the progeny of Muhammad (S)– has died in forgiveness;

Whoever dies while in love with the progeny of Muhammad (S)– has died a believer in the perfection of their faith. [13](#)

Wila, in its sense of the Imamate or leadership of the 12 error-free Imams, is the position of authority in the faith to which matters are referred for decision. That is, it is a position that others should follow, should adopt as their example for action and behavior, and from which they should learn the precepts of the faith. Such a position is necessarily one that is free from sin – *ismah* – so that the speech and actions of such Imams are safe guidance for others.

Thus, the 12 error-free Imams of *Ahl al-Bayt* are acknowledged as the authoritative source of what the Prophet said and did. Had they been associated with unrighteousness or ignorance, had they had ceased to be the complement of the Qur'an, and had they not been, like the Prophet himself, free from sin and error, they could not have been exemplars and leaders in the Prophet's place.

- In the second year after the Prophet had migrated to Madinah revelations established the Call to prayer – *adhan*
- Mental and physical purification that conditions and readies one to commune with the Lord – *wudu*,

- Mandatory prayers – *salat*, and
- Direction to face in order to align one's being with the earthly core of Islam – *qiblah*.

The Prophet Muhammad (S) taught people how to pray – and this section is for those who seek to follow the path of servant hood taught by him (S), and who desire to adhere as accurately as is possible to his teaching – for Allah tells us in the Qur'an,

In Allah's Messenger you certainly have an excellent example for those who place their hope in Allah and the Last Day, and are constant in the remembrance of Allah. (Qur'an 33:21)

Allah's final Prophet departed this world in the year 11AH at the age of 63.

9.3 Why we Pray

O you who believe! Seek help through patience and prayer ... (Qur'an 2: 153)

The Significance of Prayer in Our Lives

As individuals

Prayer is the most highly esteemed communication between human beings and their Creator.

It develops our 'greatest faculty's' capacity for concentration – and evidences the highest level of submission to Allah Almighty.

It purifies the soul and provides a framework for life's daily discipline – in particular, prayers offered at their specified times.

Prayer affords the satisfaction of having fulfilled daily obligations, and affords a spiritual taste of the sweetness of being in Allah's presence.

Recitation and remembrance maintain 'Awareness of Allah' and encourage perception of the – everywhere evident – 'signs' of His mercy and wisdom.

As families

As Islam's first preference is for prayer to be offered in a mosque, its second is for prayer to be offered in congregation, while prayer within the family has lesser significance. Nonetheless, parents have responsibility to encourage children to fulfill this most essential pillar of Islam. When toddlers watch parents perform *wudhu*' and offer daily prayer, they inevitably copy them and adopt these practices.

As a community

Prayer strengthens bonds between community members who assemble to share common experiences five times a day (or three times – when *Duhr* and *Asr*, or *Maghrib* and *Isha*¹, are contiguously offered; ref. Qur'an 17:78). The community coheres and is unified by being together at the mosque.

As congregational prayers are often accompanied by discussions of Islamic rulings and lectures on the Qur'an and *ahadith*, the educational value and influence of community prayer is compounded.

Mosques are not merely places of worship, but also places in which social problems are often solved, fellow Muslims consulted about community affairs and crucial decisions apropos the community determined.

As an ummah

Prayer increases awareness of the needs of the 'worldwide' *ummah*, for whose contentment Muslims pray.

All Muslims face one *qiblah*, communicate with the One Divinity – Allah Almighty – and are all united by common goals and objectives.

Historical aspects of faith

The first prayer ever offered in Islam was when the Prophet Muhammad (S) stood in the Holy Mosque of Makkah with Khadijah and the young boy Ali (a.s.) behind him. From this event the apparent strength of Islam encouraged others to profess faith also. When the Prophet migrated to Madinah his first action was to build a mosque. That mosque has remained the representative symbol of Islamic heritage throughout the centuries.

The significance of prayer for Muslims today

As secularism offers no solution to spiritual problems, all the hopes, aspirations and prosperity of human beings rest with faith and regular communication between human beings and their Creator. Prayer plays a central role in uplifting the spiritual standing of humanity.

The ongoing relevance of discipline

Consistency and regularity of daily prayer contribute to discipline and organization – the secret of every success. For Muslims the discipline of prayer is as automatic as brushing the teeth – which similarly refreshes and contributes to feelings of 'well-being'. As with the brushing of teeth, rewards – although long-lasting – yield their benefits over time.

The ongoing relevance of unity

Congregational prayers at central mosques – to which all must travel – are effective in establishing unity amongst those who attend. This serves to crumble the artificial barriers of society, professions, wealth, class and neighborhood, and to re-establish the equality of all human beings before Allah.

The ongoing relevance of identity

Congregating with others strengthens the individual's identity as a component of a larger group – in the same way that supporters identify with their football team. In the Western world in particular, congregational prayers reinforce bonds and relationships with the worldwide Muslim *ummah*. During the last decades of the 20th century Muslims were accused of being terrorists and attacking civilization. The new century will, 'Insha'a-Allah', witness the opposite and demonstrate the tolerance and broadmindedness of Muslims who participate and contribute to society – as their ancestors did. Politicians in the Western world have begun to realize this and to count on younger Muslims for positive contributions.

The fruits of remembrance

The essential teaching of Islam is to strive to feel the Omnipresence of Allah during every single moment of life as the Qur'an and 'Traditions' emphasize:

Remembrance of Allah satisfies the heart. (Qur'an 13:28)

Remembrance of Allah illuminates the heart. [14](#)

Remembrance of Allah leads to the love of Allah. [15](#)

Remembrance of Allah is the key to prosperity. [16](#)

Remembrance of Allah is nourishment for the soul. [17](#)

Remembrance of Allah is a cure. [18](#)

Remembrance of Allah keeps Shaytan away. [19](#)

Remembrance of Allah prevents hypocrisy. [20](#)

Remembrance of Allah's omnipresence inspires people and effectively deters them from succumbing to temptations and doing wrong.

The disadvantage of neglecting to remember Allah

Some advantages of the remembrance of Allah, essential elements in the building of Islamic personality,

are listed above and some consequences of the failure to remember Him are listed below:

The lives of those who turn from My remembrance will be circumscribed and they shall be raised blind on the Day of Judgement. (Qur'an 20: 124)

We will appoint a devil as intimate companion of those who withdraw themselves from the remembrance of The Most Gracious. (Qur'an 43:36)

Shaytan plans to create hostility and hatred between you, and to use intoxicants and gambling to hinder your remembrance of Allah. (Qur'an 5:91)

It is not those who leave art exhibitions with blurred memories of pretty pictures who appreciate or understand the stature and achievement of an artist. It is those who grasp the significance, and appreciate the artist's achievement, which in reality understand and esteem the artist's work. And it is only those of us who grasp the significance of the signs of creation in the heavens and the earth, who genuinely glorify Allah Almighty and remember Him.

9.4 Purity of Body and Soul

The manufacture of detergents and cleaning materials is a highly profitable business. Millions are spent on advertising soaps, shampoos, conditioners, washing powders etc. Families that maintain clean, wholesome and healthy homes also ensure that their bodies, clothing, bed linen, soft furnishings and houses are kept clean. That cleanliness is of the utmost importance is illustrated by a tradition of Allah's final Messenger (S) in which he said, 'Cleanliness is part of faith.' The question is – why do we assume such traditions refer only to bodily cleanliness when purification of the soul is the very objective of our existence?

Many *ayat* of the Qur'an refer to purification of the soul as the essential element in the attainment of prosperity, see Qur'an 91:9 and 87:14. This is realized in two ways – one positive, one negative. The negative is to keep away from sin, the positive is to pray.

A 'true believer' may achieve inner wisdom and knowledge of spiritual truths through her/his inner heart. The heart and 'inner heart' are closely linked. The difference between them is that the heart 'knows' while the inner heart 'sees'. When knowledge and vision combine, the unseen becomes visible and certainty is achieved. This was the goal of the Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) when he saw the '*Malakut*' of the heavens and the earth referred to in Qur'an 6:75. There is no point in knowledge without vision, nor in vision without knowledge. It is analogous to visiting a foreign country without understanding its language, history or customs.

The Prophet (S) said,

Worship Allah as if you see Him for even if you do not, He truly sees you. [21](#)

Once, when the Prophet (S) explained the significance of daily prayer to his companions, he asked, 'Do you think traces of filth adhere to the body of a person who has a flowing spring at the entrance to his house and is able to wash five times a day?' His companions thought not. He continued, 'In like manner, the five daily prayers remove dirt, filth, corruption and uncleanness from souls.'

When we have decided where we want to go, and have agreed to adhere to the regulations that govern that course, we may become comfortably established – in the 'carriage' of prayer – and be transported to our destination as it travels.

[The heart's presence during prayer](#)

Prayer is a celestial formula and 'Divine Electuary'. Every part contains a hidden 'Mystery'. Prayer is an expression of love, communication, and remembrance of the Lord of the Universe. It is the most excellent channel for spiritual perfection, ascension, and nearness to Allah. In one tradition, prayer is referred to as being the believer's 'Heavenly Journey' – *Miraj*.

Prayer is such a pure sparkling stream of spirituality that those who enter it five times a day purify their souls of every category of pollution and contamination. It is the key aspect for Allah Almighty and is the criterion for acceptance of all other deeds and acts of worship. However, none of the above advantages, or fruits of prayer, are achieved without the heart being present – that is, without devoting its full attention to Allah Almighty with utmost humbleness.

All the elements of prayer – *wudhu'*, invocations, recitals of Qur'anic *ayat*, bowing with deference, prostration in submission, bearing witness and salutation – constitute the 'face and body' of the prayer, while the heart's presence and attention to the Creator express its 'spirit'. Just as a body without a spirit is acknowledged to be dead, prayer that is offered without the heart's presence – even though it might satisfy the performance of an obligatory act of worship – does not contribute to the achievement of any higher spiritual position. Allah tells us in the Qur'an,

Establish Worship for My Remembrance. (Qur'an 20:14)

The Friday prayer has been described as an invocation:

O you who believe, when the call for the prayer on Friday is heard, hasten to the remembrance of Allah. (Qur'an 57:9)

In one tradition the Prophet (S) emphasized the above saying,

Sometimes only half a prayer is accepted – at others, possibly only a third, a quarter, or a tenth – while some prayers, like crumpled clothes thrown by a careless child, are completely rejected. [22](#)

The link between remembrance and prayer

Remembrance of Allah – *Dhikr Allah* – is evidenced by the heart, by the tongue and by the limbs and – when all are combined altogether in a single communication with Allah Almighty – by *salat*.

