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Prayers, Supplications

Directive for Prayers (Salat) with stress on the Morning (fajr) and Midnight (tahajjud) Prayers

Surah Al-Isra', 17:78-79

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

'Aqimis-Salaata li-duluu-kish-shamsi 'ilaa ghasaqil-layli wa qur-'aanal-Fajr; 'in-na qur'aanal-Fajri kaana mash-huudaa.
78. Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; surely the morning recitation is witnessed.

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَى أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

Wa minal-layli fa-tahaj-jad bihii naafilatal-lak: 'asaaa 'ay-yab-'athaka Rab-buka Maqaamam-Mah-muudaa!
79. And during a part of the night, pray tahajjud(as well) beyond what is incumbent on you; maybe your lord will raise you to a position of great glory.

In Hadith al Qudsi, Allah (swt) says:

"O Son of Adam! Do not miss the morning prayers; because all the things on which the sun shines will pray for the one who performs the prayer."

No excuse for refraining from daily Prayers (Salat)

Surah Ta – Ha, 20:132

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى

Wa'–mur 'ahlaka bis–Salaati wasta–bir 'alayhaa. Laa nas–'aluka rizqaa: Nahnu narzuquk. Wal–Aaqibatu lit–Taqwaa.
132. And enjoin prayer on thy followers, and adhere thou steadily unto it. (*And remember*) *We do not ask thee to provide subsistence for Us: it is We who provide sustenance for Thee. And the future belongs to the God–conscious.*

The first thing a believer would be questioned on the Day of Judgment would be about the Prescribed Compulsory Prayers, because for the offer of prayers (Salaat), one needs nothing besides his own self. If one cannot stand and pray, he may do it sitting. If that also be not possible, to do it lying, and if one cannot move his hands, he can do it even by signs. Under any circumstances none is exempted from the Prescribed Prayers excepting the ladies when they are under the usual terminal and delivery confinements.

Prescribed Prayers (Salat) at particular times

Surah An – Nisa, 4:103

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَاذْكُرُواْ اللّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِكُمْ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنتُمْ فَأَقِيمُواْ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا

Fa–'izaa qazay–tamus–Salaata faz–kurul–laaha qiyaa–manw–wa qu–'uudanw–wa 'alaa junuubikum. Fa–izat–ma'–nantum fa–'aqii–mus–Salaah: 'in–nas–Salaata kaanat 'alal–Mu'–miniina kitaabam–mawquutaa.
103. And when you have finished your prayer, remember
Verily, for all believers prayer is indeed a sacred duty linked to particular times (*of the day*).

Surah Hud, 11:114

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلَفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَى لِلذَّاكِرِينَ

Wa 'aqi–mis–Salaata tarafa–yin–nahaari wa zulafam–minal–layl: 'in–nal hasanaati yuz–hibnas–say–yi–'aat: zaalika zikraa liz–zaa–kiriin:
114. And be constant in praying at the beginning and the end of the day, as well as during the early

watches of the night: for, verily, good deeds drive away evil deeds: this is a reminder to all who bear (*God*) *in mind.*

Surah al-Isra', 17:78

أَقِمِ الصَّلاَةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا

' Aqimis - Salaata li-duluuu-kish-shamsi 'ilaa ghasaqil-layli wa qur-'aanal-Fajr; 'in-na qur-'aanal-Fijri kaana mash-huu-daa.
78. Keep up prayer (*regular*) *from the time the sun has passed its zenith till the darkness of the night, and the recital at the morn; verily the recital at the morn is witnessed*[1].

These verses gives the ordinance about the five times of the prescribed daily prayers. This is another clear evidence about the fallacy in the claim of *'Hasbuna Kitaballah'*. The verse only gives the timing of the prayers while the details as to how they should be conducted and with what recitals of the passages of the Holy Qur'an, i.e. the wording of the prayers, we have to get from the Holy Prophet (S). This fact clearly indicates that any heavenly scripture, particularly the Holy Qur'an, independent by itself without the guidance from the Apostle of God, can never be sufficient to guide any one right.

It was only in view of the above fact , the Book of God was left by the Holy Prophet (S) with those exactly like him in purity and knowledge, and it was declared:

"I leave behind me amidst you Two great things, the 'Book of God' (The Holy Qur'an) and my Ahlul-Bayt (a) (i.e. the members of the Holy Family). Should you be attached to these Two, never, never shall you be misled after me, for verily these Two will never be separated from each other until they meet me at the Spring of Kawthar."

The offering of the five daily prayers in Islam is of the greatest importance and it is the first and the foremost prescribed daily duty of every Muslim.

The Holy Prophet (S) said

"that the likeness of the prescribed five daily prayers is that of a river flowing at every door and he who bathes five times in it (i.e. offers prayers regularly five times every day) no dirt of any sin will remain on him."

