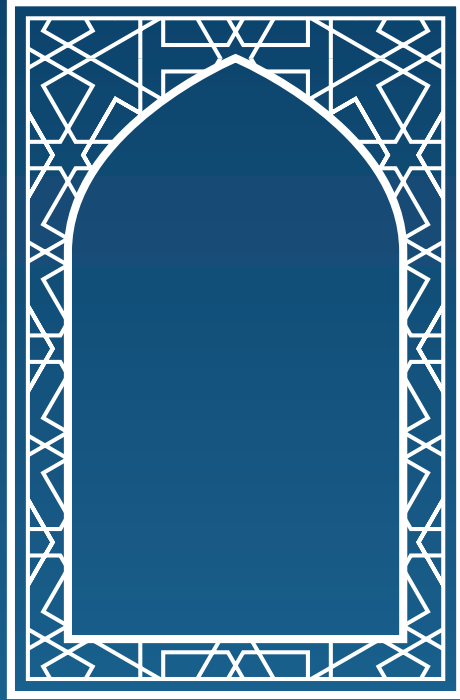


TASTE THE
SWEETNESS OF



SALAH

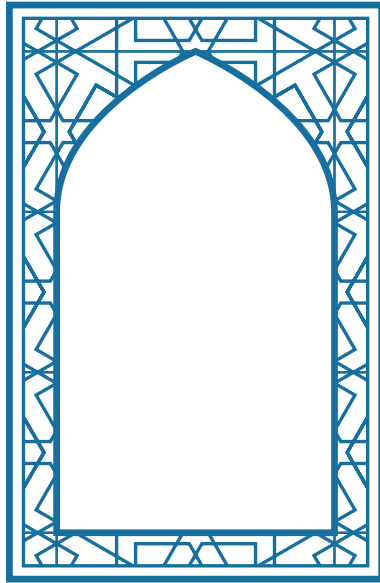
How to Attain Khushū' & Enjoy Your Ṣalāh



Life With Allah

الحياة مع الله

TASTE THE
SWEETNESS OF



SALAH

How to Attain Khushū' & Enjoy Your Ṣalāh

First Edition

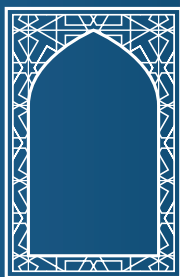
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾ ...

“Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their ṣalāh...” (23:1-2).

“My utmost joy has been put in ṣalāh”

(The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Nasā’ī)



**“Stand O Bilal (and say the call to prayer),
and bring us comfort through ṣalāh!”**

(The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Abū Dāwūd)



ABOUT UMMAH WELFARE TRUST

Recent decades have seen this final Ummah encounter unprecedented trials and calamities. Millions who have taken Allah ﷻ as their Lord and His Messenger ﷺ as their guide have suffered and perished amidst continuous wars, natural disasters and enforced poverty.

Ummah Welfare Trust, a UK-based Islamic charity that was founded in 2001, has strived to fulfil the rights of those in need by providing them assistance in areas of nutrition, education, health, shelter, income and spiritual well-being.

Alhamdulillah, donors' contributions have enabled the charity to help over 30 million of our brothers and sisters in the past two decades. May their Sadaqah increase their provisions, repel oncoming evils, and be a shade for them on the Day of Judgement.

Our Beloved Messenger ﷺ was indeed the greatest of people in giving charity. He never considered anything too much or too little to give. Attachment to this world was made insignificant to him and he called our Ummah to faith, virtue and success in the afterlife.

For this reason, Ummah Welfare Trust has increased its focus in recent years on da'wah and Islamic revivalism. Alhamdulillah, across the Ummah, the charity has increased support to Islamic schools, expanded the construction of masjids, and extended assistance to Islamic teachers and students.

By Allah's permission, 'Life with Allah' is the latest effort in which the charity hopes to revive the hearts of the believers and, in turn, the condition of the Ummah. May Allah ﷻ strengthen it and accept it from us all.



ABOUT LIFE WITH ALLAH

Life With Allah is a da'wah initiative of Ummah Welfare Trust which aims to connect the creation to The Creator.

Our goal is to instil the love and ma'rifah (deep knowledge) of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ in ourselves, our families and the wider Ummah.

We envision an Ummah that is connected to the Book of Allah; that savours the sweetness of īmān and worship; and that worships Allah with baṣīrah (sure knowledge and insight).

We hope to strengthen our īmān and nurture the īmān of our upcoming generations, enabling them to remain steadfast in this era of trials.

Our Areas of Focus

- Knowing Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ
- The journey of the Hereafter
- The Actions and Diseases of the Heart
- Tasting the sweetness of Ṣalāh
- Connecting deeply with the Qur'ān
- Implementing the Sunnah Dhikr & Du'ā' in our daily lives
- Understanding the inner dimensions of Ramaḍān and Ḥajj

What We Do

- Produce and publish books and pamphlets (print and digital)
- Distribute banners and posters for masjids
- Share daily reminders via social media
- Develop educational resources
- Provide authentic Islamic content through our website and app

All of our print and digital material is free and available to all.

CONTENTS

Introduction	8
Pre-Reading Questions	10

CHAPTER 1: KHUSHŪ' : THE KEY TO ṢALĀH 12

Allah ﷻ wants you to give your heart to Him	13
What is khushū' ?	17
The importance of khushū' in ṣalāh	21
Is it not enough that I pray five times a day?	24
The virtues of khushū'	25
The benefits of khushū' in ṣalāh	26
Ṣalāh with khushū': pure joy & comfort	30
The ṣalāh and khushū' of the Prophet ﷺ	32
In which category do you belong?	35
Hypocritical khushū'	36
Why do we lack khushū' ?	37
Chapter 1 Review & Reflect	42

CHAPTER 2: HOW TO DEVELOP KHUSHŪ' : 10 STEPS BEFORE ṢALĀH 44

1. Appreciate the importance of ṣalāh	45
2. Attain the ma'rifah (deep knowledge and awareness) of Allah ﷻ	48
3. Stop sinning and safeguard your eyes, tongue and heart	54
4. Soften your heart	56
5. Increase your time in private worship	59
6. Persistently ask Allah ﷻ for khushū' & do not give up	61
7. Act upon the etiquettes of going to the maṣjid and respond to the adhān	63
8. Pray in the congregation & do not delay	69
9. Be punctual with your sunnah prayers	71
10. Eliminate distractions	72
Chapter 2 Review & Reflect	76

CHAPTER 3: HOW TO DEVELOP KHUSHŪ' : 10 STEPS DURING ṢALĀH 78

1. Fight Shayṭān and his whispers	79
2. Understand the meaning & loftiness of what you are saying	82
3. Vary the adhkār and sūrahs you recite	85

4. Reflect and interact with the Qur'ān	87
5. Recite the Qur'ān slowly and beautifully	94
6. Be calm and lengthen your ṣalāh	97
7. Remember death and the hereafter in and outside ṣalāh	100
8. Always be mindful that you are talking to Allah and that He is responding to you	102
9. Bring your heart to ṣalāh: love, hope and fear	104
10. The secret of ṣalāh: focus your heart fully on Him	110
Chapter 3 Review & Reflect	113

CHAPTER 4: A JOURNEY THROUGH ṢALĀH

116

Attending the Court of the Almighty	117
Wuḍū'	119
Facing the qiblah and raising the hands	123
Takbīr	124
Qiyām (Standing)	126
Istiftāḥ (Opening Du'ā')	128
Isti'ādah	132
Basmalah	134
Sūrah al-Fātiḥah	135
Reciting Qur'ān	152
Rukū'	153
Practical tips on how to memorise the adhkār of ṣalāh	158
Standing up from rukū'	159
Sujūd	162
The adhkār of sujūd	167
Sajdah al-tilāwah	169
Between the two sajdahs	170
Second sajdah	171
Tashahhud	171
Ṣalawāt on the Prophet ﷺ	175
Du'ā'	177
Salām: the end of an epic journey	181
Qunūt	184
Adhkār after ṣalāh	185
Chapter 4 Review & Reflect	190

A JOURNEY THROUGH ṢALĀH: A SUMMARY

192



INTRODUCTION

All praise and thanks are to Allah ﷻ, who blessed us with Islam and īmān, guided us to the truth, and granted us the gift of ṣalāh. May His peace and blessings envelop His Chosen Messenger who undertook the magnificent journey to the heavens to receive this exquisite gift: Muḥammad b. ‘Abdillāh ﷺ.

As the second of the five pillars of Islam, ṣalāh is one of the greatest acts of worship. It is an act in which the slave shuts off the world around him to converse directly with Allah ﷻ, displaying his complete servitude (*‘ubūdiyyah*) to Him. Ṣalāh was the sunnah of every Prophet through which they honoured Allah ﷻ and sought His assistance. It is one of the best ways to remember Him, become close to Him, and erase our many sins. It is also Islam’s criterion, distinguishing the believers from the disbelievers, and it is a *‘nūr’* (light) that will come to our rescue in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection.

Our beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ described ṣalāh as the ‘joy’ of his life. Yet sadly, many of us today consider the same ṣalāh an inconvenience. Instead of ‘wanting’ to pray, we feel like we ‘have’ to pray.

How then can we become like our beloved Prophet ﷺ and learn to experience a similar joy? How can we derive peace and serenity in and from our ṣalāh? How can we make ṣalāh the lifeline that it is, helping us overcome the trials and uncertainties that the Ummah is facing? And how can we train ourselves to perform this lofty act with complete humility and concentration (*khushū*)?

Taste the Sweetness of Salah is a humble attempt to answer these questions. With Allah’s permission, it offers a guide on how to immerse yourself in your ṣalāh; to begin tasting its sweetness and joy, to appreciate its true meanings, and to reap its endless fruits.

The book has been compiled in a simple format, in order to make the writings of our luminous scholars - particularly Imām Ibn al-Qayyim رحمہ اللہ and Imām al-Ghazālī رحمہ اللہ - accessible to a wider audience. With its focus on the spiritual elements of ṣalāh (and not its legal rulings), we pray that it will benefit every believer, regardless of where they are in their spiritual journey.

The first chapter defines khushū' and explores its significance in our lives. The second chapter describes what we can do outside of ṣalāh in order to gain khushū'. This is followed by a chapter elaborating on what we can do within ṣalāh to attain khushū'. The fourth and last chapter then describes the journey through ṣalāh. It explores the significance of each posture along with the different *adhkār* (the remembrances and du'ās inside ṣalāh). The book is then summarised in its conclusion, recapping on the whole journey of ṣalāh. Reflect and review questions have been added at the end of the chapters to make the reading experience more meaningful and interactive.