How to obtain the spiritual advantages of salat

The Prophet (S) showed his companions how to pray and ordered them to follow his example. He (S), his progeny and his faithful companions then initiated them into how to derive the utmost spiritual advantage from prayer. They highly recommended the following:

1. To remind oneself that the prayer being offered might be our final one. The effect is to increase the intensity of concentration in the hope that the maximum benefit from this opportunity is achieved.
2. To intend to express the utmost submission and humility during prayer. None are able to 'draw close' to Allah Almighty until they are aware and have accepted that they themselves are insignificant creatures. The Prophet once commented on the carelessness of someone who was praying, saying, 'Had he been truly humble he would have remained aware of the awesomeness of his communication and been more measured in his actions.'
3. To understand, while declaring *Allahu Akbar*, that He is far greater than these words are able to express. Alternately, to have consciously and sincerely placed one's absolute reliance on the Greatest and Mightiest Power.
4. To manifest during bowing with deference – *ruku* – absolute faith and total submission, regardless of whether He should decide to behead you or not.
5. While in prostration – *sujud* – to concentrate on the fact that we have been created from earth, are returned to it by burial and will, on the Day of Judgement, be again raised from it.
6. It is highly recommended: while standing upright, for eyes to be focused on the point where the forehead will meet the earth; while bowing with deference, for eyes to be focused between one's feet; while sitting between prostrations and while bearing witness – *tashahud* – for eyes to be focused on one's lap; and while offering the invocation – *qunut* – for eyes to be focused on the palms of one's hands.
7. It is also highly recommended that the nose touch the earth during prostration. In many traditions this act is expressed as defiance to *Shaytan* – his intention being to divert submission from Allah – for this act is an expression of utter submission to Him.
8. And, when raising hands to the ears and uttering *Allahu Akbar*, to be conscious of surrender to Supreme Authority; when standing upright, to relax the arms with palms in contact with the thighs; when in prostration, for males to keep hands directed inwards and elbows outward – forming the arms into

'wings', *tajnih*) – and for females, to keep hands pointing forwards with elbows close to their sides.[23](#)

How to pray

There are three aspects to discuss: how to prepare for worship; conditions to be complied with during worship; and the offering of the prayer. In addition, some prayers are obligatory while others are voluntary.

9.5 Obligatory prayers

Preparation

This includes:

Ablution, ablution with water – *wudhu'* and *ghusl*, and ablution when water is not available – *tayammum*.

Wudhu'

The Arabic word used in *ahadith* references – *wudhu'* – cleanliness, encompasses mental as well as physical cleansing. When used as a technical term, it refers to 'preparation for worship'. This, when done in a quiet prayerful manner, is regarded as being a part of the act of worship.

Requirements of wudhu'

- The following presumes that hands, face, head and feet are physically clean and free from impurity.
- Specific intention to achieve closeness with Allah Almighty. Thus, if the actions of *wudhu'* are done for any reason other than this, they are not considered suitable preparation for an act of worship.
- To rinse hands and the face, pour a little water into the cupped hands and, with the right-hand palm drawn in a downward movement, clean the face from the hairline to the extremity of the beard. The area required to be cleansed is the distance between the end of the extended thumb and end of the extended middle finger. To ensure that the complete area is covered, it is recommended to overlap on each side. Water should be used sparingly as the requirement is to cleanse – not to drench. Regardless of the number of hand movements that are needed to satisfy this requirement, all are considered to be part of one complete action.
- While it is obligatory to 'cleanse' the face and hands once, and recommended to do that twice – it is considered inappropriate to do it three or more times, for Imam Sadiq (a.s.) prohibited this being done.[24](#)
- The 'cleansing' that follows immediately after an intention to make *wudhu'* is considered the 'first'.
- If one intends to perform *wudhu'* subsequent to having a bath, shower or other wash, it is

recommended that such 'cleansing' is done only once after the intention to make *wudhu*'.

- After 'cleansing' the face, 'cleanse' the right arm and hand from elbow to fingertip, and then the left arm and hand. To ensure that the elbows are adequately cleansed, it is recommended to start this process a little way above the elbows.
- With moistened right palm, wipe the hair from the centre of the head to the hairline, and the upper part of each foot starting at the toes and ending at the ankle.
- While it is required to moisten any scalp visible through the hair, there is no requirement to moisten any that is not. It is not acceptable, for those with very long hair, to moisten only the tips of their hair – the requirement is to wipe the head.

Ghusl

To have a shower – *ghusl* – sometimes also called 'the greater ablution', is obligatory prior to prayer and other acts of worship in the following circumstances:

Sexual intercourse and the emission of semen –janabah

After semen is discharged, regardless of whether this occurs during sleep or wakefulness, or when penetration occurs during sexual intercourse, if ejaculation occurs or not, a shower becomes necessary to prepare one for any act of worship.

Menstruation – Hayd

After the menstrual flow has stopped, a shower becomes necessary to prepare a woman for any act of worship.

Non-menstrual bleeding – istihadah

There are three categories of such occurrence:

1. Slight

Requirement:

To cleanse – change sanitary towel and make *wudu* prior to offering each of the five *salat*.

2. Heavy

Requirement:

To perform *ghusl* before offering *Fajr* *salat*. Cleanse – change sanitary towel and make *wudu* prior to offering *Duhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib* and *Isha* *salat*.

3. Very heavy

Requirement:

To perform *ghusl* before *Fajr*, before *Duhr* and before *Maghrib salat*. Cleanse

– change sanitary towel and make *wudu* prior to offering *Asr* and *Isha' salat*.

Childbirth – nifas

After any bleeding occurs while giving birth – *nifas* – which may be for a few minutes or continue for some ten days, a shower becomes necessary to prepare the mother for any act of worship.

Death – mawt

Before burial, the bodies of Muslims are washed three times: once with water in which the leaves of the 'Lote tree' – *sidr* – have been soaked, once with water to which camphor has been added, and once with plain water.²⁵

Tayammum

Tayammum is performed in place of *wudhu'* or bathing the whole body – *ghusl*

– in the following six circumstances:

1. When it is not possible to obtain a sufficient quantity of water to perform *wudhu'* or *ghusl*.

People are required to resolutely seek water for *wudhu'* and *ghusl* wherever they may happen to be. In populated areas, this means *tayammum* may only be performed when all possibility of finding water has been exhausted. In desert areas, people are required to search for water – on their route and in the surrounding area. In areas of rough terrain or dense forests – where movement may be severely hindered – they should, if conditions permit, search north, south, east and west to a distance of 400 steps – if not, to a distance of at least 200 steps. However, they need not look for water in directions in which they are certain no water is to be found.

If there is sufficient time before the next prayer is due – and some certitude that water is to be found a relatively short distance away – they should, if it is not going to be exceedingly difficult, set out to obtain it. However, there is no necessity to set forth on a slim possibility that water may be found. One person may be delegated to bring water for others.

If a person concludes that there is insufficient time to search for water and prays after performing *tayammum* – but later discovers that they would have had ample time – they should repeat the prayer in question.

2. If – due to age, infirmity, danger, extreme difficulty, or lack of receptacle – a person is not able to obtain water, they should perform *tayammum*.
3. People should perform *tayammum* if they have reason to fear that water may endanger their life, or prolong, complicate or aggravate an ophthalmological or other medical condition. However, if warm water for *wudhu'* and *ghusl* circumvents such danger, it should be used.
4. Those who fear subsequent shortage of drinking water if supplies of water are used for *wudhu'* and *ghusl* – should perform *tayammum*. This is specifically applicable if consequential shortages are likely to result in humans and animals – for whom one is responsible – suffering intolerable hardship, dehydration or death.
5. If the only water or receptacle available are .unsuitable – having been appropriated, for example – *tayammum* should be performed instead of *wudhu'* and *ghusl*.
6. As it is not appropriate to miss a prayer during its prescribed time – if the performance of *wudhu'* or *ghusl* would cause this to occur – *tayammum* has to be performed.

The substances that may be used for tayammum

Tayammum is performed on clean soil, sand, dried clay or, if necessary, stone.

Requirements of tayammum

The primary requirement is the 'specific intention' to perform *tayammum* – that is, to purify oneself mentally as well as physically in this manner.

For the palms and fingers of both hands to simultaneously touch or pat the substance being used.

With the heel of both hands to wipe the entire forehead – from the hair line to the bridge of the nose.

Then – in one action – to rub the palm of the left hand over the back – from wrist to fingertip – and to do that also with the palm of the right hand over the back of the left hand.

Direction of the Kabah – qiblah

Qiblah is the Arabic word that denotes the direction of the *Ka'bah* – the sacred cube-shaped building in Makkah – towards which all Muslims face when they pray. This action is an exemplification of the Islamic principle, that every human action should be focused upon the single objective of seeking the pleasure of our Almighty Creator. Indeed, facing the direction of the *qiblah* is required for other actions such as circumambulation of the *Ka'bah*, burial, the slaughter of beasts and prayers of supplication – *duas*. It is also highly recommended that those who recite or read the Qur'an face in the direction of the *qiblah*.

- While standing or sitting in prayer, the frontal aspect of the body – from head to toe – is aligned to face *qiblah*, the face not being turned away from it. This applies equally to those not able to stand or sit, who should lie, preferably on their right side, but if that too is not possible, on their left side. If neither is possible for them, they should be placed on their back with the soles of their feet aligned to face *qiblah*.
- If a person is required to offer prayer while aboard an aircraft, train or ship they may employ a compass to establish the direction of the *qiblah*. If they do not have a compass available, it is appropriate for them to pray in the approximate direction of the *qiblah*. For example, in North America to face NE, in the United Kingdom to face SE, in Paris, and other European cities on the same latitude, to face E.
- The direction of *qiblah* may be determined by compass, the informed guidance of others, or indicatory niches – *miharbs* – of local mosques. However, when no means by which to determine *qiblah* is available, prayer may be offered facing any direction. In spite of this, if time permits, it is recommended that such prayers be offered four times – with the alignment of the body being changed 90° to the right between each prayer.
- If a person believes that the *qiblah* is in one of two directions, they should offer the prayer twice, facing first in the one, and then in the other direction.

Timing for obligatory daily prayer

Within each period of 24 hours it is incumbent on every Muslim to offer five prayers – *Salat* – in their prescribed sequence. Each *Salat* comprises an intention – *niyyat* – and a specific number of cycles of standing upright, bowing with deference and prostration – *rakaah* (pl. *rakaat*). It is insufficient simply to go through the motions of prayer.

Prayer must inform and motivate all aspects of the believer's existence. It is highly recommended that each prayer be offered at the commencement of the 'preferred time specified in the *ahadith*' – *fadhilat al-waqt*.

The time for each prayer is outlined below:

Duhr – four *rakaat* – at midday.