According to Imam Ali (a) this verse is the most hope-giving verse in the Holy Qur'an for sinners.

While the Shia acknowledge the *Five Daily Prayers*, they believe that it is acceptable to pray them in *Three distinct Times*, and not five. The Fajr (morning) prayers is at the same time as their Sunni brothers do, however, the Shia usually wait 10 minutes before they consider it to be time for Fajr. They pray the noon and the afternoon prayer one after the another. And similarly they pray the sunset and the night

prayer too, one after the other (without a lot of delay between the two).

No doubt, it is better to pray in their own specific time (close to what Sunnis do), but it is not necessary. The prayers in all cases are *Distinct* and separate, and it is not (as commonly misunderstood) that the Shia pray eight rakat of Zuhr and Asr straight or seven rakat of Maghrib and Isha straight, as part of one prayer. It is the same regular form of prayer, but combines into one **Time** and **Not one Prayer**.

It should also be noted that the Sunni brothers agree to the combining of prayers in the case of Rain, Travel, Fear or other emergencies. The exception among them are the Hanifites (followers of Imam Abu Hanifa) who contend that you cannot combine the prayers at any time, not even if you are travelling. This clearly violated the other Sunni schools of thought. The Maliki's, Shafeei's, and the Hanbali's all agree to the combining of prayers when one is travelling, but are in conflict on other times. The Shia believe that one can combine the prayers anytime without any cause of fear, rain or whatever. Nonetheless, the Shia also contend that they can be prayed separately too.

Furthermore, Allah (swt) continually reminds us in the Qur'an that Islam was revealed to make your life easier, not more difficult.

Another area of difference with respect to prayers (*Salat*) between the Shia and Sunni brothers are that the Shia will only pray on natural rock or ground (if the ground has nothing planted in it which is edible and/ or something of which clothes can be made which are to be worn by humans), rugs made of dry grass like material or rugs made of palm tree leaves. A Shia will not pray on regular carpet or cement because the ingredients that they are made up of are not known.

They may contain material which are haram to prostrate one's head on. Secondly the prostration on the ground is more humble and modest and is a form of eliminating pride, arrogance and flamboyance. While the Shia prefer to use the mud of Karbala, where their 3rd Imam Hussain (a) was slaughtered by Yazid's army, it is not a mandatory requirement – the mud can be from anyplace on Earth as long it is clean and as mentioned earlier, is not planted edible foods or material which can be made into clothe that humans can wear.

Sahil al-Bukhari V2, page 256, in the chapter of "Retreating to Prayer in the last ten days (of Ramadhan)" narrates at the end of a long tradition that when the Holy Prophet (S) raised his head from prayer, the companions saw marks of mud and water on his forehead. This indicates that he prayed on the ground.

Sahih Muslim V1, page 168, narrates that the Holy Prophet (S) had a special rug made of Palm tree leaves that he used to pray on.

Salat ordained along with patience in adversity

Surah Qaf, 50 :39-40

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ

Fasbir ‘alaa maa yaquuluuna wa sab-bih bi-Hamdi Rab-bika qabla tuluu-‘ish-shamsi wa qabla tuluu‘ish-shamsi wa qablal-ghuruub,-
39. Hence, (O believer), bear thou with patience whatever they may say, and extol thy Sustainer's limitless glory and praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting;

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ

Wa minal-layli fasab-bih-hu wa ’ad-baaras-sujuud.
40. and in the night, too, extol His glory, and at every prayer's end.

Common supplication in Qunoot of Prayer

Surah Baqarah, 2:201

وِمِنْهُم مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Wa minhum - man - yaquulu Rab-banaaa ‘aatinaa fid-duniya hasanatanw-wa qinaa azaaban-Naar.
201. But there are among them such as pray, "O our Sustainer ! Grant us good in this world and good in the life to come (hereafter), and keep us safe from suffering through the fire"

Those who pray either for the present life only or only for the hereafter show that they feel themselves secure in the life for which they do not pray for, without the help of God. Hence the prayer of a true or a sincere believer must be for both the life here and also for the hereafter.

Recitation of "Bismillah" and seeking refuge from Satan, before reciting the Qur'an

Surah An – Nahl, 16:98-100

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

Fa–'izaa qara'–tal–Qur–'aana fasta–'iz bil–laahi minash–Shay–taanir–Rajiim.
98. Now whenever thou happen to read this Qur'an, seek refuge with God from Satan, the accursed.