We pray to Allah *al-Mannān* (the Great Bestower), to bless us with continuous khushū' both in and outside of ṣalāh. We seek the forgiveness of Allah ﷻ, the Most Merciful, for our shortcomings in this publication. We pray that He makes our ṣalāh a means for us to experience the joy of conversing with Him in this world as though we can see Him, and subsequently see Him in the Abode of Peace. Āmīn.

Sha'bān 1442 AH
April 2021



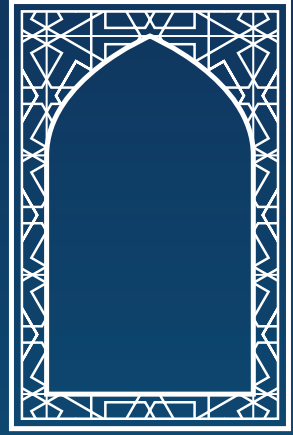
Life With Allah
Connecting to The Creator



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

Before you start reading this book, take some time out to ponder on the following questions. Jot down your answers, so that you can look back and reflect on your answers.

- 1 What is your purpose in life?
- 2 What is the first word that comes to your mind when you think of ṣalāh?
- 3 What does ṣalāh mean to you?
- 4 Write down three words/phrases which describe how you feel about the state of your ṣalāh.
- 5 How would you describe your 'ideal' ṣalāh?
- 6 What does the word khushū' mean to you?



KHUSHŪ':
THE KEY TO ṢALĀH



ALLAH ﷻ WANTS YOU TO GIVE YOUR HEART TO HIM

Why am I here? Where am I going? What is my purpose in life?

At certain stages in your life, these questions may have occupied your thoughts. Allah ﷻ says, “I did not create jinn and men except so that they worship Me” (51:56). Thus, if there is one word that would capture the purpose of our life, it is *‘ibādah*.

‘Ibādah, often translated as 'worship', is a comprehensive term for every action and utterance that Allah ﷻ loves and is pleased with.

‘Ibādah consists of:

- 1 Actions of the limbs, or physical acts of worship.
- 2 Actions of the heart, or inner acts of worship. These include: firm belief (*īmān*), knowledge of Allah (*ma‘rifah*), sincerity (*ikhhlās*), piety and mindfulness (*taqwā*), trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), hope (*rajā*), fear (*khawf*), gratitude (*shukr*), patience (*ṣabr*), love (*ḥubb*), yearning for Allah (*shawq*) and certainty (*yaqīn*).

Every act of worship in Islam consists of both an outer manifestation ('action of the limb') and an inner reality ('action of the heart'), which is its essence and core.

The outer manifestation of ṣalāh consists of rukū' and sujūd, whilst its essence is khushū'.

The outer manifestation of fasting is to stay away from anything that invalidates the fast, whilst its essence is taqwā.

The outer manifestation of ḥajj consists of ṭawāf, standing in 'Arafah and the pelting, whilst its essence is to honour the symbols of Allah ﷻ.

The outer manifestation of du‘ā’ is to raise the hands and utter words, whilst its essence is humility and an utmost need for Allah ﷻ.

The outer manifestation of dhikr is to utter Subhānallāh, Alḥamdulillāh, Allāhu Akbar etc. whilst its essence is loving, fearing and having hope in Allah ﷻ; and contemplation upon His creation and blessings.

Whilst we often focus on the outer and physical acts of worship, we often neglect the inner dimensions and spiritual elements of these same acts. In other words, we do not pay enough attention to our hearts.

Imām al-Ghazālī رحمه الله explains the inner reality of worship and the centrality of the heart: “The honour and excellence of the human being, by which he surpasses all other creatures, is his ability for knowing Allah ﷻ. Knowing Allah ﷻ is the human’s beauty, perfection and glory in this world; and his provision for the hereafter. He is prepared for such knowledge only through his heart, and not through any other organ. For it is the heart that knows Allah, works for Allah, strives towards Allah, and draws near to Him. In contrast, all the other organs are mere subordinates and instruments that are employed by the heart ... For it is the heart that is accepted by Allah when it is free from everything except Him. And it is veiled from Him when it becomes immersed in other than Him ... Thus, knowledge of the heart and the reality of its qualities is the root of religion and the foundation of the path of the seekers.”

“There is no soundness in the hearts until the knowledge of Allah (ma‘rifah), His greatness, His love, fear of Him, awe of Him, hope in Him and reliance on Him are established in them and they are full of that. This is the reality of tawḥīd and it is the essence of the saying, ‘There is no god worthy of worship except Allah.’”

- Ibn Rajab رحمه الله

The Deen-Race: What makes one person superior to another?

A person’s superiority to another is determined by the actions of his heart. Allah said, “The noblest amongst you in Allah’s sight is the one with the most *taqwā*” (49:13).

Taqwā is to protect yourself from Allah's wrath and punishment by avoiding His prohibitions and implementing His commands. *Taqwā* is not restricted to the physical acts. Allah ﷻ says, "Whoever honours the symbols of Allah – indeed, it is from the *taqwā* of hearts" (22:32). Similarly, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*Taqwā* is here, *taqwā* is here, *taqwā* is here," whilst pointing to his chest (Muslim). The believer therefore journeys to Allah ﷻ through his heart, and not just his body.

ʿAbdullāh b. Masʿūd ؓ described the Companions ؓ as the best of this ummah with the 'most virtuous hearts.' Bakr al-Muzanī ؓ said, "Abū Bakr ؓ did not surpass others because of an abundance of fasting and ṣalāh. Rather, he surpassed them because of something that settled in his heart."

Ibn Taymiyyah ؒ said, "Actions surpass each other in proportion to the *īmān* and *ikhhlāṣ* (sincerity) of the hearts. There may be two men in the same row of prayer, yet the difference between their prayers is like the distance between the heavens and the earth." Similarly, two individuals may give in charity; one giving £1,000, while the other only gives £10. However, the reward of the second individual may be far greater due to his sincerity. It is for this reason that ʿAbdullāh b. al-Mubārak ؓ said, "How many a small act is elevated by an intention, and how many a great act is diminished by an intention."

A Heart Attached to Allah ﷻ: An Early Paradise

“Truly there is a paradise in this world. Whoever does not enter it, will not enter the Paradise of the hereafter.”

- Ibn Taymiyyah ؒ

The 'paradise in this world' refers to the heart that is filled with bliss, contentment and pleasure. This state is only possible when the heart becomes deeply acquainted with Allah ﷻ, loves Him, turns to Him ﷻ and relies on Him alone. It attains contentment by remembering Him, being alone with Him and attaining closeness to Him. It yearns to meet Him and its greatest desire is to see Him.

Mālik b. Dīnār ؓ lamented, "The people of the world left the world without having experienced its greatest delight." When he was asked, "What is its greatest delight?", he replied, "The *ma'rifah* (knowledge) of Allah ﷻ."

It is these actions of the heart that will bring you true joy. Once you are blessed with them, you will realise that no other blessing can compare. You will experience the ‘sweetness’ of worship, and your heart will overflow with happiness and contentment. You will carry this wherever you go and it will fortify you against whatever you encounter.

A life in which your heart is attached to Allah ﷻ is truly special. A saint of Allah said, “There are times when I say: if the people of Paradise have anything like this, then how blissful must their lives be!” Another stated, “There are times when the heart bursts in joy (out of the love for Allah ﷻ).”

After quoting the above, Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله writes, “Glorified is the One who lets His slaves witness His Paradise well before they meet Him, who opens its doors to them in this world of deeds; and who gives them some of its joy, its breeze and its perfume, so that they may seek it and hasten towards it with all their strength.”

“Truly in the heart there is a certain loneliness that cannot be removed except by spending time with Him in solitude. In it there is a sadness that cannot be removed except through the happiness of knowing Him and being true to Him ... In it there is a void that cannot be filled except through loving Him, turning to Him constantly, always remembering Him, and being sincere to Him. Were a person to be given the entire world and everything in it, it would never fill this void.”

- Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله

Submitting fully to Allah ﷻ

An important caveat that we should always keep in mind is that the importance assigned to the actions of the heart does not in any way negate the significance of the external physical actions. Rather, when we internalise the actions of the heart, we will come to realise that they always go hand in hand with the external acts of worship. One without the other will always be defective.

One of Shayṭān’s tricks, particularly in this modern age, is to undermine the outer acts of obedience in Islam by convincing us that ‘what really matters is my heart and inner state’. For instance, we may convince ourselves that so long

as we have a clean heart and pure intentions, ḥijāb is not necessary. In reality, however, if our hearts are truly pure, we would fully submit and humble to the outer commandments of Allah ﷻ, and not to our own desires.



WHAT IS KHUSHŪ' ?

Khushū' is one of the actions of the heart. Linguistically, khushū' means to sink, to be low, to be subservient and to be still. Technically, it refers to the heart that stands with complete humility, lowliness and full concentration towards Allah ﷻ. Khushū' resides within the heart and is manifested through the limbs and organs.

With khushū' your heart softens, becomes still, and humbles itself to its Lord. Your heart submits and focuses on Allah ﷻ to such a degree that everything else retreats into insignificance. Your limbs and organs then follow the heart and they too are humbled. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "There is a lump of flesh in the body: if it is sound, the whole body will be sound but if it is corrupt, the whole body will be corrupt. Truly, it is the heart" (Bukhārī).

A humble heart results in the humbling of the ears, eyes, head and face. This is why the Prophet ﷺ would say in his rukū', "My hearing, sight, mind, bones, and nerves are humbled to You" (Muslim). Your hearing submits to Allah and you only listen to what He has permitted. Your eyes do not glance at the ḥarām. Every interior and exterior part of your body humbles itself and obeys its Creator.

Khushū' extinguishes the 'fires' of lust and desire, and illuminates your heart with the 'light' of Allah's ﷻ greatness. You become fully aware that Allah is looking at you, and this fills your heart with His reverence.

Although the focus of this book is khushū' within ṣalāh, it is important to note that you should also strive to experience khushū' outside of ṣalāh. Imām al-Ghazālī رحمه الله described khushū' as the fruit of īmān and the result of a firm

conviction in the greatness of Allah ﷻ. If you are blessed with this, you will enjoy khushū' in and outside of ṣalāh - even when alone and away from others. Continuously remembering that Allah ﷻ sees you, being in awe of His greatness, and recognising your own deficiencies will lead to a constant state of khushū'.