Asr – four *rakaat* – in the late afternoon.

Maghrib – three *rakaat* – at dusk, as the sky darkens before nightfall.

Isha' – four *rakaat* – after dusk when full darkness has set.

Fajr – two *rakaat* – at 'true' dawn – *Fajr al-Sadiq*.

For example, if we assume that on a particular day, the time in London for *Dhurr* is 12.04 and that sunset is at 4.02:

The first ten minutes after 12.04 are designated as being the specified time in which to offer *Dhurr* – in other words, those ten minutes are exclusively reserved for *Dhurr* prayers, and no other prayer may be offered during that time.

The last ten minutes prior to 4.02 are designated as being the specified time in which to offer *Asr* – in other words, those ten minutes are exclusively reserved for *Asr* prayer, and no other prayer may be offered during that time.

However, both *Dhurr* and *Asr* may also be offered at any time between those two specified periods.

In many *ahadith* to pray as early as possible is highly recommended. The Prophet (S) once described the reward for a prayer offered at the commencement of each Salat time as equivalent to the size of a large camel whilst the reward for prayer offered towards the end of that prayer's time is equivalent to the size of a tiny bird.

Thus, there is a preferred time for each *salat* to be offered referred to as *fadhilah al-waqt* explained below:

1. The *fadhilah al-waqt* for the *Dhurr* prayer is established in the following manner:

A rod placed vertically on level ground casts its shadow towards the West as the sun rises. The length of the shadow cast reduces in size as the sun approaches noon and, in places where it is directly overhead, disappears completely. (In Makkah, for example, this occurs on 28th May and 14th July.) The time to start *Dhurr* is defined as the moment that the sun passes its highest point and begins to cast its shadow towards the East. The time in which to offer – *fadhilah al-waqt* – the *Dhurr* prayer continues until the shadow of the rod reaches four-sevenths of the length of the rod, i.e. just over half its length.

2. The *fadhilah al-waqt* for the *Asr* prayer starts when the shadow of the rod reaches two-sevenths of the rod's length, and continues till it is equivalent to six-sevenths of the rod's length.

3. The *fadhilah al-waqt* for the *Maghrib* prayer starts when the redness of sunset in the Eastern horizon is at its peak. That is, when the redness of the setting sun has shrunk to cover only the western half of the sky. This *fadhilah* continues until the redness has disappeared completely from the western sky.

4. The *fadhilah al-waqt* for the *Isha'* prayer begins immediately after this, and continues for the first third of the night.

5. The *fadhilah al-waqt* for the *Fajr* prayer is 'true' dawn – *Fajr al-Sadiq*. This appears first as a horizontal white thread on the horizon, and then broadens into a 'river of light' of ever increasing clarity and brilliance.²⁶ True dawn is not to be confused with 'first' or 'false' dawn – *Fajr al-Kathib* – that appears

as a column of light that increases and diminishes until it finally withers away completely. *Fajr al-Sadiq* is technically defined as the instant in the morning when the upper edge of the sun's disc is 18 degrees below the horizon. At certain times of the year, in cities located on 48 degrees of latitude or above, the sun's disc does not descend 18 degrees below the horizon, and for those times, *Fajr al-Sadiq* occurs when the upper edge of the sun's disc is 12 degrees below the horizon. This applies in London and similarly located cities between 22 May and 23 July each year.

The details of all these circumstances are explained by Ayatollah Sayyid Fadhel Milani in his *Frequently Asked Questions on Islam*, pages 57–59 (Islam in English Press, London 2001).

- A prayer not offered until after the specified time of its succeeding prayer is considered to be an unfulfilled duty and squandered opportunity. In such circumstance a 'surrogatory prayer' – *qada* – must be offered. In other words, if a person has time to offer only one prayer of four *rakaat* before the specified time for *Asr* ends, they must offer their *Asr* prayer, and immediately thereafter their *qada* prayer for *Duhr*.

In the opinion of all Islamic scholars, a deliberate breach in the sequence in which prayers must be offered renders such prayers invalid.

If, having made the intention – *niyyat* – and started the *Asr* prayer, one realizes that *duhr* has mistakenly been missed, one should instantly transfer one's intention from offering *Asr* to offering *Duhr*, and continue the prayer as *Duhr*. The *Asr* prayer must be offered afterwards.

Rulings related to deficiencies during prayer -Salat

Deliberate major or minor omissions, additions or changes to the obligatory acts of *Salat* render such *salat* invalid.

If one comes to realize, during or after *salat*, that one's *wudhu'* or *ghusl* is no longer valid, one must abandon that prayer until *wudhu'* or *ghusl* is again valid. If that prayer's *fadilat al-waqt* has passed, the prayer should still be offered unless the specified time for the next prayer has come. If that is the case, the surrogatory prayer – *qada* – must be offered.

If it is realized, during or after *ruku*, that a prostration – *sujud* – of the preceding *rakaat* has been omitted, then that *salat* is invalid and must be offered correctly. If this is realized prior to *ruku*, *sujud* should immediately be made, followed by all the obligatory actions of *salat*, from that stage of the prayer onwards. When an error has been corrected during *salat* it is recommended that two additional *sujuds* be made immediately after that prayer – *Sujud al-sahw* – to correct that oversight.

If it is realized before the salutation that a *sujud* of the final *rakaah* has been omitted, this should be then made and *tashahud* repeated before the salutation.

If, before the *salam* at the end of the prayer, it is realized that something has been omitted, it should be performed prior to the *salam*.

Conditions to be fulfilled during prayer

Six conditions apply to where prayer may be offered

1. To use a place for prayer it must either be owned, rented, or have the permission of the owner or leaseholder to be used for that purpose. Clearly, mosques and prayer facilities in public places such as universities, hospitals and airports have been provided for people to pray in. One may not knowingly use any thing or place without the legal right to do so.
2. Prayer must be offered in surroundings where it will not be disrupted.
3. There must be sufficient space in which to stand upright, bow and prostrate comfortably.
4. The place must be free of impurities and dry – so that body and clothes are not rendered impure.
5. The point where women place their forehead during prostration should be behind the men. In restricted spaces this may be as far forward as a point just behind the line of the men's knees during prostration.
6. During prostration, the point where the forehead is placed should not be more than the breadth of four fingers above that of the hands, knees and toes.

Islam places great emphasis on *salat* being offered in mosques. Considered foremost of these are, in the following order:

- The Holy Mosque in *Makkah*
- The Holy Mosque in *Madinah*
- The Holy Mosque in *Kufa*
- The Holy Mosque in Jerusalem – *Masjid al-Aqsa*

These four mosques are followed in preference by the central – *jami* – mosque of the city, the local mosque and the street market or borough mosque.

Six conditions apply to clothes that are worn during salat

1. They should not be contaminated by anything that is 'impure in itself – *Najis al-'Ayn*.
2. They must be permissible for use during prayer, i.e. not stolen or unlawfully obtained.

3. They must not be made of any material from creatures that have not been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law. Hence leather belts and jackets that may have been made from such materials are removed prior to prayer.
4. They must not be made of material from creatures whose flesh is unlawful to consume, such as carnivores or reptiles.
5. For males – they must not be made of material that includes any silk.
6. For males – they must not be embroidered with gold thread.

Covering of private parts - awrah

- While male pudenda must always remain concealed, this is especially true for *salat*. It is strongly recommended also to cover the body between navel and knee.
- With the exception of faces and hands, women's bodies and limbs are required to be covered during *salat*. This clearly requires that clothes should not be, or become, 'see through' in varying lighting conditions.

Acts that invalidate prayer

Prayer is invalidated in twelve circumstances:

1. When realization dawns that an essential requirement of prayer has not been satisfied.
2. When, by accident or intention, *wudhu'* is invalidated.
3. If, while standing upright, palms are deliberately removed from the thighs in order to fold the arms. Neither the Prophet(S) nor the Muslims at the time of the first Caliph folded their arms during *salat*. This innovation of the second Caliph was prohibited by Imam Sadiq (a.s.) when he declared it to be a Magian but not Muslim practice.
4. When *Amin*¹ is uttered after *Surat al-Fatiha*. The Prophet (S) taught Muslims how to pray and ordered them to 'copy' him. He never uttered *Amin* after *Surat al-Fatiha* and the only narration that maintains that he did so is not regarded as authentic.
5. When a person voluntarily turns away from the *qiblah*.
6. While in prayer it is not legitimate to articulate words or phrases not included in the Qur'an or used for *dhikr*. If, however, someone greets those in prayer with the words Salamun Alaikum – a greeting that demands an obligatory response – it must be done using the phrase Salamun Alaikum – words included in the Qur'an in a variety of places.[27](#),

7. When one voluntarily laughs aloud. However, a smile or a small chuckle do not invalidate prayer.
8. The value of any prayer is directly linked to the quality of communication with the Creator. While tears or sobs of fear engendered by Allah's awesome Omnipotence and Omnipresence do not detract attention from Him, tears shed over the affairs of this world clearly indicate that thoughts and actions are no longer focused on Him – a situation that renders such prayer meaningless.
9. When untoward actions alter the prescribed form of the prayer. The form of prayer is clearly altered if a coat is removed, shirtsleeves rolled up or other such action not associated with prayer. However, small gestures which contribute to reducing a disturbance and promote concentration, for example one to silence a child or indicate that someone who is not praying should answer a knock at the door, are acceptable.
10. When one eats or drinks anything – other than during a recommended *salat* before *Fajr* – on a day that intention has been made to fast, and the time for fasting is due to commence prior to the prayer ending. In this specific circumstance – providing water is within reach and that all acts that invalidate prayer are avoided – water may be drunk.
11. When continuing doubts are entertained regarding the number of *rakaat* that have been offered during any prayer – because such doubt evidences the absence of concentration.

Doubts regarding the number of *rakaat* for *Fajr* and *Maghrib* prayers invalidate *salat*. However, doubts over the number of *rakaat* offered during *Duhr*, *Asr*, and *Isha'* are effaced by the offering of *Salat al-Ihtyat* – precautionary prayer – after the prayer has been completed.

12. If deliberate omissions/additions are made to any element of prayer.

Prayer itself

Adhan and iqamah

The history of the adhan

Although the *adhan* was amongst the very first practices of the Muslim community there are contradictory reports in the *ahadith* over how this custom came into being.

- Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nissa'i narrate on the authority of Abdullah Ibn 'Umar that when Muslims in Madinah were gathering for *salat* they had no means to announce to others that the prayer was about to commence. Some suggested bells, as used in Christian churches, others a ram or ibex horn – *Shofar* – as used by the Jews. But Umar suggested that one member of the congregation call the others to prayer. At this point, the Prophet (S) said, 'O Bilal, go and call them to prayer.'[28](#)
- Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud narrate on the authority that Abdullah ibn Zayd told them:

I dreamed about a man with a bell just as the Prophet (S) was ordering a bell be used to call people to prayer. I asked him, "Will you sell me your bell?" He asked why I wanted it and I replied, "To call people to prayer". He then asked if I would like him to teach me a better way to do this. To my positive response he taught me the *Adhan* and *Iqamah*. In the morning I told the Prophet about my dream and he, delighted by it, said that it constituted clear guidance on what to do, and promptly ordered Bilal to undertake that task'. When Umar heard this story he too came to the Prophet (S) and said, 'By He who sent the truth with you, I had precisely the same dream as Abdullah ibn Zayd.' The Prophet (S) then praised Allah for such bountiful blessings.[29](#)

- The Imamiyah and Zaydiah accept that the first *adhan* to be called was during the 'Night Journey' where the Prophet (S) learned its detail.

Al-Halabi reports that Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah told him that he was incensed by the nonsense spoken of the *adhan* and *iqamah* being inspired by anyone's dream. It is, he said, 'sheer fantasy that these could be based upon images, of real or imaginary characters, places or events, that happen to pass through the mind of a sleeping person. The *adhan* was taught to the Prophet during the Night Journey.'[30](#)

Numerous authentic *ahadith* in the collections of *Al-Kafi*, *Bihar al-Anwar* and *Wasa'il al-Shiah* consistently report that the Prophet (S) learned the *adhan* and *iqamah* from Jibra'il during the Night Journey.

Prayer comprises:

Intention - Niyyat

The foremost intention and sole motive must be to fulfill obediently a specific injunction of The Creator, and to remain aware of this throughout the prayer. There is no need to enunciate the intention but if the mind drifts and concentration is lost, the prayer is rendered meaningless.

Announcing that prayer has commenced

The words '*Allahu Akbar*' – *Takbirat al-Iharam* – must be clearly and accurately pronounced in order to announce that prayer has commenced. This specific requirement must be fulfilled while steadily standing upright. Those who are physically unable to articulate these words must try to fulfill the requirement as best they can.

It is recommended when enunciating the words '*Allahu Akbar*' – at the commencement of prayer and also when they occur during the prayer – to signify surrender to the will of Allah Almighty by raising both hands parallel to the ears, with palms facing the *qiblah*.

The three main postures of *Salat* are: Standing upright, Bowing in deference and Prostration in humility. In profound theological discussion each is considered to reflect a different aspect of Islamic Belief in the

Oneness of Allah – There is no Divinity other than Allah. Standing reflects Unity of Actions, Bowing Unity of Attributes and Prostration Unity of Essence.

Standing upright - Qiyam

When Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (a.s.) asked his father "Ali ibn al-Husayn (a.s.) why he turned pale while standing upright in *salat*, he replied, 'By Allah, it is because I am conscious of whom I stand before'³¹. This *Hadith* reveals the awesome significance of *qiyam* in submission to the Might and Majesty of Allah. It is only achieved when the things of this world are completely overshadowed by consciousness of Allah. While thus aware and while still in this position to recite Qur'anic *ayat* before going into *ruku*.

Prayer

Those who are elderly or infirm are exempt from standing and may fulfill this aspect of the prayer while seated. However, if they are able to stand with the aid of a stick or chair they should do so.

Qur'anic recitation

This comprises the opening *surah* plus another short *surah* of the Qur'an – *Qiraah*. The first and second *rakaah* of every prayer must commence with the recitation of Qur'an 1:1-7 (*Surat al-Fatihah* also known as *Surat al-Hamd*) and be followed by the recitation of any other complete *surah*.³² A few of these are listed.

Al- Fatihah - The Opener - Qur'an 1

{بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ} 1

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

{الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ} 2

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;

{الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ} 3

Most Gracious, Most Merciful;

{مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ} 4

Master of the Day of Judgment.

{إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ} 5

Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.

{اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ} 6

Show us the straight way,

{صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ} 7

The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.

[Al-Tawhid - Monotheism - Also Called Al-Ikhlās - Sincerity - Qur'an 112](#)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful

{قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ} 1

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only;

{اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ} 2

Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;

{لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ} 3

He begetteth not, nor is He begotten;

{وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ} 4

And there is none like unto Him.

Bowing in deference – Ruku

Recitation – *qirat* – is followed by the intention to bow in deference, i.e. bend directly forwards from the waist, to the extent that fingertips rest upon the knees. When the body is steady in that position, to pronounce three times in Arabic, I glorify Allah – *Subhana Allah*. If one prefers, this may be extended to, I glorify my Lord, who is Supremely Glorious and I praise Him – *Subhana Rabbi al-Azim wa bi hamdih*.

- *Ruku* should convey absolute faith and submission to the Lord without regard for how He might treat you.
- After completing the above one stands upright and enunciates, Allah hears those who praise Him – *Sami Allahu Limon Hamidah*. When steady in that position, intention is made to prostrate oneself in humility and this is immediately thereafter done.
- (Those for whom it is not possible to bend directly forwards from the waist, should indicate their intention with their head. They may find it easier to pray while sitting on a chair.)

Prostration – Sujud

Two prostrations – *sajdah* – follow *ruku* in every *salat*.³³

The intention should be to express utter humility with forehead, palms, knees and big toes touching the earth. When stable in that position to enunciate three times, I glorify Allah – *Subhana Allah*. If one prefers, this may be extended to, I glorify my Lord the Most High and praise Him – *Subhana Rabbi al-Ala wa bi Hamdih*.

- This is done because, when ‘Glorify your Lord who is Supremely Glorious’ was revealed in Qur’an 56:74, the Prophet said, include this in *dhikr* for *ruku*’ and when ‘Glorify your Lord who is Most High’ was revealed in Qur’an 87:1 the Prophet(S) said, include this in the *dhikr* for *sujud*.¹
- After the first *sajdah* one sits upon the legs with feet crossed and, when stable in this position, enunciates *Allahu Akbar* before going into the prostration of the second *sajdah*.
- After the second *sajdah* one stands up for the *qiyam* of a second and identical *rakaah*.

Offering (the invocation) – qunut

It is recommended that *qunut* be recited while standing upright – *qiyam* – just before the *ruku* of the second *rakaah* of every *salah*. To do this, open hands are held before the face, fingers together, palms uppermost, and with eyes focused on them the *dhikr* of *qunut* is enunciated (except for congregational prayers, in which this is done by the Imam). *Qunut* may consist of any invocation such as,

{رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ} 201

'Rabbana iitina fid dunya Hasanah, wafil Akherati Hasanah, wa Qina 'athab an Naar'

'O Lord, grant us all that is good in this world and the world to come, and save us from chastisement by fire' (Qur'an 2:201).[34](#)

Bearing witness – tashahud

In the second *rakaah* of every *salah* as well as in the last *rakaah* of every *salah*

– while sitting on the left thigh with the upper part of the right foot rested on the sole of the left foot and with hands on thighs – one must enunciate:

Phonetic transliteration

Al-hamdu li-Llah, ashadu an la ilaha il-alliih wahdahu la sharika lah Wa ashadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa Rasuluh

Alliihuma salli ala Muhammadin wa ali Muhammad,

Wa taqabbal shafa atahu warfa darajatah

Translation

All praise is for Allah and I testify that there is no Divinity other than Allah, the One who is without partner,

And I testify that Muhammad(S) is His Servant and Messenger, O Allah, send Your blessing to Muhammad (S) and his progeny, Accept his intercession, and elevate his rank.

Ending the prayer -Salam

Once the affirmation – *tashahud* – is completed in the final *rakaah* of a prayer, the closing act is to enunciate:

Phonetic transliteration

Assalamu 'alaykaayuhan Nabi wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh Assalamu alayna wa ala ibadillahi Salihin.

Assalamu alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

Translation

O Prophet, Allah's peace, blessings and grace be upon you,

Also Allah's peace be on us and upon all pious servants of Allah. Allah's peace and blessings be on you all.

Special circumstances

There are circumstances in which flexibility is appropriate, namely:

Prayer whilst travelling

Prayers of four *rakaat* – cycles of standing upright, bowing and prostration – are shortened to only two *rakaat* during travel, regardless of the purpose of the journey. This ruling is based upon the ayah:

{وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا...} 101

'There is no blame on you for shortening your prayers during journeys, if fearful that disbelievers might harry you'.. (Qur'an 4: 101).

- Muslim reports in his *Sahih* that Umar asked the Prophet (S) the meaning of the phrase, 'there is no blame upon you' and he replied, 'This is a concession that Allah has granted, so accept it and be grateful.' Both Bukhari and Muslim record that Anas ibn Malik reported, 'We travelled from Madinah to Makkah with the Prophet (S) and throughout the journey he (S) only offered two *rakaat* until we returned to Madinah.' This referred specifically to the *Duhr*, *Asr* and *Isha'* prayers.
- Thus, this concession applies to return journeys of 44 km/28 miles or more, but not to shorter distances.
- A traveler's intention, when setting off, must have been to undertake a return journey of 44 km/28 miles or more.
- The distance of 44 km/28 miles is calculated from one's town of residence regardless of where a journey may have started.
- It goes without saying that the purpose of the journey has to be lawful to benefit from Allah's concession.
- People whose livelihoods involve long-distance travel do not qualify for this concession.
- The benefit commences immediately after the outer reaches of the town of residence have been passed.

Effects of the prayer being shortened

- Those who start their journey prior to noon – during the month of Ramadhan or during any other fast – break their fast and shorten their prayers. However, those who start their journeys after midday do not break their fast despite their prayer being shortened.
- Those who travel for six months of the year, or for three days or more each week, do not meet the criteria for prayers to be shortened.
- Travellers who stay the minimum of ten days or more in a town are considered temporary residents and thus do not meet the criteria for prayers to be shortened.

Prayer at the time of solar and lunar eclipse and at times of disasters that are secularly described as 'Acts of God'

There are differences between the events referred to in the items above.

- Solar and lunar eclipses are regular, predictable events observable from a wide variety of places throughout the world; 'Acts of God' are local incidents within specific regions.
- Prayers offered at times of solar or lunar eclipse are obligatory, regardless of people fearing such events or not.
- Prayers after uncontrollable events caused by natural forces, for example earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados or other disaster are only obligatory when the safety of the majority of people in a region is threatened by such an event, or its immediate consequences.

Such prayers were taught by the Prophet Muhammad(S), whose religious guidance Muslims observe, and have nothing whatever to do with superstitious belief.

How to offer such prayers

These prayers consist of two *rakaat*. In each of them the opening *surah* and another short *surah* of the Qur'an is recited five times, followed each time by a *ruku*, prior to the first *sajdah*. The same procedure is repeated in the second *rakaah*.