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

'In–nahuu laysa lahuu sultaanun 'alal–laziina 'aamanuu wa 'alaa Rab–bihim yatawak–kaluun.
99. Behold, he has no power over those who have attained to faith and in their Sustainer place their trust:

إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُم بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ

'In–namaa sultaa–nuhuu 'alal–laziina yata–wal–lau nahuu wal–laziina hum–bihii mushrikuun.
100. he has power only over those who are willing to follow him, and who (*thus*) *ascribe to him a share in God's divinity.*

The Sustainer's assurance to accept the prayer of all who call upon Him sincerely

Surah Ghafir, 40 :60

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

Wa qaa–la Rab–bukumud–'uuniii as–tajib lakum; In–nal laziina yastakbiruuna 'an ibaa–datii sa–yad–khuluu–na Jahan–nama daakhiriin.
60. But your Sustainer says: "Call unto Me, (*and*) *I shall respond to you! Verily, they who are too proud to worship Me will enter hell, abased!"*

This indicates that no prayer from man is without the response from God. The response may be in complete accord to what man has prayed for or it may be a blessing in other shape and form depending upon, and in God's knowledge what is advantageous to the supplicant. The seventh Imam, Imam Musa al–Kadhim (a) has said that *'Dua'* itself is one of the best forms of devotion to God and no devotion will be left without reward. There is nothing more loved by God than man's asking and beseeching Him for His bounties and there is nothing which is disliked by God more than the one who refrains from such devotion and does not beseech for His bounties, even for the minute thing in life or the hereafter.

In Hadith al Qudsi, Allah (swt) says:

"Oh! Son of Adam! Be patient and be humble and I will elevate you.

Thank Me and I will increase your bounties.
Seek pardon from Me, and I will forgive you.
Call upon Me, and I will answer you.
Ask from Me, and I will provide for you.
Give alms in My way, and I will bless your bounties.
Be kind towards your relatives, and I will add to your age by delaying death.
Seek from Me good health as long as you are healthy.
Seek safety from Me when you are alone.
Seek sincerity in purity.
Seek piety in repentance (Tawba).
Seek worship in knowledge."

Assurance of acceptance from Allah when asked from Him through the Medium of Dua

Surah Baqarah, 2:186

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُواْ لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُواْ بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

Wa 'izaa sa–'alaka 'ibaadii 'an–nil fa–'innii Qariib: 'ujiibu da'–watad–daa–'i 'izaa da–'aani fal–yastajiibuu lii wasyu' – minuu bii la–allahum yar–shuduun.
186. And if My servants ask thee about Me – behold, I am near ; I respond to the call of him who calls, whenever he call unto Me: let them, then, respond unto Me, and believe in Me, so that they might follow the right way.

It is clearly stated in this verse that a devout supplicant is heard or responded to, by God. The words of the Verse clearly indicate the acceptance of a sincere prayer, as promised by God. Acceptance of a prayer referred to here does not mean immediate fulfilment or the grant of whatever sought for. Only that which is best in the infinite wisdom of the All–Merciful Lord, for the individual, is done.

Reverting to prayer or the efficacy of prayer, it does not at all exclude the necessity on the part of the Supplicant, of the use of the necessary external means of achieving the desired object.

The connection between the practical means and prayer is indissoluble. Any sincere seeker of an object will naturally look for the practical means to achieve it. In the search for the means one must endeavour as best as possible for him, employing all his native faculties, devoting the necessary time and attention to achieve the desired object. When one is in search for the means open and hidden, he naturally desires guidance from higher powers from which nothing is hidden and for which nothing is impossible or difficult.

Prayer blesses the supplicant by granting him the guidance necessary for the realization of the desire. With the sincerity of intention, and fullness of effort one seeks help from the Almighty Lord, the seeker will naturally be granted his desires if in the view of the All-Merciful, All-Wise Lord the realization of that object also be profitable to the seeker.

"Therefore, call upon Allah, being sincere to Him in religion, through averse be the disbelievers." **Surah al-Ghaafir, 40:14**

"Call upon your Lord humbly and secretly; surely He loves not those who exceed the limit. And call on Him fearing and hoping; surely, the mercy of Allah is near to those who do good." **Surah al-A'araf, 7:55-56**

It is narrated in Hadith al Qudsi, wherein Allah (swt) says:

" O' Musa! Ask from Me all that you need, even fodder for your goat and salt for your dough."

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said:

"Calling (upon Allah) is better than reciting the Qur'an, because Allah has said, "Say, My Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayers."

He also has said,

"Allah (swt) informed one of his prophets in a revelation: 'By My Power and Dignity! Verily I shall change into despair the hope of everyone who hoped from other than Me, and I shall remove him from My relief and bounty. Does my servant put his hope in other than Me in hardships, while hardships are in My hand; And does He expect anything from other than Me, while I am Self-sufficient, the Munificent? In My hands are the keys of the doors, while they are closed; and ***My door is open for the one who call on Me."***

He has also said:

"Resort to Allah (swt) in your needs; and seek refuge in Him in your misfortunes; and humiliate yourselves before Him and beseech Him, because, verily, supplication is the essence of worship."