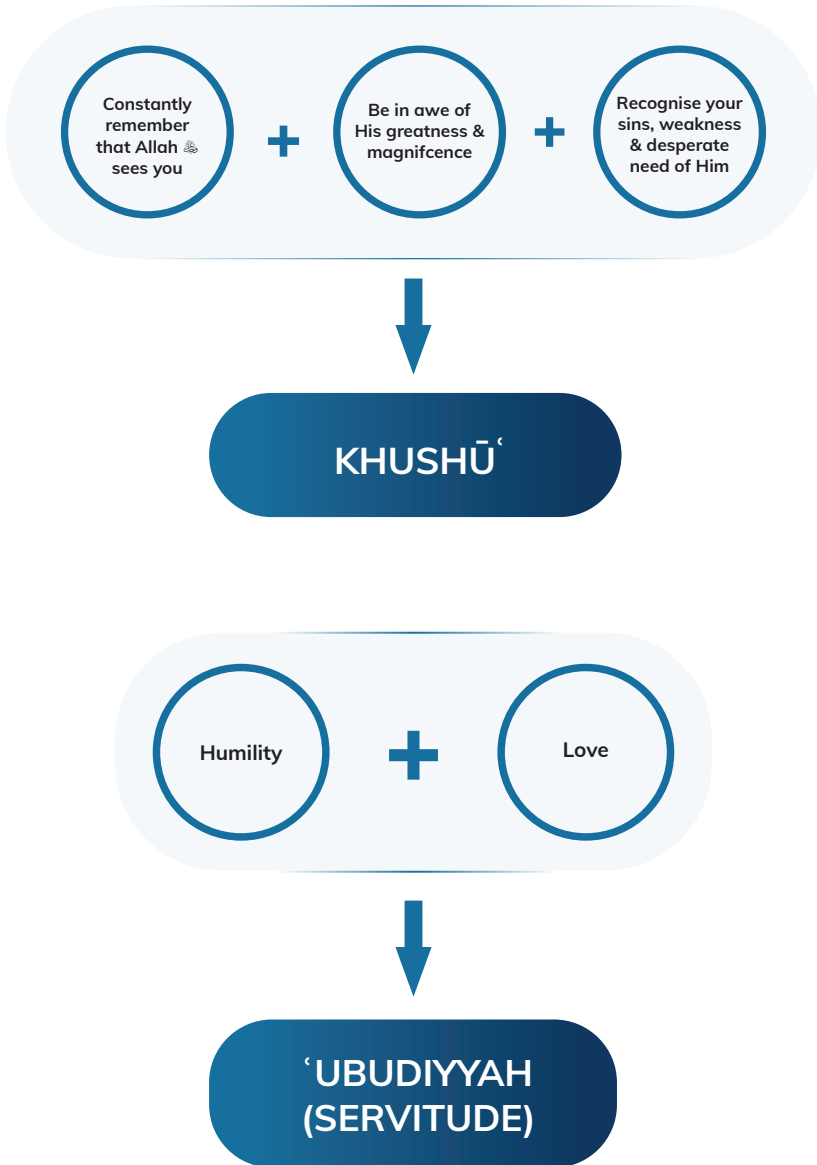
Khushū' is a state in which you constantly weigh up your sins against the greatness of Allah, leaving you overwhelmed with humility and a desperate need for Him.

Khushū' magnifies and multiplies the rewards of good deeds. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله explains that even though there is a great reward in reciting Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ (as it equates to one third of the Qur'ān), if one was to read any other āyah with khushū', the reward of it would be greater.

Khushū' is one of the easiest and quickest routes to attaining the pleasure of Allah. One of the pious predecessors said, "I have tried coming closer to Allah ﷻ by entering all the doors of worship. But every time I came close to a door, I found that it was crowded with people; thus, I was unable to enter until I approached the door of humility and desperate need for Him. I found that it was in fact the nearest and widest of all doors to Allāh; there were not any crowds at it nor were there any barriers. As soon as I placed my foot inside, He ﷻ took my hand and admitted me inside."

“Khushū' is the humility of the heart and the subservience of the limbs and organs.”

- 'Aṭā' al-Khurāsānī رحمه الله



HUMBLE YOURSELF

You are weak, and He is the Most Powerful.

You desperately need Him, whilst He needs no one.

You are a speck in the universe, whilst the universe is a speck of His dominion.

His Knowledge and Kindness have no bounds.

His Mercy and Magnificence are endless.

And His Glory and Generosity are limitless.

Be ashamed of your sins.

Cry over your shortcomings.

Lower your head in humility.

Feel your desperate need for Him.

And humble yourself to His Greatness.



THE IMPORTANCE OF KHUSHŪ' IN ṢALĀH

Allah ﷻ says,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾ ...

“Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their ṣalāh...” (23:1-2).

The above āyāt mark the beginning of Sūrah al-Mu'minūn. In these āyāt, Allah ﷻ describes the qualities of the successful believers. The passage starts off by mentioning those ‘who are humble in their ṣalāh’, and ends with the ninth āyah mentioning those ‘who consistently maintain their prayers’. Thus, ṣalāh features in both the beginning and the end of the list, demonstrating its great significance.

Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله explained this āyah: “Khushū' in ṣalāh is only attained by the one who has completely emptied his heart for it, who fully occupies himself for it and does not pay attention to anything else besides it, and who prioritises it over everything else. At that point it becomes a source of comfort and intense joy.”

Similarly, Allah ﷻ says,

وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ

“...and they establish ṣalāh” (2:3).

The use of the word *iqāmah* (to ‘establish’ the prayer) is significant. The words ‘do’ or ‘perform’ ṣalāh have not been used here since it is not sufficient to complete just the outward motions. However, when you ‘establish’ ṣalāh, you complete both the inner and outer aspects of this noble worship. The outer aspects involve carrying out its pillars, obligatory acts and prerequisites; whilst the inner aspects refer to attaining the essence of ṣalāh, namely, khushū'. These

acts should be conducted in tandem with pondering on the meaning of the utterances and actions during ṣalāh. (Adapted from Tafsīr al-Sa'dī)

The Prophet ﷺ stated, “The first thing to be lifted from this ummah will be khushū‘, until you will not find anyone with khushū‘” (Ṭabarānī).

Ḥudhayfah رضي الله عنه said, “The first thing you will lose of your religion will be khushū‘ and the last thing you will lose of your religion will be ṣalāh. There may be a person praying yet there is no goodness in him. Soon a time will come when you will enter a large Masjid and not see a single person with khushū‘ in it.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Indeed a person may pray for sixty years, yet not a single ṣalāh of his will be accepted. Perhaps he perfected the rukū‘ but not the sujūd, or he perfected the sujūd but not the rukū‘” (Ibn Abī Shaybah).

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله compared khushū‘ in ṣalāh to the soul in the body. When the soul leaves the body, the body dies. Similarly, without khushū‘ the ṣalāh lacks its soul, spirit and essence. Likewise, praying ṣalāh without khushū‘ is like gifting a dead servant to a king. He then writes, “Allah ﷻ will neither accept it nor reward him for it, even if the obligation (of ṣalāh) has been legally fulfilled.”

“Two rak‘ahs with contemplation are better than standing up for the entire night with an inattentive heart.”

- ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

Once Imām al-Bukhārī رحمه الله was praying and a wasp stung him 17 times. On completing his ṣalāh, he said, “Look at what troubled me during my ṣalāh.” They looked and found that the wasp had stung him in 17 parts of his body. Despite this, he carried on praying. It has been said that this was a voluntary prayer after Ṣuhr.

After he finished praying, it was said to him, “Why did you not stop your ṣalāh when it started stinging you?” He replied, “I was reciting a sūrah and I wanted to complete it.”

“

Ṣalāh brings provisions, preserves one's health, removes pain, repels illnesses, strengthens the heart, brightens the face, brings joy to the soul, removes laziness, stimulates the limbs, fuels one's strengths, brings peace to the heart, nourishes the soul, illuminates the heart, preserves blessings, repels calamities, brings blessings, pushes shayṭān away, and brings one close to the All-Merciful.

- Ibn al-Qayyim 

”



IS IT NOT ENOUGH THAT I PRAY FIVE TIMES A DAY?

“At least I’m praying.”

*“I’m happy with where I am. I’m praying 5 times a day.
I pray on time and I’m content with that.”*

You should certainly feel happy and grateful that Allah ﷻ has granted you the gift of praying your farḍ prayers, particularly if you have previously been unable to do so.

However, this should not be enough. Even if the obligation of ṣalāh has legally been fulfilled, praying ṣalāh without khushū‘ will lead you to missing out on the essence of ṣalāh.

Imām al-Ghazālī رحمه الله wrote: “The goal of reciting the Qur’ān and the adhkar (in ṣalāh) is praise, exaltation, asking and humility: and the One being addressed is Allah. However, whoever’s heart is covered by heedlessness is veiled from Him; thus, he does not see or experience consciousness of Him. He is heedless of the One to whom he is speaking with, and his tongue simply moves out of habit. How far is this from the purpose of prayer, which was ordained to purify the heart, renew the remembrance of Allah, and firmly tie the rope of imān.”

In Sūrah al-Wāqī‘ah, Allah ﷻ describes three groups of people: the people of the left (destined for Hell-fire), the people of the right (destined for Paradise), and finally the elite of Paradise (destined for the super-luxurious premium Paradise). It is this latter group who will be the closest to Allah ﷻ, blessed to see Him most often, and have the Prophets ﷺ and the Companions رضي الله عنهم as their neighbours. They are the ‘Sābiqūn’ (the forerunners).

Your goal and du‘ā’ in life should be that Allah ﷻ resurrects you amongst the Sābiqūn. If you wish to enjoy this premium Paradise in the hereafter, then your ṣalāh (and other acts of worship) should be of premium quality. An average or mediocre ṣalāh is not enough.

A believer always aims for the best. Thus, the Prophet ﷺ explained that when making du'ā', ask Allah for al-Firdaws, because it is the highest Jannah (Bukhārī). He ﷺ also stated, "Indeed Allah loves that when one of you does something, he perfects it" (Ṭabarānī).

Do not become satisfied with the quantity and quality of your worship. Do not placate your inner self (*nafs*) with weak excuses! Do not believe that the 'ibādah you are doing is sufficient. Rather, reflect on your shortcomings, battle your *nafs* and ask Allah ﷻ to make your ṣalāh like the ṣalāh of the Messenger ﷺ.



THE VIRTUES OF KHUSHŪ'

1 Achieving success in this world and the hereafter

In Sūrah al-M'uminūn, Allah ﷻ mentions that the first trait of the successful is khushū' in ṣalāh. Allah ﷻ says, "Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their ṣalāh" (23:1-2).

Thus, if you want true success, firstly, you must have īmān and secondly, you should perform ṣalāh with khushū'.

2 Becoming sin-free like a newborn

'Amr b. 'Abasah ﷺ narrated a long ḥadīth in which he described the virtues of wuḍū'. He reported the Prophet ﷺ saying, "And if he stands to pray and praises Allah ﷻ, extols Him and glorifies Him with what He is most deserving of; and shows wholehearted devotion to Allah, he will revert to being sin-free (as pure) as he was on the day his mother gave birth to him." 'Amr b. 'Abasah ﷺ states that he heard this from the Prophet ﷺ more than seven times (Muslim).