Id Prayer

All Muslims celebrate two special days each lunar year, namely *Id al-Fitr*, to celebrate the completion of one month of fasting, and *Eid al-Adha*, to commemorate the sacrifice offered by the Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.). In the *ahadith* related by the error-free Imams, followers of Ahl al-Bayt are recommended to celebrate also *Eid al-Ghadir*. This *Id* commemorates the event at *Ghadir Kumm* where Imam Ali was appointed to be the successor to the Prophet – A congregational *Id* prayer is only offered at *Fitr* and

Adha.

How to offer Id prayers

The *Id* prayer consists of two *rakaat*. It is highly recommended that in the first of these, the Imam recite the Opening suraah (*Al-Fatihah*) and Surah 87 (*Al-Ala*) – followed by five *qunuts* before the *ruku* of the first *raka'ah*. And for the second *rakaah*, the Opening surah (*Al-Fatihah*) and Surah 91 (*Al-Shams*) – followed by four *qunuts*.

Al-'Ala -The Most High - Qur'an 87

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى {1}

Glorify the name of thy Guardian-Lord Most High,

{الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى {2}

Who hath created, and further, given order and proportion;

{وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى {3}

Who hath ordained laws. And granted guidance;

{وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى {4}

And Who bringeth out the (green and luscious) pasture,

{فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى {5}

And then doth make it (but) swarthy stubble.

{سُنُقْرُبُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى {6}

By degrees shall We teach thee to declare (the Message), so thou shalt not forget,

{إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى} 7

Except as Allah wills: For He knoweth what is manifest and what is hidden.

{وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى} 8

And We will make it easy for thee (to follow) the simple (Path).

{فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى} 9

Therefore give admonition in case the admonition profits (the hearer).

{سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى} 10

The admonition will be received by those who fear (Allah):

{وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَى} 11

But it will be avoided by those most unfortunate ones,

{الَّذِي يَصُلِّي النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى} 12

Who will enter the Great Fire,

{ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى} 13

In which they will then neither die nor live.

{قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى} 14

But those will prosper who purify themselves,

{وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى} 15

And glorify the name of their Guardian-Lord, and (lift their hearts) in prayer.

{بَلْ تُؤْتُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا} 16

Day (behold), ye prefer the life of this world;

{وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى} 17

But the Hereafter is better and more enduring.

{إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى} 18

And this is in the Books of the earliest (Revelation),-

{صُّحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى} 19

The Books of Abraham and Moses.

Al-Shams - The Sun - Qur'an 91

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا} 1

By the Sun and his (glorious) splendour;

{وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَاهَا} 2

By the Moon as she follows him;

{وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا} 3

By the Day as it shows up (the Sun's) glory;

{ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا } 4

By the Night as it conceals it;

{ وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا } 5

By the Firmament and its (wonderful) structure;

{ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا } 6

By the Earth and its (wide) expanse:

{ وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا } 7

By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it;

{ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا } 8

And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;-

{ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا } 9

Truly he succeeds that purifies it,

{ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا } 10

And he fails that corrupts it!

{ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِطَغْوَاهَا } 11

The Thamud (people) rejected (their prophet) through their inordinate wrong-doing,

{إِذِ انْبَعَثَ أَشْقَاهَا} 12

Behold, the most wicked man among them was deputed (for impiety).

{فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا} 13

But the Messenger of Allah said to them: "It is a She-camel of Allah! And (bar her not from) having her drink!"

{فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَعَقَرُوهَا فَدَمْدَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَحَسَّاهَا} 14

Then they rejected him (as a false prophet), and they hamstrung her. So their Lord, on account of their crime, obliterated their traces and made them equal (in destruction, high and low)!

{وَلَا يَخَافُ عُقْبَاهَا} 15

And for Him is no fear of its consequences.

Then, a specific *dua* is recited during *qunut* namely:

اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلَ الْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَالْعِزَّةِ، وَأَهْلَ الْجُودِ وَالْجَبَرُوتِ، وَأَهْلَ الْعَفْوِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ، وَأَهْلَ

التَّقْوَى وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي جَعَلْتَهُ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ عِيداً، وَلِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى

اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ ذُخْراً وَمَزِيداً، أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَنْ تُدْخِلَنِي فِي كُلِّ

خَيْرٍ أَدْخَلْتَ فِيهِ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلَ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَأَنْ تُخْرِجَنِي مِنْ كُلِّ سُوءٍ أَخْرَجْتَ مِنْهُ

مُحَمَّدًا وَآلَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيْهِمْ - اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادُكَ

الصَّالِحُونَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِمَّا اسْتَعَاذَ مِنْهُ عِبَادُكَ الصَّالِحُونَ

Allahumma ahl al-Kibriya' wal 'Azamah, wa ahl al-Judi wal Jabarut wa ahl al-'Afwi wal Rahmah, wa ahl al-Taqwa wal Maghfirah, asa'luka bihaqqi hatha alyawm allathi ja 'altahu lil Muslimina 'idan wa li-Muhammadin thukhran wa maizda an tusallia ala Muhammadin wa ali Muhammad wa an tudkhillani fi kulli khairin adkhalta fihī Muhammadan wa ala Muhammad wa an tukhrejani min kulli su' akhrajta minhu Muhammadan wa ala Muhammad. Allahumma inni asaluka khaira ma sa'laka minhu 'ibaduka alSalihun wa authu bika mima ista'atha minhu 'ibaduka alsalihun.

O Lord of Grandeur and Might, Lord of Generosity and Omnipotence, Lord of Pardon and Mercy, Lord of Righteousness and Forgiveness, I beseech you on this auspicious day you have made celebratory for the Muslim community, for You to grant Your Mercy and Blessing to the Prophet Muhammad (S) and his progeny and bestow upon me every goodness that You bestowed upon the Prophet Muhammad (S) and his progeny and safeguard me from every misfortune that You safeguarded the Prophet Muhammad (S) and his progeny from. O Allah, I ask you for the best of what Your most pious and devout servants asked, and seek the same protection that Your most pious and devout servants sought.

After the *id* prayer, the Imam delivers two sermons with a short pause in between the first and the second.

- In the first he details the significance of the fast or the pilgrimage and the value of spiritual purification. The second is to emphasize the importance of the Muslim *ummah* remaining united and responsive to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.
- There is no *adhan* or *iqamah* called for *id* prayers. Repetition of the words '*as-Salah*' three times suffices. The time for *id* prayer is from sunrise to midday and there is no *qada* offered for a missed *id* prayer once its time has passed.

Congregational prayers

Muslims are encouraged to offer prayer in congregation and it is considered that the larger the congregation, the greater the blessing of the prayer will be. Authentic *ahadith* record that congregational prayer has 25 times greater benefit than prayer not offered in congregation. Indeed, it is not considered appropriate for anyone to abandon congregational prayer without justifiable excuse. Even if one has already offered a specific prayer, it is highly recommended to join a congregation about to offer it. Those who frequently entertain doubts concerning the correctness of their prayers are required to alleviate such doubts by offering their prayers in congregation.

The qualifications required by those who lead congregational prayer

To lead congregational prayer the Imam must be adult, sane, *Ithna Ashari Shiah* and *Adil* – righteous. Further, the Imam needs to be well acquainted with rulings that relate to prayers in general and, in particular, those that relate to congregational prayer. A male may lead both genders but a woman may only lead other women. Those not able to stand, bow or prostrate may not lead congregational prayers.

- While the Imam delivers the opening *surah* and second short *surah* of the Qur'an – in the first and second *rakaat* – those who follow must remain silent. However, members of the congregation are required to participate in a soft voice, so as not to be overheard – 'sotto-voce' – in the recitation of all the other passages the Imam recites.
- Those who join congregational prayer – prior to the Imam raising his head from *ruku* in the first *rakaah* – utter *Takbir al-Ihram*, follow the Imam and are considered to have started the prayer together with the congregation. Those who join later than this must wait until the Imam stands for the next *rakaah*.

Making up for missed prayers

When any obligatory prayer is missed, whatever the reason, it must be made up for. It is highly recommended for this to be done as soon as is possible. However, if one is not absolutely clear about the precise number of prayers that need to be compensated for, to be on the safe side, one should adopt the maximum that one is certain will fulfill these missed obligations.

Missed prayers are to be compensated for in the form that they were missed, e.g. those shortened during travel should be offered in shortened form. One has to specify in the *niyyah* that the prayer to be offered is in compensation.

The prayer for the departing soul (Salat al-Janazah)

Salat al-Janazah should be offered as soon as possible after the deceased's body has been bathed, shrouded and anointed with camphor. The *Salat al Janazah* may take place at home, in a mosque, graveyard or elsewhere in the open. Although women may not enter a mosque during periods of menstruation – *hiad* – they may enter Islamic centers not designated as mosques. A building is only officially recognized as a mosque after the owner, donor or charity – *waqf* – committee in charge of it, announces the intention for it to be designated as such. Although the state of ritual purity – *wudhu'* – is a requirement of *Salah*, in circumstances in which the making of *wudhu'* is likely to result in the *Salat al-Janazah* being missed, it may be offered even if one is not in the state of *wudhu'*. This applies equally to women in *hayd*, absolved from the duties of *salah*, who may join at one side of the congregation.

- This is a manifestation of Allah's mercy for, no matter what their circum stance, all may participate in prayer for a departed soul. *Salat al-Janazah* is the only *salah* for which no *adhan* or *iqamah* is called. The only time both *adhan* and *iqamah* are called and not followed by *Salah*, is after the birth of a baby, when the *adhan* is called softly in its right ear and the *iqamah* in its left.
- Congregational *Salat al-Janazah* is offered standing facing the direction of the qiblah. The deceased's shrouded body, lying on its back, is laid on a bier or in a coffin, in front of the congregation. It is placed with the head to the right of the congregation and the feet to its left. The Imam positions himself in front of the chest area of a woman and the navel of a man. The congregation stands in lines behind the Imam, makes the intention to offer *Salat al-Janazah* for the deceased's soul, raise their hands to their

ears to pronounce *Allahu Akbar – takbir* – and follow the Imam in reciting the prayer in a low voice. Those unable to stand may of course sit while doing this.

How to offer Salat al-Janazah

According to *Imamiyah fiqh*, both Imam and congregation pronounce five *takbirs* and between each, the Imam recites either the shorter or the longer passages aloud, with the congregation doing so silently. Imam Jafar asSadiq (a.s.) said, 'Allah made five prayers obligatory, and appointed one *takbir* for the deceased in the place of each prayer.' He also referred to the Prophet (S) offering five *takbirs* for all the deceased, other than hypocrites, for whom he only offered four. However, the four Sunni schools of law only consider four *takbirs* to be necessary.