Imam Ali (a) wrote in his will to his son Imam Hussein (a):

"Then He placed the keys of His treasures in your hands in the sense that He allowed you to ask Him. Therefore, whenever you wish, you may get the doors of His bounties opened with prayer. Delay in acceptance of the prayer should not disappoint you, because the granting (of prayer) in according to the measure of (your) intention."

Imam al-Baqir (a) has said:

“A servant does not extend his hand towards Allah (swt), but that Allah (swt) is ashamed to return it empty. He puts in it from His bounty and mercy whatever He wishes. So, when one calls (upon Allah (swt)), he should not return his hand until he wipes it on his head and face.”

The Messenger of Allah (S) said to Abu Dharr:

“ O Abu Dharr! Should I not teach you some words by which Allah (swt) will benefit you? Guard (the commands of) Allah (swt), (and) Allah (swt) will guard you. Keep (the remembrance of) Allah (swt), (and) you will find His before you. Make the acquaintance of Allah (swt) in opulence (i.e. prosperity), He will know you in hardship. And when you ask, ask from Allah (swt); and when you seek help, seek help from Allah (swt), and if all the creatures together strived to benefit you with what Allah (swt) did not write for you, they would not be able to do so.”

Supplication (Dua) recited by Prophet Sulayman (a)

Surah An – Naml, 27:19

فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

Fatabas–sama zaahikam–min–qawliha wa qaala Rab–bi ’awzi‘–niii’ an ’ashkuru ni‘matakal–latiii ’an–‘amta ‘alay–ya wa ‘alaa waaliday–ya wa ’an ’a‘mala saalihan–tarzaahu wa ‘ad–khilnii bi–Rahmatika fii ‘ibaadikas–saalihiin.
19. Thereupon (*Solomon*) *smiled joyously at her words and said: “O my Sustainer! inspire me so that I may forever be grateful for those blessings of thine with which Thou hast graced me and my parents, and that I may do what is right* (*in a manner*) *that will please Thee; and include me, by Thy grace, among Thy righteous servants!”.*

Advised to mention “If Allah wills (Insha Allah)” before intending to do any deed

Surah Al – Kahf, 18:23–24

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِشَيْءٍ إِنِّي فَاعِلٌ ذَلِكَ غَدًا

Wa laa taquu lan–na li shai–in in–nii faa–‘ilun zaalika ghadan.
23. And never say about anything , “Behold, I shall do this tomorrow,”

إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَاذْكُر رَّبَّكَ إِذَا نَسِيتَ وَقُلْ عَسَى أَن يَهْدِيَنِ رَبِّي لِأَقْرَبَ مِنْ هَذَا رَشَدًا

’Il-laaa ’ay-yashaaa - ’al-laah! Wazkur-Rab-baka ’izaa nasii-ta wa qul ‘asaaa ’ay-yah-diyani Rab-bii li-’aqraba min haazaa rashadaa.
24. without adding, “if God so wills.” And if Thou shouldst forget (*thyself at the time, and become aware of it later*),*call thy Sustainer to mind and say: “I pray that my Sustainer guide me , even closer than this, to a consciousness of what is right!”*

Note the extent of dependence on God’s Will, Islam demands of every true believer; for when one promises to do a thing he is not to depend upon his own will or ability but subject his will and ability to the Will of the Lord and say - ‘If God wills’

It is a general directive that man should never feel confident of his ability when he decides to do anything in future. However strong may be his will-power and ability, he is nothing before God’s Will and Ability.

1. Allah (swt) mentions in the Holy Qur’an in Surah al-Israa, 17:78 three and not five different occasions for prayers, i.e. Sun’s decline, Darkness of the Night, and the Morning.

Ibn Abbas, one of the most famous narrators, has quoted a Hadith of our Holy Prophet (S) which is written in “Muwatta” of Malik (Imam of Maliki sect) Vol.1, page 161:

“The Holy Prophet (S) prayed Zuhr and Asr in combination and Maghrib and Isha in combination without a reason for fear or travel.”

The same is quoted in Sahih Muslim, English version, chapter CCL, Tradition # 1515 in the following words:

“ The messenger of Allah (S) observed the noon and the afternoon prayers together, and the sunset and Isha prayers together without being in a state of fear or in a state of journey.”

Another quote by the same authority in Sahih Muslim, English version, Chapter CCL, Tradition # 1520 reports the following : Ibn Abbas reported that the messenger of Allah (S) combined the noon prayer with the afternoon prayer and the sunset prayer with the Isha prayer in Medina without being in a state of danger or rainfall.
And in the hadith transmitted by Waki (the words are):
“I said to Ibn Abbas: What prompted him to do that? He said: So that his (Prophet’s) Ummah should not be put to (unnecessary) hardship.”
Other Traditions are #1523-1524-1516-1522 in Sahih Muslim.

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