3 Having previous sins forgiven

‘Uthmān ؓ performed wuḍū’ and then said, “I saw the Messenger of Allah ؐ perform wuḍū’ like this and he then said, ‘Whoever performs wuḍū’ like this wuḍū’ of mine, then performs two rak‘ah of prayer during which he does not let his thoughts wander, Allah ؓ will forgive all of his previous sins” (Bukhārī).

4 Earning a guarantee of Paradise

‘Uqbah b. ‘Āmir ؓ heard the Messenger of Allah ؐ say, “If any Muslim performs wuḍū’, and does so properly, then stands and performs two rak‘ah of prayer in which he focuses with his heart as well as his face [i.e. is not physically distracted], Paradise is guaranteed for him” (Muslim).

When ‘Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr ؓ stood up to pray, he was described as being ‘like a stick (i.e. motionless) with khushū’’. Once, during the siege of the Ka‘bah, whilst he was prostrating, a catapult struck him and tore part of his garment, but he did not even raise his head!



THE BENEFITS OF KHUSHŪ’ IN ṢALĀH

The benefits of khushū’ are many. Along with transforming your ṣalāh, it will also transform your life.

1 Khushū’ ensures ṣalāh is easy and beloved for the one praying

Allah ؓ says, “And seek help through patience and ṣalāh, and indeed, it is difficult except for those who have khushū’; those who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him” (Q2:45-6).

If your ṣalāh feels like a chore, it is because there is an absence of khushū' in your ṣalāh. Once you experience khushū', your ṣalāh will transform into a source of comfort and joy. It will become something you continuously seek recourse in and cannot live without.

2 Khushū' in ṣalāh averts evil and prevents immorality

Allah ﷻ says, “Recite (O Prophet) what is revealed to you of the Book, and establish ṣalāh. Surely ṣalāh restrains one from shameful and evil acts. Truly, the remembrance of Allah is the greatest of all things. Allah knows what you do” (29:45).

If you pray ṣalāh as it is ought to be prayed, fulfilling its conditions and with complete concentration and humility, your heart will become purified. Eventually your heart will become illuminated. Your īmān will increase. You will incline more to goodness and abhor evil. Being able to restrain yourself from sins and shameful behaviour is not only one of the greatest fruits of ṣalāh, but is in fact one of its primary purposes.

If you have ever wondered why performing our five daily prayers does not stop us from evil sins, the answer lies in the quality of our ṣalāh: our ṣalāh is rushed, distracted and aimless, and so it does not purify us nor stop us from sinning.

Ṣalāh may be compared to bathing five times a day. If after such frequent bathing, our bodies remained dirty, we would question the usefulness of such bathing. Likewise, if our morals and actions remain corrupt despite praying five times a day, we have to question the usefulness of our ṣalāh. We have to ask ourselves: Is our ṣalāh changing us? Are we gaining from ṣalāh what we are supposed to be gaining?

3 Khushū' leads to crying out of the fear of Allah ﷻ

Having complete khushū' will undoubtedly lead you to cry out of the fear of Allah ﷻ. Crying in this manner is a great deed which can save you from the Hell-fire and admit you into Paradise.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “A man who wept out of the fear of Allah shall not enter the Fire until the milk returns to the udder [an impossibility]” (Tirmidhī).



Thābit al-Bunānī رحمه الله experienced pain in his eyes. The doctor said to him, “If you promise me one thing, you will get better.” Thābit رحمه الله asked him, “What is that?” The doctor said, “Don’t cry.” Thābit رحمه الله remarked, “What good is there in an eye if it does not cry?”

Like other acts of worship, crying privately is superior to crying publicly. Of the seven individuals who will be provided shade on the Day of Judgement - the day where there will be no shade except His shade - will be the person who remembered Allah ﷻ in private, and then shed tears (Bukhārī).

4 Khushū' enhances your understanding of the essence of ṣalāh

Praying with khushū' leads you to realising and appreciating the true meaning of ṣalāh, namely the turning of the heart and the body towards Allah ﷻ, and attaining closeness to Him by it.

5 Khushū' is the key to attaining closeness to Allah ﷻ

Khushū' in ṣalāh gives you the pleasure of conversing with Allah ﷻ. It increases your faith, softens your heart, distances you from the world, and makes you long for Allah ﷻ and His closeness in the hereafter.

6 Khushū' in ṣalāh will ease the standing in front of Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgement

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله wrote, "The slave of Allah ﷻ stands in front of his Lord on two occasions: the first is when he stands in his ṣalāh and the second is when he will meet Him on the Day of Judgment. Whoever fulfils the rights of the first standing, the second standing will be made easy for him. And whoever belittles, neglects and does not fulfil the rights of the first standing (i.e. ṣalāh), the second standing will be made very difficult for him."

7 Khushū' in ṣalāh solves your problems and removes anxiety

Allah ﷻ says, "And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for those who have khushū'; those who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him" (2:45-6).

Similarly, Ḥudhayfah رحمه الله narrated, "Whenever anything distressed the Prophet ﷺ, he would pray" (Abū Dāwūd). Turning to prayer at times of difficulty was also the practice of the previous Prophets ﷺ (Aḥmad).

“Shayṭan will not go near the person whose heart has khushū'.”
- Sahl al-Tustarī رحمه الله

As cases of depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses rise, let us return to the prophetic remedy of resorting to ṣalāh. In addition to other forms of

precautions and remedies, we should not underestimate the strength and healing power of ṣalāh.

8 Khushū' is the source of strength in your daily activities

Praying ṣalāh with khushū' will give you strength, enthusiasm and *barakah* (blessings) in your other daily activities. (See Q2:45 above). It will be your inspiration and the fuel in your journey to serve Allah ﷻ and His religion.

“Let not your concern be the quantity of your actions. Rather, worry about perfecting them and doing them well; for a slave may be praying, but he is disobeying Allah ﷻ in his ṣalāh.”
- Wuhayb b. al-Ward



ṢALĀH WITH KHUSHŪ': PURE JOY & COMFORT

*“Women and perfume have been made dear to me,
and my utmost joy has been put in ṣalāh.” (Nasāʾī)*

The Prophet ﷺ would gain extreme pleasure and joy in his ṣalāh. This was a result of his perfection in conversing privately with his Lord, being conscious of His Greatness and basking in His Presence. Because of this he ﷺ said to Bilāl, “Stand O Bilāl (and announce the call to prayer), and bring us comfort *through* ṣalāh” (Abū Dāwūd).

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله explains that when you perform ṣalāh with khushū', fulfilling all of its rights and conditions and you turn your mind and heart to Allah, you will feel light, as though all of your burdens have been washed away. You will be full of energy but also calm and peaceful. Such feelings will make you wish you could remain in that prayer for ever. Ṣalāh is the coolness of the eye, the delight

of the soul and the paradise of the heart. Until you enter into ṣalāh, and seek comfort in it and not away from it, you will feel as though you are constricted and chained up in a prison.

The peace, joy and intensity experienced in ṣalāh performed with khushū' is the result of a noble soul leaving the earthly realms and circling the Throne of Allah ﷻ.

If your heart and joy is in ṣalāh, you will find comfort in it and will rush to it eagerly. If your heart is distanced from Allah ﷻ, however, and filled with the love of this world, your ṣalāh will be a struggle. No matter how 'healthy' and 'free' you are, performing ṣalāh will feel like a burden and a chore.

Our approach to ṣalāh is sometimes evident through our language. We may say, "Let me get my ṣalāh over and done with so that I can see to this and that." If we think of ṣalāh as a chore, then it will feel like a chore. Conversely, thinking of ṣalāh as the great gift and source of comfort that it is, will – by His Permission – help us in attaining genuine peace and happiness.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله once said, "If you don't find sweetness and joy in the deed you perform, then doubt its sincerity, for Allah ﷻ is Shakūr (Most Appreciative and Rewarding)." This means that Allah will reward His servant for his deeds in this world by granting him sweetness and tranquillity in his heart. But if he finds that his heart lacks delight and joy, then his deed is imperfect and defective.

“We are in a garden, where our food is khushū', and our drink is the tears that flow.”
- Ibn al-Jawzī رحمه الله

Experiencing the 'sweetness' (*ḥalāwah*) of ṣalāh and of other acts of worship is a game changer. Once you have experienced it, your life will change and you will forever crave its pleasure.

Think back to the last time you experienced the sweetness of imān and worship. Perhaps it was in Ramaḍān. Or maybe it was during your 'umrah or ḥajj trip. Or maybe you were going through a difficult time in your life, and you cried your eyes out to Him in sajdah. The experience felt at that moment – the feeling of closeness to Allah ﷻ and of finding peace and contentment in His company –




does not have to be momentary. Instead, by striving to improve your ṣalāh, you can experience this feeling more frequently.


“Whoever is delighted by the prayer in this world, will be delighted by nearness to his Lord in this world and the next.”



- Ibn al-Qayyim 



THE ṢALĀH AND KHUSHŪ‘ OF THE PROPHET

The Prophet  was the most God-fearing of men. He was the humblest and the most obedient to his Lord and had the purest soul. He was the best person to have ever worshipped, stood and prayed to his Creator. The highest level of khushū‘ any human being could possess was attained by him . His lofty khushū‘ and softness of heart was a manifestation of his deep love, awe and veneration of Allah .

The ṣalāh of the Prophet  was the perfect embodiment of submission and humility, both internally and externally. Accordingly, it is vital that we educate ourselves about his ṣalāh and then try to emulate him.

When standing up to pray, the Prophet’s  head would be lowered. In sajdah, he would separate his arms from his body so widely that the whiteness of his armpits was visible. In the final tashahhud, his blessed gaze would not go beyond the finger he was pointing with. He would lengthen each pillar, praying with tranquility and calmness. Sometimes, even in congregational prayer, he would stand for so long after rukū‘ that his Companions  would think he had forgotten. His private ṣalāh would be even lengthier. He would weep and pray for hours on end in the night.

‘Abdullāh b. al-Shikh-khīr ؓ said, “I came to the Prophet ﷺ whilst he was praying. His inside was making a sound like the sound of the boiling of the cooking-pot [due to crying profusely]” (Nasā’ī). In another narration, the sound was likened to the noise of a mill-stone (Abū Dāwūd).

The Most Amazing Thing

‘Aṭā’ ؓ entered with ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr ؓ upon ‘Ā’ishah ؓ. When Ibn ‘Umayr asked ‘Ā’ishah ؓ to tell them about the most amazing thing which she had witnessed from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, she cried. She then said, “He got up one night and said, ‘O ‘Ā’ishah, leave me to worship my Lord.’ I told him, ‘By Allah, indeed I love to be with you, and I love what makes you happy.’ So he stood up, performed wuḍū and then stood to pray. He continued to cry until his lap became wet. He then cried and continued to cry until the ground became wet. When Bilāl ؓ came to give the call to prayer and saw him crying, he said, ‘O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, are you crying when Allah has forgiven all your previous and upcoming sins?’ He replied, ‘Should I not be a grateful slave? Certain āyāt were revealed to me last night; woe to the one who recites them and does not ponder over what they contain (the last ten āyāt of Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, 3:190-200)’” (Ibn Ḥibbān).