Salat al-Janazah becomes obligatory once a deceased Muslim is six years or over.

1st Takbir

Allahu Akbar

Then either:

I bear witness that there is no Divinity but Allah and that Muhammad (S) is Allah's Messenger.

Phonetic transliteration

Ashhadu an la ilaha ilallah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah.

or:

I bear witness that there is no Divinity but Allah the One, who has no associates. And I bear witness that Muhammad (S) is His Servant and Messenger, sent to convey Truth, and give warnings and good tidings before the Day of Judgement.

Phonetic transliteration

Ashhadu an la ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lah. Wa Ashadu anna Muhammadan abdahu wa Rasuluh, arsalahu bil haqqi bashiran wa nathiran bayna yaday is sa'ah.

2nd Takbir

Allahu Akbar

Then either:

O Lord! Bestow peace and blessings upon Muhammad (S) and his progeny.

Phonetic transliteration

Alla humma salli ala Muhammadin wa aali Muhammad.

or:

O Lord! Bestow peace upon Muhammad (S) and his progeny and bless Muhammad (S) and his progeny and send Your Mercy upon Muhammad (S) and his progeny as the best of Your peace, blessing and mercy was bestowed upon Ibrahim and his progeny. You are The Praised and The All-Glorious. Bestow peace upon all the Prophets, Messengers and martyrs.

Phonetic transliteration

Alla humma salli 'ala Muhammadin wa aali Muhammad wa barik 'ala Muhammadin wa aali Muhammad warham Muhammadan wa ala Muhammadin ka afzali ma sallayta wa barakata wa tarahamta 'ala Ibrahim wa aali Ibrahim innaka Hamidun Majid wa salli ala jami il anbiya' wal mursalin, was-shuhada was-siddiqin wa jamri 'ibadilla his-salihin.

3rd Takbir

Allahu Akbar

Then either:

O Lord! Forgive all believing men and women.

Phonetic transliteration

Allah hummaghfir lil mu'minina wal mu'minat.

or:

O Lord! Forgive all believing men and women and all Muslim men and women, alive or dead; join us with them by good deeds. You are the Listener of prayers The All Powerful.

Phonetic transliteration

Allahumma ghfir lil mu'minina wal mu'minat wal muslimina wal muslimat. alahya 'l minhum wal amwat tabi baynana wa baynahum bil khayrati innaka mujibud-dawat innak ala kulli shay'in Qadir.

4th Takbir

Allahu Akbar

Then either:

O Lord! Forgive this dead person.

Phonetic transliteration

(For a male) – *Allahumma ghfir li hazal mayyit.*

(For a female) – *Allahumma ghfir li hazihil mayyit.*

or:

O Lord, this is Your servant the son/daughter of Your servants, Your guest and You are the best of Hosts. O Lord, we know him/her by his/her good conduct but You know him/her better than we do. O Lord, if he/she was a doer of good, increase their good for them. If on the other hand he/she was a doer of evil, forgive him/her. O Lord, lift him/her to the highest level and console the bereaved. You are the All Merciful.

Phonetic transliteration

(For a male) – *Alla humma inna haza abduka wabnu abdika wabnu amatika nazala bika wa anta khayru manzulin bihi Alla humma inna la nalamu minhu ilia khayra wa anta aalamu bihi minna. Alla humma in kana mohsinan fa zid fi ihsanihi wa in kana musi'an fatajawaz anhu waghfir lahu. Allahumma j'alhu indaka fi a'la 'illiyin wakhluf ala ahlihi fil ghabirin warhamhu bi-rahmatika ya ar hamar Rahimin.*

(For a female) – *Alla humma inna hazihi amatuka wabnatu abdika wabnatu amatika nazalalat bika wa anta khayra manzulin bihi Allahumma inna la na'lamu minha ilia khayra wa anta a'alamu biha minna. Allahumma in kanat mohsinatan fa zid fi ihsaniha wa in kanat musi'atan fatajawaz 'anha waghfir laha. Allahumma j'al ha 'indaka fi a'la 'illiyin wakhluf 'ala ahliha fil ghabirin warhamha bi-rahmatika ya ar hamar Rahimin.*

5th Takbir

Allahu Akbar

9.6 Voluntary prayers

In section 9.5 we discussed the obligatory – *fard* – prayers that constitute a 'pillar' of the Islamic religion. However, as constant communication with the Creator is highly recommended, additional prayers, over and above the obligatory, are commonly offered. Some additional prayers – *nafilah* (pl. *nawafil*) – are customarily appended to *fard* prayers, others are not.

Voluntary *raka'at* are invariably offered in pairs, i.e. four *raka'at* being made up of two sets of two *raka'at*.

Voluntary prayers that are appended are:

- Two *raka'at* prior to the *Fajr* prayer
- Eight *raka'at* prior to the *Duhr* prayer
- Eight *raka'at* prior to the *'Asr* prayer
- Four *raka'at* after the *Maghrib* prayer
- Two *rak'aat* after the *'Isha'* prayer while sitting – despite this being considered to equate to only a single rakacah performed while standing.
- Eleven *rak'aat* for the midnight prayer

A total of 34 *raka'at*

Thus, the *raka'at* offered in any one day – 17 *fard* + 34 *nawafil*: total 51.

Voluntary prayers include the following.

[The prayer related to Jafar, son of Abu Talib](#)

Numerous authentic reports refer to its outstanding effectiveness as an expression of contrition in seeking forgiveness for major sin. The most appropriate time to offer this four-*rakaat* prayer is thought to be a half hour after sunrise on a Friday morning.

The first pair: In the first *raka'ah*, *Surah 99 – Al-Zilzal* – is recited after *Al-Fatihah*, and in the second *raka'ah*, *Surah 100 –Al-Adiyat* – is recited after *Al-Fatihah*.

[Al-Zilzal – The Earthquake – Qur'an 99](#)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا 1}

When the earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion,

{وَأُخْرِجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَتْقَالَهَا 2}

And the earth throws up her burdens (from within),

{وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا } 3

And man cries (distressed): 'What is the matter with her?'

{يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا } 4

On that Day will she declare her tidings:

{بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا } 5

For that thy Lord will have given her inspiration.

{يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصُدُّرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّبُرُؤِ أَعْمَالِهِمْ } 6

On that Day will men proceed in companies sorted out, to be shown the deeds that they (had done).

{فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ } 7

Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it!

{وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ } 8

And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.

Al-Adiyat - The Chargers - Qur'an 100

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{وَالْعَادِيَاتِ ضَبْحًا } 1

By the (Steeds) that run, with panting (breath),

{فَالْمُورِيَاتِ قَدْحًا} 2

And strike sparks of fire,

{فَالْمُعِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا} 3

And push home the charge in the morning,

{فَأَثَرُنَ بِهِ نَفْعًا} 4

And raise the dust in clouds the while,

{فَوَسَطْنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا} 5

And penetrate forthwith into the midst (of the foe) en masse;-

{إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ} 6

Truly man is, to his Lord, ungrateful;

{وَإِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ ذَلِكَ لَشَهِيدٌ} 7

And to that (fact) he bears witness (by his deeds);

{وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ} 8

And violent is he in his love of wealth.

{أَفَلَا يَعْلَمُ إِذَا بُعْثِرَ مَا فِي الْقُبُورِ} 9

Does he not know, when that which is in the graves is scattered abroad

{وَحُصِّلَ مَا فِي الصُّدُورِ} 10

And that which is (locked up) in (human) breasts is made manifest-

{إِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ بِهِمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّخَبِيرٌ} 11

That their Lord had been Well-acquainted with them, (even to) that Day?

The second pair: In the first raka'ah, Surah 110 – *Al-Nasr* – is recited after *Al-Fatihah* and in the second raka'ah, Surah 112 – *Al-Ikhlās* – is recited after *Al-Fatihah*.

Al-Nasr – Victory – Qur'an 110

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ} 1

When comes the Help of Allah, and Victory,

{وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا} 2

And thou dost see the people enter Allah's Religion in crowds,

{فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا} 3

Celebrate the praises of thy Lord, and pray for His Forgiveness: For He is Oft-Returning (in Grace and Mercy).

Al-Tawhid – Monotheism – Also Called Al-Ikhlās – Sincerity – Qur'an 112

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ 1}

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only;

{اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ 2}

Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;

{لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ 3}

He begetteth not, nor is He begotten;

{وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ 4}

And there is none like unto Him.

In both pairs of *raka'at* the following is repeated – as outlined below: Translation

Allah is glorified and praised, there is no Divinity but Him, He is The Most Great.

Phonetic transliteration

'Subbana Allahi wal Hamdu lilahi wa La ilaha ilia Alahu wa Alluhu Akbar'.

15 times after recitation of the two *surahs*,

10 times during each *ruku*,

10 times while standing after *ruku*,

10 times during each *sajdah*,

10 times while sitting between the two *sajdahs*,

and,

10 times while sitting after the second *sajdah*.

The above glorification – *tasbih* – is thus recited 75 times in each *raka'ah*

– taking the total number in this prayer to 300.

- Shaykh Koleini reports, on the authority of Imam Jafar as-Sadiq that he taught one of his companions to recite the following supplication in the last *sajdah* of the fourth *raka'ah*, immediately after the completion of the ten *tasbih*.

صلاة الجعفر الطيار

سُبْحَانَ مَنْ لَيْسَ الْعِزُّ وَالْوَقَارُ، سُبْحَانَ مَنْ تَعَطَّفَ بِالْمَجْدِ وَتَكَرَّمَ بِهِ، سُبْحَانَ مَنْ لَا

يَنْبَغِي التَّسْبِيحُ إِلَّا لَهُ، سُبْحَانَ مَنْ أَحْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمُهُ، سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْمَنِّ وَالنِّعَمِ،

سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْقُدْرَةِ وَالْكَرَمِ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَعَاقِدِ الْعِزِّ مِنْ عَرْشِكَ، وَمُنْتَهَى

الرَّحْمَةِ مِنْ كِتَابِكَ، وَأَسْمِكَ الْأَعْظَمِ، وَكَلِمَاتِكَ التَّامَّةِ، الَّتِي تَمَّتْ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا،

صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ

Subhana man labisa alizza wal waqar, Subhana man tac'tafa bil majdi wa takarama bih, Subhana man la yanbaghi al tasbihu ilia lah, Subhana man ahsa kulla shayin 'ilmuh, Subhana thil manni wal niyam, Subhana thil qudrati wal karam. Allahuma ini asaluka bi ma'aqid etizz min 'arshika wa muntaha al rahmati min kitabika, wa ismikal 'azam wa kalimatik al tammah al-lati tamat sidqan wa adlan salli ala Muhammadin wa ahli baytihi waf'al bi ...