Another moving ḥadīth relates how he ﷺ cried through the night in the Battle of Badr. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ؓ said, “There wasn’t a horseman amongst us on the day of Badr except for Miqdād ؓ. I observed that all of us were sleeping except the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was under a tree, praying and crying until the morning” (Aḥmad).

The following ḥadīth is one of the most amazing accounts of the perfection and quality of the Prophet’s ﷺ ṣalāh:

Ḥudhayfah ؓ said, “I prayed with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ one night and he started reciting Sūrah al-Baqarah. I said to myself that he will do rukū‘ at the end of one hundred āyāt, but he carried on reciting. I then said to myself that he will perhaps recite the whole sūrah in a rak‘ah, and he carried on reciting. (At the end of Sūrah al-Baqarah), I said to myself that he will (now) go into rukū‘. However, he then started Sūrah al-Nisā’, and recited it.

He then started Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān and recited it slowly. When he recited the āyāt which entailed the glorification of Allah (*tasbīḥ*), he glorified Him. When he recited the āyāt which entailed asking (*du‘ā’*), he would ask Allah ﷻ. And when he recited the āyāt which entailed the protection of Allah ﷻ, he sought His protection.

He then went into rukū‘ and said, *سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ* ‘How Perfect is my Lord, the Magnificent.’ His bowing lasted about the same length of time as his standing. He then said, *سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ* ‘May Allah respond to the one who has praised Him’, and he then stood for a long time, about the same length of time as he had spent in bowing. He then performed sajdah and said, *سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى* ‘How Perfect is my Lord, the Most Exalted’, and his prostration lasted nearly the same length of time as his standing” (Muslim).

Allāhu Akbar! Go back and read this ḥadīth again to fully appreciate its significance. Can you imagine what the ṣalāh of Rasūlullāh ﷺ was like?

The above ḥadīth gives us a glimpse of the noble and pure love he ﷺ had for his Creator and Master ﷻ. The Prophet ﷺ at the time was over the age of fifty. Despite this, along with the responsibilities he shouldered throughout the day, he still spent hours at night in standing, bowing and prostrating to his Lord.

‘Ā’ishah ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ used to pray (for so long) during the night that his feet would swell up. She asked him, “Why do you do this O Messenger of Allah when Allah has already forgiven your previous and upcoming sins?” He ﷺ replied, “Should I not be a thankful slave?” (Bukhārī)



IN WHICH CATEGORY DO YOU BELONG?

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمته described ṣalāh as the scale by which you can measure yourself. Ṣalāh is a measure of your progress in your journey to Allah ﷻ, measuring whether you lag behind or are far into your journey on this path to Him. It is a gauge of your īmān and your honesty with Him.

1

Will Be Punished (معاقب)

- He is negligent in his wuḍū and the prescribed times
- He is negligent in the limits and essential pillars of the prayer

2

Will Be Held Accountable (محاسب)

- He safeguards the times, limits, outward pillars and wuḍū
- However, he is distracted by the devils' whispers

3

Will Be Forgiven (مكفر عنه)

- He upholds the limits and essential pillars
- In ṣalāh, he is in a constant battle with the devils, trying to ward off their whispers.

4

Will Be Rewarded (مثاب)

- He stands in prayer, perfecting its rights, limits and pillars
- His heart is engrossed in safeguarding its limits and rules. His focus remains fully on performing the prayer as it ought to be, completely and perfectly.

5

Will Be Close To His Lord (مقرب عند ربه)

- He stands in prayer and establishes it as the fourth does, but along with this, he places his heart before his Lord. In this state, he beholds his Lord – ever vigilant before Him, filled with His love and glory – as if, seeing Him, he is physically present before Him.
- Therefore, the distractions and the whispers vanish, as the veil is lifted between him and his Lord. **The difference between this person in his prayer and everyone else is as vast as the distance between the heaven and the earth, for he is occupied solely with his Lord, in which he finds his source of sheer delight.**



HYPOCRITICAL KHUSHŪ‘

The Companions ﷺ and their successors ﷺ were extremely cautious with regards to hypocrisy in khushū‘. Ḥudhayfah ؓ would say, “Take refuge with Allah from hypocritical khushū‘.” When asked what it was, he replied, “That you see the body humble and submissive, while the heart is not.”

‘Umar ؓ saw a person with his neck bowed in prayer and said, “O so-and-so, raise your head for khushū‘ lies not on the neck but in the heart.” Al-Fuḍayl b. ‘Iyād ؓ said, “It used to be disliked for a person to display more khushū‘ than what was in his heart.”

The following table highlights the difference between genuine and hypocritical khushū‘:

Hypocritical khushū‘	Genuine khushū‘
The soul rages with lust and desires.	The desires and lusts have vanished.
Whilst the body outwardly appears to be ‘submissive’, the heart is empty of Allah’s awe and remembrance.	The heart is ashamed at its shortcomings and is fearful of its Master. It breaks down in awe of Allah’s ﷻ greatness.
The outwardly display of khushū‘ is a result of riya‘ (showing off), and not sincerely for the sake of Allah ﷻ.	Full of shyness and love, the heart become meek, humbles itself and submits to Allah ﷻ. The body then does the same.



WHY DO WE LACK KHUSHŪ'?

Numerous reasons exist for our lack of khushū'; generally, as a defect in our heart, and specifically, in our ṣalāh. These include:

1 Weak Īmān

Our Īmān in Allah ﷻ is extremely weak. We claim to love Allah, yet we hardly know Him. We disobey Him day and night. We call ourselves 'His slaves', yet we choose to submit to the dunyā and our lowly desires. We turn to everything and everyone but Him.

Reflect

When reflecting, be honest with yourself.

A. Answer both questions:

- i. Talk about a favourite topic of interest (football team, celebrity, the latest scandal)
- ii. Who is Allah?

Now compare both your answers. How long and articulate were your answers? Could you talk about Allah ﷻ for longer than your topic of interest? How long were you able to talk about Allah ﷻ? How articulate was your response?

B. Praise the one dearest to you. Why do you love this person dearly and how long can you spend praising them? Now compare your answer to how long you can spend praising Allah ﷻ, be it in any language.

Just as our īmān in Allah ﷻ is weak, our īmān in the hereafter is also weak. Though we believe in ‘death’, we delude ourselves into thinking that we have a long time left. We are ignorant of the hereafter. We are quick to describe Paradise and all its glory, but are uncomfortable discussing the perils of the Hell-fire, the terrors of the Day of Judgement or the punishment of the grave.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ؓ described the Companions ؓ as follows, “By Allah, looking at them was like looking at people who could see Paradise and Hell-fire right in front of their own eyes. By Allah, they were not people of argumentation or falsehood, nor did they find comfort in anything except the book of Allah, nor would they show that which was not in their hearts (they were genuine and not hypocritical).”

For the Companions ؓ, Jannah was real. Jahannam was real.

2 Far from Allah ﷻ and Close to Sin

Although modernity has brought about its fair share of ease and benefits, it has also produced unprecedented challenges.

Firstly, we have become disconnected from the creation of Allah ﷻ and, by extension, from Him. By and large, we do not feel the need for God or a higher power. If something inside our home breaks down, we call a worker. If we feel hungry, a hot takeaway meal just requires a few swipes on our devices. Nearly every type of fruit or vegetable can be bought from the supermarket throughout the year. Our fast-paced life dictates that we no longer stop to witness and contemplate the greatness of Allah ﷻ and the manifestations of His power in our surroundings.

Secondly, we live in a world where immorality and sin have become widespread and glamourised. Actions that were socially unacceptable a mere half a century ago, even amongst non-Muslims, have now become commonplace for both non-Muslims and Muslims alike. A stark difference between today and the past is the ever-increasing number of ‘Muslims’ who try to ‘justify’ or make ‘ḥalāl’ what Allah ﷻ has clearly made ḥarām.

Thirdly, the advent of the internet, especially social media, has transformed society. Sins are no longer considered matters that one should be ashamed

of; something which must be kept between oneself and Allah ﷻ. Many of us brazenly expose our sins not just in public, but through online platforms seen and read by tens of thousands of users. Likewise, it has made certain sins very easy to access.

Millions of dollars have been spent on designing social media platforms to ensure that we become addicted to them. These platforms distract us from worship, hinder us from our social and familial responsibilities, and reduce our ability to focus. We feel pressured by social media to 'share' everything, including our good deeds. This leads us to doing good deeds for others instead of Allah ﷻ (*riyā'*), self-admiration (*'ujb*) and pride (*kibr*). All of the aforementioned diseases of the heart are completely at odds with humility, which is the essence of khushū'.

Social media has been designed to amplify the importance of one's inner self (*nafs*). Conversely, khushū' and true servitude (*'ubudiyyah*) require us to diminish our self-importance and venerate Allah ﷻ. We must think the highest of Allah ﷻ and be in awe of His greatness, while thinking of ourselves as insignificant. The less importance we attach to ourselves, the greater our awe and reverence (*ta'ẓīm*) of Allah ﷻ will be.

3 Love of the World

The love of the world (*dunyā*) is one of the major reasons for the weakness of our īmān. Success in today's materialistic society is defined by how 'rich' or 'famous' you are. Despite our beautiful dīn having laid down the yardstick for success, we still buy into the corrupt dominant narrative. We strive hard to accumulate the riches of the dunyā, be it clothes or cars, luxury homes or the latest gadgets. Enjoying such luxuries is not wrong nor is it a sin, however, it can develop into a wrong if it becomes our purpose in life. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Every ummah has a *fitnah* (trial), and the *fitnah* of my ummah is wealth" (Tirmidhī).

Imām al-Ghazālī رحمه الله calls the love of the world "the root of every shortcoming and the source of all corruption". He states that when the love of the world enters the heart of the person to such an extent that he no longer takes provisions from it for the hereafter, he can no longer hope to experience the pure bliss of conversing with Allah ﷻ in ṣalāh. This is because the

person who experiences his joy in this world will not experience the joy of conversing with Allah ﷻ. A man aspires to that which gives him joy and, if his joy is rooted in this world, then he will certainly aspire and work hard to attain that.

4 We Couldn't Care Less: Hedonism and Apathy

We have lost sight of our purpose in life. No longer is our focus and goal in life to please and worship Allah ﷻ. Along with rampant materialism, our lives are plagued with hedonism (where pleasure and satisfying one's desires is the sole aim of human life) and apathy. Statements like YOLO (You Only Live Once), encourage us to 'have as much fun as possible'. Endless entertainment is making us apathetic to the condition of our souls and the plight and suffering of humanity. One reason why we have lost khushū' in our lives is because 'we couldn't care less'. It doesn't bother us. Allah ﷻ reminds us in Sūrah al-Ḥadīd:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ

"Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth" (57:16)?

Let us be like the great Companion 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar ؓ. He would cry upon hearing this āyah and respond by stating:

بَلَى يَا رَبِّ بَلَى يَا رَبِّ

Certainly, my Lord! Certainly, My Lord!

Regret your past and make a firm resolve!

From this point onwards, regret your past sins. Regret your absence of khushū'. Cry over your distance from the One who has created you and is the Source of all your blessings. Resolve to turn a new leaf, both in how you conduct your life and in your ṣalāh. From today onwards, resolve to pray with khushū' through His ﷻ tawfīq (divine accord).

HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR ĪMĀN

①

Recite and ponder upon the Qur'ān (tadabbur)

②

Increase your knowledge and awareness of Allah ﷻ

③

Continuously seek beneficial knowledge

④

Avoid sins

⑤

Perform righteous deeds (compulsory and voluntary)

⑥

Fear a bad end

⑦

Frequently remember death

⑧

Remember and visualise the various stages of the hereafter

⑨

Reflect on the signs of Allah ﷻ in the universe (tafakkur)

⑩

Remember Allah ﷻ as often as possible

⑪

Talk privately to Allah ﷻ by making du'ā'

⑫

Think of the world as insignificant

⑬

Be in the company of the righteous

⑭

Cultivate a sound heart

⑮

Give preference to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ over yourself

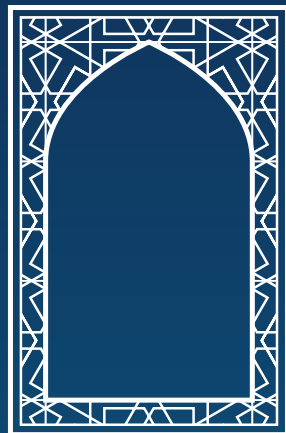
⑯

Regularly attend the gatherings of dhikr



CHAPTER 1 - REVIEW & REFLECT

- 1 Why is it important to consistently work on reforming and purifying your heart?
- 2 What is khushū'?
- 3 Why is khushū' one of the most challenging acts of worship?
- 4 Why should you strive to attain khushū'?
- 5 What is the true meaning of ṣalāh?
- 6 What is the ONE reason you will choose as your primary motivation for developing khushū' in your ṣalāh?
- 7 When was the last time you cried out of the fear of Allah ﷻ? What made you cry?
- 8 How do you react when you are faced with a difficulty or you feel anxious?
 - ☐ Swear ☐ Phone a friend ☐ Experience anger ☐ Throw things
 - ☐ Rush to ṣalāh ☐ Other:
- 9 When was the last time you felt very close to Allah ﷻ? Describe the occasion in detail.
- 10 What can you easily replicate from the above scenario in your life on a daily/weekly basis?
- 11 Imagine you are a young child who was fortunate to have witnessed the Prophet ﷺ praying. Many years later, you are describing the ṣalāh of the Prophet ﷺ to your grandchildren. How would you describe his ṣalāh?
- 12 Go back to p. 35 and review Ibn al-Qayyim ﷺ's 5 categories of people in relation to their ṣalāh. Which category do you fall into? What practical steps can you take to move up this ladder?
- 13 List the three reasons mentioned for why we lack khushū'. Can you think of three other reasons for why we lack khushū'?



HOW TO DEVELOP KHUSHŪ': 10 STEPS **BEFORE** ṢALĀH

The following steps are some of the ways you can develop khushū' in ṣalāh. The majority of these ten steps will be developed outside of ṣalāh. The list is by no means exhaustive. You may find that some of the steps resonate with you more than others. Hold on to these steps. How often you wish to work on each one will depend on you. For instance, you may want to work on each one every forty days, quarterly or over a different time-frame. Working on all of the steps simultaneously may be overwhelming, therefore, you may find it better to initially only focus on one step. As you work through them, you will come to realise that most of them, if not all of them, complement each other. Moreover, you will find that the benefits of these will not be limited to your ṣalāh, but will permeate to all areas of your life.



APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF ṢALĀH

The first step to developing khushū' is to understand and appreciate the importance of ṣalāh itself.

After the obligation of attesting to the Oneness of Allah (*tawḥīd*), there is no greater commandment in Islam than ṣalāh.

Ṣalāh is the second pillar of Islam and the prime connection between a slave and his Master. It is the first act which he will be held accountable for on the Day of Judgement: if it is good, he will be saved and will succeed; if it is not good, he will be doomed and be amongst the losers.

Ṣalāh is the crucial factor that distinguishes the believers from the disbelievers. By preserving your ṣalāh, you are preserving your dīn. Maintaining your ṣalāh will give you a special light (*nūr*) in your heart, face and in your grave. On the Day of Judgement, your ṣalāh will come to your rescue and will be your special 'light'. However, those who do not pray will find themselves with Fir'awn, Qārūn, Hāmān and Ubayy b. Khalaf: the worst of mankind.

Ṣalāh is the purification of the soul. It cleanses your sins and protects you from all harm. Ṣalāh is your oxygen, without which you will die. If you do not perform your ṣalāh, although you may be ‘alive’ in the physical sense, you are spiritually ‘dead’.

Ṣalāh is unique because it was made compulsory upon the Prophet ﷺ and his ummah during the Night Journey and Ascension (*laylat al-isrā’ wal-mi’rāj*). He personally received this commandment without any intermediaries from above the seven heavens.

Even on his deathbed, despite being weak and in agony, the Prophet ﷺ never forgot his ummah. He exhorted, “Ṣalāh, ṣalāh and your slaves.” These were his parting words and his final *waṣiyyah* (last will) to us.

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās ؓ relates that when ‘Umar ؓ - the second Caliph of Islām - was stabbed, he carried him to his house along with a group of Anṣārī men. Umar ؓ remained unconscious until the morning. A man said, “You won’t be able to wake him up except through ṣalāh.” So they said to him, “Ṣalāh, O Leader of the Believers!” Upon hearing this, ‘Umar ؓ opened his eyes and asked, “Have the people prayed?” When they answered in the affirmative, he said, “Indeed there is no share in Islām for the one who abandons ṣalāh.” He then performed ṣalāh whilst his wound was bleeding. (Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-Razzāq)

“When the slave rectifies two of his qualities, everything else will be rectified: (1) his ṣalāh and (2) his tongue.”

- Yunus b. ‘Ubayd ؓ

WHY DO WE PERFORM ṢALĀH?

- ① To fulfil the purpose of our life i.e. to worship Allah ﷻ.
- ② To uphold the command of Allah ﷻ.
- ③ To remember Allah ﷻ and become closer to Him.
- ④ To humble ourselves and express our need to Him.
- ⑤ To appreciate and show gratitude to Allah ﷻ.
- ⑥ To converse privately with the Lord of the worlds.
- ⑦ To separate ourselves from those in kufr (disbelief).
- ⑧ To safeguard ourselves from sins and evil deeds.
- ⑨ To purify our souls.
- ⑩ To earn magnificent rewards in this world and the hereafter.
- ⑪ To have our sins forgiven.
- ⑫ To renew our pledge with Allah ﷻ and affirm our commitment to Him.
- ⑬ To prevent our hearts from hardening.
- ⑭ To acquire Allah's ﷻ happiness and love.
- ⑮ To be given the opportunity enough to see Allah ﷻ in Jannah.
- ⑯ To fill our lives with peace and comfort, and to help us when we are stressed, worried or feeling down.



ATTAIN THE MA'RIFAH (DEEP KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS) OF ALLAH ﷻ

One of the greatest means of attaining khushū' in ṣalāh is the *ma'rifah* of Allah ﷻ. *Ma'rifah* refers to a deep awareness and knowledge of Allah ﷻ.

The greater your knowledge of Allah ﷻ, the greater the level of khushū' you will develop.

Knowledge of Allah ﷻ is a prerequisite for worshipping Him. Allah ﷻ states, “I only created jinn and men so that they worship Me” (51:56). Worshipping Allah ﷻ means submitting yourself to Him, humbling yourself to Him and loving Him. However, how can we love Him if we do not know Him?

Who is Allah ﷻ?

Allah ﷻ is the Creator of the universe, the King of everyone and the Lord of everything. He is the Only One who deserves to be worshipped.

He manages the affairs of all kingdoms. He commands and forbids, creates and provides, gives life and death, raises and lowers people, alternates night and day, and alternates victory and defeat amongst nations, so that one nation rises and another falls.

Only Allah's commands and decree are executed throughout the heavens and the earth, deep in the oceans and in the skies, and throughout the entire universe. His knowledge encompasses all matters; accounting for each and every being, and enveloping them with His mercy and wisdom.

He hears all voices, in their different languages, and with their varied requests and pleas. One voice does not distract Him from hearing another, nor do their

innumerable pleas confuse Him. The pleading of the needy beggars knocking at His door does not aggravate Him, nor do their questions annoy Him.

He sees all things: the visible and invisible. He sees the black ant crawling across a solid black rock in a pitch-dark night. No matters are hidden from Him nor are secrets withheld from Him. He has knowledge of all that has occurred and all which has yet to occur.

Everyone in the heavens and the earth beseech Him for their needs. Every day, He attends to His creation: He forgives sins, eases difficulties and relieves distress. He mends the broken, enriches the poor, teaches the ignorant, guides the astray, directs the confused and helps the desperate. He frees the captive, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked and cures the sick. He accepts the repentance of the one who repents, and rewards the one who does good. He aids the oppressed and humbles the tyrant. He conceals faults and calms fears.

He does not sleep nor does sleep befit Him. The deeds of the night ascend to Him before those of the day, and the deeds of the day before those of the night. Light is His veil: were He to lift it, the splendour of His Face would burn all of His creation as far as His gaze reaches. What He possesses is not diminished by what He gives, for His Right Hand always remain full.

On the Day of Judgement, the whole earth will be enclosed in a single grip of His Hand, and all the heavens will be rolled up in His Right Hand. Then He will shake them and say, 'I am the King, I am the King. It is I who created the world out of nothingness, and I who will return it to how it was.'

No sin is too great for Him to forgive, no request too great for Him to fulfil. Were all in His heavens and on His earth, from the beginning to the end of His creation - mankind and jinn alike - were to be as pious as the most pious amongst them, this would not increase His sovereignty in the slightest. And if they all, from the beginning to the end of His creation - mankind and jinn alike - were to be as sinful as the most sinful amongst them, this would not decrease His sovereignty in the slightest.