Glorified is the One of Honour and Dignity, Glorified is the Sole source of every bounty, Glorified is the One to whom glorification exclusively belongs, Glorified is the Omniscient One who encompasses all, Glorified is the Sole source of Power and Generosity. O Allah, I ask by the elements of Glory that uphold Your Throne, by Your abundant Mercy and Your Greatest Name to bestow Your Mercy and Blessing upon Muhammad (S) and his progeny and grant me ... [mention your individual wishes].

It is considered to be particularly meritorious to recite the above prayer in the Holy Shrine of Imam Ar-Ridha' (a.s.) – Alamah Majlisi quotes from Shaykh Husayn ibn Abdul Samad through his teachers that, if a visitor to the shrine of Imam Ar-Ridha' (a.s.) or other Imams recites the above prayer, there will be recorded for him many great rewards.

Mafitih-ul-Jinan, Keys of Heavens, translated by Murtaza Lakha, p. 520

The prayer for protection offered after Jumuah or Dhurr on a Friday

Shaykh Tusi reported from Imam Sadiq (a.s.), that if a person recites two *raka'at* on a Friday, after *Dhurr*, and in each, after *Al-Fatihah* recites Surah 112 – *Al-Ikhlās* – seven times, followed by the supplication below, protection from all afflictions is granted for the coming week, and that Allah will ensure they remain in the company of Muhammad (S) and Ibrahim (a.s.)

أعمال يوم الجمعة

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي حَشَوْهَا الْبَرَكَةُ وَعُمَارُهَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ مَعَ نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَأَبِينَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

Alliihuma ij alni min ahl aljannah al lati hashwuha al-barakah wa 'ummaruha al-malaikah ma'a nabiyna Muhammadin (S) wa abina Ibrahim (a.s.)

O Allah please place me in paradise that overflows with Your mercy and in the company of our Prophet Muhammad (S) and his forefather Ibrahim (a.s.).

Prayer offered to implore the Lord for rain

Although people do not need such prayers in those parts of the world in which there is seldom any shortage of water, many areas do suffer water shortage and drought.

The Prophet (S) taught us how we may implore the Lord for rainfall and recommended that several acts be associated with this two-raka"at prayer that is followed by an address.

- It is offered in the outskirts of cities, except in Makkah, where it is offered in *Masjid Al-Haram*.
- According to *ahadith* reported from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) it is better if Muslims fast for three days and offer this prayer on the third.
- When he offered this prayer, the Prophet put his cloak on 'inside-out', so that its right shoulder rested upon his left shoulder and vice-versa. When asked why this was so he said that it was to symbolize drought being overcome by abundance.
- It is recommended that the Imam face the *qiblah* and repeat '*Allahu Akbar*' 100 times, that he then turn his head to the right and repeat '*Subhana Allah*' 100 times and then to the left, to repeat '*La ilaha ilia Allah*' 100 times prior to facing the congregation and repeating the phrase '*Al Hamdu lilahi*' 100 times.

Thereafter, the Imam leads the prayer and delivers his address.

History records that during a time of severe drought, Imam Ali (a.s.) left the city in order to offer this prayer and deliver the following sermon:

Be aware, the earth that bears you and the sky that covers you are obedient to their Sustainer (Allah). They do not bestow their blessing out of pity for you or for any good from you, but do so because that is what they have been commanded to do and they merely obey that command.

Allah tries His creatures with regard to their evil deeds by decreasing fruits, holding back blessings and sealing treasures, so that those who wish to repent may, and those who were negligent may develop awareness. Allah Almighty has made the seeking of His forgiveness a means for pouring livelihoods and mercy upon people,

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَيَبِينْ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

'Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, truly He is the Oft-forgiving, He will send down upon you clouds of abundant rainfall and will provide help for your wealth and offspring' (Qur'an 71: 10–12).

'May Allah shower mercy upon those who repent and forsake sin. O Allah, we come from the shelters we have built while our children and beasts cry out for Your mercy, hope for the generosity of Your bounty and remain in fear of Your chastisement and retribution. Oh Allah, let us drink from your rainfall, do not forsake us and let the drought take our lives, do not punish us for what the foolish amongst us have committed.'³⁵

Oh Allah, we have come to complain about something that is not hidden from You. Severe troubles have forced us, famine has driven us, distress and need have reduced us to helplessness. Oh Allah, we beseech You not to send us back disappointed, not to make us return with downcast eyes and not to treat us according to our own deeds.

Oh Allah, please pour Your mercy, blessing and sustenance down upon us and let us enjoy rain: to quench our thirst; to produce green herbage and bring to life again that which has withered; to bring about the benefits of freshness, plenitude and ripened fruits. With rain our rivers may flow again, our fields will be irrigated, our plants will regain foliage and the price of food will plummet. You certainly have power over whatever You will.³⁶

Prayer offered during each of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah

Once in a lifetime pilgrimage to Makkah is obligatory for those who can afford it. However, those unable to go, and those who have already been but nevertheless yearn for the merits of pilgrimage, are

recommended to offer two *raka'at* – between the *Maghrib* and '*Isha*' prayers – during the first ten nights of *Dhul-Hijjah*. In both *raka'at*, after reading *Surah Al-Fatihah* and *Surah Al-Ikhlās* the following ayah is recited:

We called Musa into Our presence for 30 nights and kept him with Us a further 10 after that to make his stay total 40 nights. Musa said to his brother Harun,

اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ....

'... Take my place among my people, act appropriately and be cautious not to let mischief-maker influence you.' (*Qur'an 7:142*).

Prayers offered during the nights of the Holy Month of Ramadhan

It is highly recommended to combine the fast of Ramadhan with nightly prayer. According to authentic *ahadith* one should offer 1,000 voluntary *raka'at* over this month in the following manner:

Over the first 20 days offer 20 *raka'at* each night – eight after *Maghrib* and 12 after '*Isha*'.

Over the last ten days, offer 30 *raka'at* each night – 12 after *Maghrib* and 18 after '*Isha*'.

On the 19th, 21st, and 23rd offer 100 *raka'at* each night.

Important note:

The Prophet (S) only stipulated that 'obligatory' prayers be offered in congregation. The custom that was followed during his lifetime was for the voluntary prayers of the nights of Ramadhan to be offered alone by each individual – not in congregation. This practice was continued during Abu Bakr's period in office and, for the first year of his caliphate, 'Umar fasted over Ramadhan and offered his prayers in the same manner as the Prophet (S) and Abu Bakr had done before him.

However, in the 14th year of the Hijra, 'Umar and some of his companions entered the mosque in Madinah while those present were offering voluntary prayer – some bowing, some in prostration, some standing and others sitting. He felt displeased by the apparent disorder and was moved to stipulate that all those present offer voluntary prayers in congregation. He further demanded that this be done in all the mosques throughout his dominion. Such congregational prayers came to be known as *Tarawih*.

However, the error-free Imams of Ahl al-Bayt continue to follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (S) and decline this, and all other innovation.

Prayer of greeting offered after entering any mosque

It is recommended to offer two *raka'at* each time one enters a mosque but there are no references to any particular surahs being recited. Abu Dar reports that he entered the mosque while the Prophet (S) was there and he said,

'O Abu Dar, there is a greeting to be offered to the mosque'; when I asked him (S) what that was he (S) replied, 'To offer two *raka'at*.'³⁷

Prayer offered on the first night after a burial (Salat al-Wahshah)

On the first night after burial, fellow Muslims are recommended to offer two *raka'at* to comfort the soul of the deceased in its new surroundings.

The first *raka'ah*: *ayat* 2:255-7 – *Al-Kursi* – is recited after *Al-Fatihah*.

The second *raka'ah*: *Surah* 97 – *Al-Qadr* – is recited 10 times after *Al-Fatihah*.

After this, the request is made, 'O Lord, please bless the Prophet Muhammad (S) and his progeny (a.s.) and refer the benefit of this prayer to the grave of 'so and so' [the name of the deceased and her/his father].

Al-Baqarah – Qur'an 2- Verses 255-257

The frequently recited *ayat* – 255-257 – are jointly referred to as: 'Throne Ayat' – '*Ayat ul-Kursi*'

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ۚ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۚ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ
عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۚ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
{وَالْأَرْضَ ۚ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ {255}

Allah! There is no god but He, -the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا
{انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۚ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ} 256

Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى
{الظُّلُمَاتِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ} 257

Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the evil ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein (For ever).

Al-Qadr - Qur'an 97

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ} 1

We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power:

{وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ} 2

And what will explain to thee what the night of power is?

{لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ} 3

The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.

{تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ} 4

Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand:

{سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ} 5

Peace!... This until the rise of morn!

Prayer of ghufailah

The name *ghufailah* is derived from the Arabic word for heedlessness – *ghaflah* – which implies that most people are not aware of its merits.

It comprises two *raka'at* offered between the *Maghrib* and '*Isha'* prayers. In the first *raka'ah* after *al-Fatihah*: the ayat 21:87–88 are recited. It is evident that the recitation of these ayat is to relieve believers of their woes.³⁸

Al-Anbiya – The Prophets – Qur'an 21- Verses 87–88

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَىٰ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ
{الظَّالِمِينَ} 87

And remember Zun-nun, when he departed in wrath: He imagined that We had no power over him! But he cried through the depths of darkness, "There is no god but thou: glory to thee: I was indeed wrong!"

{فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ} 88

So We listened to him: and delivered him from distress: and thus do We deliver those who have faith.

In the second *raka'ah* after *al-Fatihah*: Qur'an 6:59 *Al-An'am*:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ

{الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَظْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ} 59

With Him are the keys of the unseen, the treasures that none knoweth but He. He knoweth whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf doth fall but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (inscribed) in a record clear (to those who can read).

After this, the hands are raised in *qunut* and the following is recited:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَفَاتِحِ الْغَيْبِ الَّتِي لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلِهِ وَأَنْ ---

Allahuma inni as'aluka bi mafatih al ghaib al-lati la ya lamuha illa ant an tusaliya 'ala Muhammadin wa alihi wa an ...

O Allah, I beseech you by your Keys to the treasures unseen, to bless Muhammad (S) and his progeny and to grant me..[After stating one's desires one continues] O Allah, You are my Guardian and Provider and know my desires, so I beseech you, in the names of Muhammad (S) and his progeny, to grant my request.

Prayer on the first day of each month

It is recommended to offer the following two rakaciit prayers at the start of each month.

The first *raka'ah*: Surah 112 –*Al-Tawhid* – is recited 30 times after *Al-Fatihah*.

The second *raka'ah*: Surah 97 – *Al-Qadr* – is recited 30 times after *Al-Fatihah*.

Al-Tawhid – Monotheism – Also Called Al-Ikhlās – Sincerity – Qur'an 112

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ} 1

Say: He is Allah, the One and Only;

{اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ} 2

Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;

{لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ} 3

He begetteth not, nor is He begotten;

{وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ} 4

And there is none like unto Him.

Al-Qadr - Qur'an 97

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ} 1

We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power:

{وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ} 2

And what will explain to thee what the night of power is?

{لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ} 3

The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.

{تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ} 4

Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand:

{سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ} 5

Peace!... This until the rise of morn!

In a narration from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) this offers excellent monthly protection.

Prayer offered on Id Al-Ghadir

'Id Al-Ghadir falls on the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah, the day that the Prophet Muhammad (S) announced that Allah had appointed 'Ali ibn Abu Talib (a.s.) to be his successor and the first Imam.

It is recommended to offer two *raka'at* half an hour prior to noon and to recite in each *raka'ah*: *Surah Al-Ikhlās* 10 times, *Ayat Al-Kursi* 10 times, and *Surah Al-Qadr* 10 times after the recital of *Surah Al-Fatihah*. It is reported from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that the merit of this prayer equates to the benefits of going on thousands of major and minor pilgrimages and that our desires for this world, or that of the world to come, will be granted.

Prayer for the fulfillment of specific desires

Despite Islamic guidance that every person is responsible for her/his own physical and worldly needs, Muslims are advised also to seek the Lord's help. Here are a few suggestions outlined by the Imams–

- To offer two *raka'at* in the great mosque in Kufa and in each *raka'ah*, to recite *Surah* 113, *Surah* 114, *Surah* 112, *Surah* 109, *Surah* 110, *Surah* 97 and *Surah* 87 – after *Surah Al-Fatihah*. Thereafter to recite the tasbeeh of Lady Fatimah (a.s.) – '*Allahu Akbar* 34 times, '*Al Hamdu li'lah*' 33 times and '*Subhana Allah*' 33 times – before asking for one's requests to be granted.
- Imam Ali (a.s.) ibn Al-Husayn advised a frail and financially straitened person to offer two *raka'at* – to follow that with Allah's praise and sending the Prophet (S) and his progeny blessings – after which to recite the last three ayat of *Surah* 59, the first six ayat of *Surah* 57, and ayat 26 and 27 of *Surah* 3.³⁹

Ayat 22-23- 24 of Surah 59 - Al-Hashr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ۚ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ۚ 22}

Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ۚ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ 23}}

Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ ۗ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۗ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
24}}

He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours). To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

[Ayat 1-6 of Surah 57 – Al-Hadid](#)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{سَبِّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ} 1

Whatever is in the heavens and on earth,- let it declare the Praises and Glory of Allah: for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

{لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ} 2

To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: It is He Who gives Life and Death; and He has Power over all things.

{هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ} 3

He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things.

{هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۗ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا ۗ وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ} 4

He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in Six Days, and is moreover firmly established

on the Throne (of Authority). He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allah sees well all that ye do.

{لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ} 5

To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: and all affairs are referred back to Allah.

{يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُؤَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ۖ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ} 6

He merges Night into Day, and He merges Day into Night; and He has full knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts.

Ayat 26 -27 of Surah 3 - Ali-Imran

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the most Merciful.

{قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكِ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ ۗ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ ۗ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ} 26

Say: "O Allah! Lord of Power (And Rule), Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippeth off power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: In Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power.

{تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ۖ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ۖ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ ۗ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ} 27

"Thou causeth the night to gain on the day, and thou causeth the day to gain on the night; Thou bringest the Living out of the dead, and Thou bringest the dead out of the Living; and Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest, without measure."

Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (a.s.) said that after reciting the above, Allah will grant your desires for this world and for the world to come.

It is reported from Imam Ali (a.s.) that a four-rakat prayer should be offered to invoke Allah to grant desires

In the first raka'ah after Al-Fatihah, to recite Qur'an 3:173 (Al-Imran) seven times – **'Allah is sufficient for us, He who protects us is Most Excellent.'**

{الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ} 173

Men said to them: "A great army is gathering against you": And frightened them: But it (only) increased their Faith: They said: "For us Allah sufficeth, and He is the best disposer of affairs."

In the second raka'ah after Al-Fatihah, to recite the following ayah of Al-Kahf seven times,

{وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ تَرَنَّا أَنَا أَقَلُّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا} 39

"Why didst thou not, as thou wentest into thy garden, say: 'Allah's will (be done)! There is no power but with Allah!' If thou dost see me less than thee in wealth and sons.. (Qur'an 18:39).

In the third rak'ah after Al-Fatihah, to recite the following ayah seven times,

{أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ} 87...

'There is no Divinity other than You – limitless Glory beyond imperfection. Truly I was among the unjust ..' (Qur'an 21:87).

In the fourth raka'ah after Al-Fatihah, to recite the following ayah seven times,

{وَأَفْوِضْ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ} 44

'I entrust my affairs to Allah, truly Allah watches over His servants' (Qur'an 40:44).

He said that after reciting the above, Allah will grant your desires for this world and for the world to come.

Prayer for istikhirah

The word *istikharah* – to petition Allah for guidance to all that is good – is derived from the Arabic root word *khair* – good. Human beings, created with intelligence and the ability to reason, are well equipped to evaluate the benefits and disadvantages of actions and make informed decisions. However, at

moments of stress, or when obliged to make decisions crucial to their future success, believers are advised to seek the guidance of Allah – Knower of All that is Hidden and Manifest – to direct them to the 'best' solution via *istikharah*.

- Scholars have dedicated chapters, even volumes, to this subject. The most famous work is the book of Al-Sayyid ibn Tawus (d. 664 AH) '*Fath al-Abwab*' (Opening the Doors) in which he records 20 different approaches to the seeking of *istikharah*.[40](#)
- Shaykh Saduq refers to Imam Sadiq (a.s.) saying, 'When one wishes to consult Allah, pray two *raka'at*, praise Allah, send blessings to the Prophet and his progeny and then say, "O Allah if this action is beneficial in terms of religion or worldly matters, please make it easy for me to undertake; if it is not, please erase it from my thoughts.'" The narrator asked the Imam which *surahs* should be recited in the *raka'at* and was told that both *Surah Al-Ikhlās* Qur'an 112 and *Surah Al-Kafiriun* Qur'an 109 should be recited in the knowledge that the Prophet (S) said that the recitation of *Al-Ikhlās* is equal to the recitation of one-third of the Qur'an.[41](#)

[1.](#) Sermon 199.

[2.](#) Maxim 136.

[3.](#) Wasa'ilal-Shi'ah, Vol.4, p.32.

[4.](#) Wasa'ilal-Shi'ah, Vol. 4, p.32.

[5.](#) Wasa'ilal-Shi'ah, Vol. 4, p.33.

[6.](#) R. A. Nicholson, Rumi Poet and Mystic, redrafted by A. J. Arbeny, Unwin Paperbacks 1978.

[7.](#) Sunan of Abu Dawud; Khasa'is of Nisa'i, p.30; Sahih of Muslim, Vol. 7, p. 122 ; Sunan of Tirmidhi, Part 2, p.307; Mustadrak of Hakim, Vol.3, pp. 109 & 148; Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol.3, pp. 14–17; Vol.4, pp.26 & 59; and Vol.5, pp.182 & 189.

[8.](#) Al-Hakim's Al-Mustadrak, Vol. 3, p.26.

[9.](#) Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Number 119.

[10.](#) Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Number 145.

[11.](#) Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 1, Number 143.

[12.](#) Al-Amini's Al-Ghadir, Vol. 1, pp. 14–18.

[13.](#) Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, Al-Razi, Vol. 27, p. 166.

[14.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam.

[15.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 93, p. 160.

[16.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 77, p. 199.

[17.](#) Ghurar al-Hikam.

[18.](#) Kanz al-Ummal, Tradition 1751.

[19.](#) Nahjul Balaghahh, Sermon No. 2.

[20.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. n.p.290.

[21.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. n,p. 74.

[22.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 84. p.260.

[23.](#) Al-Kafi, Vol. 3, pp.310–363

[24.](#) We may deduce that this was on the grounds that it would incur unnecessary water usage and encourage people to doubt that they had carried it out properly.

[25.](#) Prior to the availability of soaps, readily available leaves of the Lote tree were used as a detergent with camphor being employed to preserve the deceased from decay. Despite contemporary soaps and shampoos being equally efficient, in order to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (S) the consensus of jurists is to retain the use of these substances. This has the

secondary benefit of helping those who lack funds or live in remote areas.

[26.](#) ...eat and drink until dawn when the whiteness of day becomes distinct from the blackness of night. (Qur'an 2:187).

[27.](#) For example Qur'an 16:32.

[28.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol1, p.306; Sahih al-Muslim, Vol1, p.285; Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Vol1, p.362; Sunan al-Nissai, Vol 2, p.2; Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol 2, p. 148.

[29.](#) Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Vol. 1, p.358; Sunan abi Dawud, Vol. 1, p. 135.

[30.](#) Al-Sirah al-Halabiyah, Vol. 2, p.300.

[31.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 4, p.685.

[32.](#) According to the ahadith of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s.), Surah number 93 known as Al-Duha and Surah number 94 known as Al-Inshirah) are regarded, for the purposes of salat, to be a single surah. This too applies to Surahs 105 and 106.

[33.](#) The only prayers that do not include either ruku or sujud are those offered for the dead – Salat al-Janazah.

[34.](#) It is recommended for the qunut of Salat al-Witr, which is one single raka'ah of the voluntary midnight prayer, to ask Allah forgiveness for forty believers.

[35.](#) This is in reference to Qur'an 7:155 in which the Prophet Musa selected 70 men of his people to be appointed by the Lord, who in their supplication said, 'Will you destroy us for what the foolish amongst us have done?'

[36.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon 143.

[37.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 5, p.248.

[38.](#) When Yunus became angry that his people did not respond to his teaching, Allah tested his fidelity within the whale. When engulfed, he cried out to the Lord to confess that he should not have become angry and left his people despite their waywardness.

[39.](#) Many of Allah's Most Beautiful Names appear in these three groups of ayat. For a deeper understanding of these and the others refer to pp. 175–246, The Source of Islamic Spirituality, Islam in English Press 2004.

[40.](#) It is reported in a hadith of the Holy Prophet (S) that the paths to Allah Almighty are equivalent to the 'breath of all creatures'. This illustrates that there are a never-ending variety of ways in which to communicate with one's Lord.

[41.](#) Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, Vol. 8, p. 66.

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