If all those in His heavens and on His earth, human beings and jinn, living and dead, were to assemble in one place and ask Him, and He gave each one of them what they asked for, this would not decrease what He has by even an atom's weight.

He is the First before whom there is nothing; the Last after whom there is nothing. He is the most High, and there is nothing above Him; the most Near and there is nothing closer than Him. He is the most Blessed and Exalted. He is the most worthy of being worshipped and remembered. He is the most deserving to be thanked and praised. He is the most compassionate of kings, the most generous of those who are asked, the most forgiving of those who have power, and the most just of those who take revenge. With His knowledge comes wisdom; with His might, His forgiveness and with His withholding, His wisdom.

He is the King who has no partner, the Unique who has no rival, the Perfect Master who has no companion or child; He is the Independent who has no helper. There is none like Him. Everything will perish except His Face; every kingdom falls except His kingdom. Every grace except His has its limit. None obeys Him except by His permission; none sins except by His knowledge. When He is obeyed, He is appreciative; when disobeyed, He overlooks and forgives. His anger is always just. Every punishment from Him is just, and every blessing from Him is a favour. He is the closest witness and the nearest protector. He records the deeds and sets down the appointed times for all things. When He intends something to be, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is.

(Adapted from Ibn Qayyim رحمہ اللہ's *al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib*)

“What does one know if one does not know Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ? What truth has he recognised if this truth has eluded him? What knowledge has one gained and what action has one obtained if one has failed to know Allah, failed to act for His pleasure, failed to know the path to Him and failed to know what is in store for him once he reaches Him?”

- Ibn al-Qayyim رحمہ اللہ

What should the maʿrifah of Allah ﷻ lead to?

A deep awareness and knowledge of Allah ﷻ will make you shy of Allah, increase your love for Him and attach your heart to Him. You will be left in awe of Him and will always long to meet Him. You will repeatedly turn to Him broken in repentance. You will hastily run away from the creation to enjoy seclusion with Him.

Striving to attain these qualities is a continuous effort, and not a single struggle. It is a lifelong journey that will only end when we meet Him and He is pleased with us, inshāAllāh.

“There is no life and no peace for the hearts unless they become deeply aware of their Creator, Lord and God through His Names, Attributes and Actions; and through this process (of getting to know Him), He becomes more beloved to them than everything else.” - Ibn Abī al-‘Izz al-Ḥanafī

How can you attain the ma‘rifah of Allāh ﷻ?

- a **Through tadabbur:** reflecting and pondering on the ‘āyāt’ (verses) of the Noble Qur’ān (see p. 87 on how to do tadabbur).
- b **Through tafakkur:** reflecting on the numerous ‘āyāt’ (signs) of Allāh ﷻ that surround us. Allāh ﷻ says, “We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth” (41:53).

The Qur’ānic verses (āyāt) continuously remind us of the many signs (āyāt). These include the sun, moon, stars, sky, rain, animals, mountains and the human being himself.

Tips for Tafakkur

1

Perform your morning and evening adhikār outside, especially on days when the skies are clear and you can appreciate the beauty of Allāh’s creation. This will help you to combine dhikr and tafakkur.

2

Try to grow your own fruits and vegetables. You will feel closer to Allāh ﷻ as you witness His Power and also benefit from eating local organic produce.

3

Explore nature and marvel at the natural beauty that is all around us.

4

Take your family on a hike or visit a local farm.

Key Rule: Phones must be switched off!

- C Through His Beautiful Names.** This is only possible through a deep understanding of Allah's Excellent Names, their Majesty and their Perfection; and realising that He is the Only One to whom these Names belong.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمہ اللہ wrote, "The key to the da'wah of the Messengers ﷺ and the essence of their Message, is knowing Allah ﷻ through His Names, His Attributes, and His Actions. This is the foundation which the rest of the Message, from beginning to end, is based upon."

Allah ﷻ said, "To Allah Alone belong the most Beautiful Names, so call on Him by them." (7:180) The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Indeed Allah has 99 Names; whoever preserves them will enter Paradise" (Muslim).

How can you preserve the Names of Allah ﷻ?

- 1 Memorise the Names
- 2 Understand their meanings
- 3 Praise Allah ﷻ with them and ask Him through them.
- 4 Act upon what they necessitate. For instance, Allah's Name 'al-Raqīb' means The Ever Watchful. You can act upon this Name by abstaining from His prohibitions, knowing He is Ever Watchful over you.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمہ اللہ wrote, "There is no greater need of the soul than its need to know its Creator and Originator. And there is no way to achieve this except through knowing His Attributes and Names. The more a slave knows them, the more he will know Allah ﷻ, the more he will seek Him and the closer he will be to Him. Similarly, the more ignorant the slave is of His Names and Attributes, the more ignorant, disliked and further away from Him he will be. The status which the slave enjoys in the eyes of Allah ﷻ is dependent on the status the slave himself accords Allah in his heart. Thus, journeying to Allah ﷻ through the path of His Names and Attributes is truly an amazing matter. The doors it opens are astounding."

Throughout your ṣalāh, bring the rich meanings of Allah's Names to the forefront of your mind. Doing this will help you feel that you are directly conversing with Him, and thereby it will increase your closeness to Him.

“Whoever attains the recognition of Allah through His Names, Attributes and Actions, will undoubtedly love Him.”
- Ibn al-Qayyim

d By worshipping Him as much as possible.

Ma'rifah itself is one of the greatest forms of worship. Other acts of worship - including dhikr, du'ā', reciting the Qur'ān and ṣalāh - will increase your ma'rifah. It's a cycle: the more you know Allah ﷻ, the more you will worship Him. And the more you worship Him, the more you will know Him.

Performing ṣalāh with khushū', is one of the greatest means of attaining His ma'rifah.

In summary, increasing your knowledge of Allah is one of the best ways to achieve khushū'. Once you get to know Him ﷻ - through His signs, through His Names, through His Book and through worshipping Him - your awe, veneration and love of Him will increase. Your own self-importance will meanwhile decrease. Both of these will help your body and heart to humble themselves to Allah ﷻ and allow you to taste the sweetness of khushū'.

“The perfection of the slave of Allah ﷻ is in his knowing Allah and then loving Him (in the world); and (his perfection) in the hereafter is experiencing the joy of seeing Him.”
- Ibn Taymiyyah



STOP SINNING AND SAFEGUARD YOUR EYES, TONGUE AND HEART

To attain khushūʿ, you have to push yourself to stop sinning by protecting your organs; in particular your eyes, tongue, and heart. Safeguard your eyes against looking at ḥarām, whether online or offline. Stop your tongue from backbiting, slandering, swearing, obscene language and saying hurtful things. Keep good company who will help you to protect yourself. Protect yourself from eating ḥarām food, including that which is earned from unlawful means.

The īmān in your heart has a special *nūr* (light). The more *nūr* the heart has, the greater the *nūr* of your actions and words will be. Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله explains that there are some believers whose actions ascend up to Allah ﷻ, and the *nūr* of their deeds is like the light of the sun. It shines brightly with the *nūr* from their hearts. The *nūr* will keep them steady on the *ṣirāṭ* (bridge over Hell-fire) and will guide them to Paradise. Of the various deeds, ṣalāh in particular is a ‘*nūr*’ as stated by the Prophet ﷺ (Muslim).

Ṣalāh brings *nūr* in your heart; *nūr* in your face; *nūr* in your grave and *nūr* in the hereafter. Observe those who pray with complete khushū. You will notice that these people have abundant *nūr* on their faces. This is the same *nūr* which illuminates the heart and opens the doors of *maʿrifah* (knowledge) of Allah ﷻ *al-Nūr* (The Ultimate Light). It is this *nūr* that also helps you to enjoy the sweetness of worship.

This ‘*nūr*’ of the heart is extinguished through sins, especially the sins of the eyes. The sins block goodness and *nūr* from penetrating into the heart. This is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Verily, when the slave commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart. When he desists, seeks forgiveness and repents, his heart is polished clean. But if he sins again, it increases until it covers his heart. And that is the *rān* (rust) which Allah mentioned: ‘No indeed! Rather what they have been doing has rusted their hearts (83:14)’” (Tirmidhī).

Ibn Rajab رحمہ اللہ explains that the accumulation of rust on their hearts veils them from His *ma'rifah* (knowledge and deep awareness of Him), thereby, preventing them from becoming acquainted with Him. It hinders them from having vigilance (*murāqabah*) of Him رحمہ اللہ, being mindful of Him and being aware of His presence in this world. The consequence of their hearts being veiled in this world is that they will be 'veiled' and blocked from seeing Him in the next. Hence why Allah رحمہ اللہ says in the next āyah, "No indeed! They will surely be veiled on that Day from their Lord" (83:15).

“Do not be of those who curse Shayṭān in public, and obey him in private.”

- 'Umar b. 'Abdul-'Azīz رحمہ اللہ

Sin after sin turns the heart into a sieve, preventing it from holding goodness. Unless you seek forgiveness and make sincere repentance, your heart will die. In this manner, praying ṣalāh with khushū' will become impossible, because a 'dead' heart cannot humble itself nor submit to its Master رحمہ اللہ.

Fighting your nafs and subjugating it is essential to attaining khushū' in ṣalāh. Ibn al-Qayyim رحمہ اللہ explains that for a servant to remain present in his ṣalāh and to be occupied with his Lord, he must overcome his lust and desires. He asks, 'How can a heart - which is overcome by lust, captivated by desires, and is a stronghold of shayṭān - be saved from whispers and distractions?'

We should lower our gazes and stay away from looking at anything which incites lust, especially when we are browsing the internet. This includes being very selective of who we follow on social media. Likewise, we should lower our gazes when we are outside the home, walking in the streets and in the workplace.

Al-Rabī' b. Khuthaym رحمہ اللہ was so strict in keeping his gaze lowered that some people thought he was blind. For twenty years, he was a regular visitor to the house of 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd رحمہ اللہ. Whenever the maidservant would see him, she would remark to Ibn Mas'ūd, "Your blind friend has come," and Ibn Mas'ūd رحمہ اللہ would laugh at her remark. When Rabī' would knock on the door, the maidservant would go out and see him, head down and with his gaze lowered. When Ibn Mas'ūd رحمہ اللہ would see Rabī', he would say, quoting the Qur'ān, "And give good news to the humble." (22:34). If Muḥammad رحمہ اللہ had seen you, he would have loved you."

Three benefits of lowering the gaze

①

Tasting the sweetness and joy of imān. This sweetness is far greater than the sweetness of what you averted your gaze from, because when you give up something for the sake of Allah ﷻ, He replaces it with something far better.

②

The heart becomes illuminated, thereby increasing your insight (firāsah) as you are able to see through the light (nur) of your heart what others cannot see.

③

It strengthens the heart, makes it steadfast, and makes one courageous.

- Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله



SOFTEN YOUR HEART

A sick, heedless and hard heart is one of the greatest reasons for the lack of khushū' in ṣalāh. When the heart is rectified, the actions are also rectified as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “There is a lump of flesh in the body: when it is sound, the whole body is sound and when it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Truly, it is the heart” (Bukhārī).

Those with hardened hearts are condemned by Allah ﷻ: “So is one whose heart Allah has opened up for Islam and he is upon a light from his Lord (like one whose heart rejects it)? Then woe to those whose hearts are too hard to remember Allah. They have clearly lost their way” (39:22).

In another āyah, Allah ﷻ warns His believers of the hardening of the heart: “Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth” (57:16)?

And in the next āyah, Allah ﷻ says, “Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. We have made clear to you the signs so that perhaps you will understand” (57:17).

Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله explains how this āyah indicates that Allah ﷻ softens hardened hearts, guides those who are confused after they were astray, and alleviates hardships after they have become unbearable. Just as Allah brings the dead dry earth back to life by sending down abundant rain, He also guides the hardened hearts with the proofs and evidences of the Qur’ān. By inserting the light of īmān into these hearts, these hearts are softened after previously being blocked.

Therefore, do not give up. Even if you have struggled your entire life with khushū’, have hope and beg Allah ﷻ to soften your heart and make it receptive to īmān, the Qur’ān and every form of good.

How to Soften a Hard Heart

❶ Frequently remember Allah ﷻ with your tongue & heart

Allah ﷻ says, “Truly it is in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ that hearts find peace” (13:28). Dhikr is one of the greatest means of protecting a heart from hardening. This is because excessive talking about other than Allah is one of its leading causes. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Do not talk too much without the remembrance of Allah. Truly, excessive talking without the remembrance of Allah hardens the heart; and the furthest of people from Allah is the hard-hearted person” (Tirmidhī).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “For everything there is a polish, and the polish of the heart is the remembrance of Allah” (Bayhaqī).

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله explains that the heart rusts like copper and silver. Moreover, just as the heart can rust, it can also be polished through dhikr, to the extent that it can shine like a crystal mirror. Thus, when one neglects dhikr, the heart rusts, and when one remembers Allah, it shines. There are two things which cause a heart to rust: heedlessness (*ghaflah*) and sin. Conversely, the heart can be polished by two things: dhikr and *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness).

b Avoid laughing excessively

Excessive laughing hardens the heart. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Do not laugh excessively as excessive laughter deadens the heart” (Tirmidhī).

c Remember death frequently

The heart of one who is heedless of death and has excessive hope is dead. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Frequently remember the destroyer of pleasures,” i.e. death (Tirmidhī).

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar ؓ said, “I was with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. A man from among the Anṣār came to him and greeted the Prophet ﷺ. Then he said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, which of the believers is best?’ He ﷺ said, ‘He who has the best character amongst them.’ He said, ‘Which of them is the smartest?’ He ﷺ said, ‘The one who remembers death the most and is best in preparing for it. Those are the smartest’” (Ibn Mājah).

d Visit the graveyards and reflect on the situation of its residents

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “I used to forbid you from visiting the graves but (now) visit them, for it truly reminds you of the hereafter” (Tirmidhī).

When ‘Uthmān ؓ would stop at a grave, he would cry until his beard was soaked (in tears). It was said to him, “Paradise and Hell-fire are mentioned, and you do not cry, yet you cry because of this?” So he said, “Indeed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Indeed the grave is the first stage of the hereafter. So, whoever is saved from it, then what comes after it is easier than it. And whoever is not saved from it, then what comes after it is worse than it.’” He said, “And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘I have not seen any sight except that the grave is more horrible than it’” (Ibn Mājah).

e Recite the Qur’ān

Allah ﷻ says, “We send down in the Qur’ān that which is a cure and mercy for the believers...” (17:82).

Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ ﷺ said, “Five things cure the heart: reciting the Qur’ān with *tadabbur* (reflection), an empty stomach, the night prayer, humbly supplicating to Allah ﷻ before dawn, and keeping the company of the righteous.”

f Feed the poor and stroke the head of the orphan

A man once complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the hardness of his heart so the Messenger ﷺ said to him, “If you want to soften your heart then feed the poor and stroke the head of the orphan” (Aḥmad).

Abū Bakr ﷺ was known for his excessive weeping. In Makkah, he built a masjid in his courtyard in which he would perform ṣalāh and recite Qur’ān. As he was a very soft-hearted person, he would not be able to control himself when he was reciting the Qur’ān and he would cry extensively. The women and children of the polytheists would gather to listen to his moving recitation, to the extent that it frightened the chiefs of the Quraysh.



INCREASE YOUR TIME IN PRIVATE WORSHIP

Another means of attaining khushū' in ṣalāh is to engage in 'ibādah, especially in private. Just you and Allah ﷻ. No one else.

You may perform many acts of 'ibādah, but still not experience their sweetness. Rectify this by increasing your private worship. Private worship is one of the best ways to attain sincerity and protect yourself from hypocrisy. Once your heart is purified, you will taste the sweetness of īmān and worship.

Imām Mālik ﷺ said, “Whoever would like to have peace in his heart, and be saved from the agonies of death and the terrors of the Day of Judgement, then let his private deeds be greater than his public ones.”

Our inner self (*nafs*) rages inside of us. It loves praise and hates criticism. Sometimes it insidiously manifests itself when we mention our private worship in casual conversation with someone. We must, however, fight this. We should avoid mentioning our private acts of worship and maintain it as a special ‘secret’ between us and Allah ﷻ. Sufyān al-Thawrī ؓ said, “When the servant performs a deed in private, Shayṭān keeps at him until he mentions it. It then moves from the records of private deeds to the record of public deeds.”

However, this does not mean that every deed should be done only in private. On the contrary, numerous deeds have to be performed communally and, therefore, in public. Nevertheless, we should strive to have a collection of ‘secret deeds,’ deeds that no one has knowledge of but Allah ﷻ.

Be careful of ‘ujb

Conducting deeds in private may seem like an act that is free from risks. It is not, and you should be careful of your *nafs*. Just like you ought to be wary of *riyā’* (showing off) when you worship Allah ﷻ in public, you should be wary of ‘ujb (self-admiration) when you worship Allah ﷻ in private. ‘Ujb is to be impressed with yourself and your feats. ‘Ujb can lead to pride (*kibr*). This pride can lead to you comparing your actions to others, and start regarding your deeds to be better than theirs. You may, as a result, start looking down on them. Consequently, instead of purifying the soul, your private deeds lead to the destruction of the soul.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever amongst you is able to have hidden good deeds, then let him do so” (Muṣannaf b. Abī Shaybah).



PERSISTENTLY ASK ALLAH ﷻ FOR KHUSHŪ' AND DO NOT GIVE UP

Turn to Allah ﷻ the Almighty with humility and beg Him to grant you the ability to perform your ṣalāh with khushū'. Have certainty in your heart that He will respond, as He so promised: "When My servants ask you about Me, truly I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me; so let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, so that they may be guided" (2:186).

You can make du'ā' in your own language and ask Allah ﷻ to bless you with khushū'. Alternatively, you may wish to memorise the following supplications of our beloved Messenger ﷺ and ask Allah ﷻ through them:

اللَّهُمَّ آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا ، وَزَكِّهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ، أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ ، وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ ، وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا تَشْبَعُ ، وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا .

O Allah grant my soul taqwā (piety and mindfulness) and purify it, for You are the Best of those who can purify it. You are its Protector and Master. O Allah, I seek Your protection from knowledge which does not benefit, a heart which does not submit, a soul which is not satisfied, and a supplication which is not accepted (Muslim).

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ صَلَاةٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ .

O Allah, I seek Your protection from a prayer which does not benefit (Abū Dāwūd).

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي لَكَ شَكْرًا ، لَكَ ذَكْرًا ، لَكَ رَهَابًا ، لَكَ مِطْوَعًا ، إِلَيْكَ مُحِبًّا أَوَّاهًا مُنِيبًا .

My Lord, make me one who is extremely grateful to You, who remembers you always, who perpetually fears You, who is fully obedient to You, who is humble before You, who constantly cries and pleads with You, and who frequently turns to You in repentance (Abū Dāwūd).

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعِنِّيْ عَلٰى ذِكْرِكَ ، وَشُكْرِكَ ، وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ.

O Allah, help me to remember You, be grateful to You and worship You in an excellent manner (Abū Dāwūd).

Never Give Up!

Making the human lose hope is one of Shayṭān's most powerful tricks. You might think: "This khushū' thing is not for me. I've tried it, but I keep getting distracted." Do not give in to this trick and continue to try. On some days your level of khushū' will feel strong, whilst on others, you may not feel it at all. Despite all of this, continue to work on it and do not ever give up.

“I struggled with ṣalāh for 20 years, and then I enjoyed it for the next 20 years.”

- Thābit al-Bunānī

“I forced my nafs (inner self) to go to Allah whilst it was crying, until I was able to take it to Him whilst it was laughing.”

- Abū Zayd

Strive for a balance

Achieving a balance is not always easy. Try to strike a balance between pushing yourself and over-doing it. Push yourself and fight your nafs to pray ṣalāh, working on both the quality and the quantity of your ṣalāh. At the same time, do not burden yourself with it so much that you find it challenging to maintain. For instance, you may attend an īmān-boosting lecture and therefore decide to get up an hour before Fajr to pray tahajjud. The first day or week may pass smoothly, but by the second week, you might start feeling like it is too much; you do not feel like waking up at all anymore, not even for 10 minutes.

Rather than immersing yourself fully, build yourself up gradually over time. Try to be consistent as consistency is the key. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The best deeds in the sight of Allah ﷻ are those which are constant, even if they are few” (Bukhārī).

Accordingly, do not take an 'all-or-nothing' attitude. If your inner voice is saying, 'Either I'm going to pray all of my voluntary prayers or none at all,' then remember that it is better to pray some of them than to pray none of them.

“Indeed, these hearts have their ebbs and flows: when they are soaring, impose on them the voluntary acts; and when they are experiencing a downturn, impose on them the obligatory acts.”

- ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb



ACT UPON THE ETIQUETTES OF GOING TO THE MASJID AND RESPOND TO THE ADHĀN

The Etiquettes of Going to the Masjid

The etiquettes of attending the masjid are a crucial preparation for ṣalāh. Adhering to these is indicative of the respect and esteem you accord ṣalāh in your heart. They will also prepare you psychologically for your standing in front of the Supreme Creator.

a Perform wuḍū thoroughly in accordance to the sunnah at home

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “No man purifies himself, and does it thoroughly, then goes to the masjid, except that Allah records a good deed for him for every step he takes, raises him a degree for it, and wipes away a sin from him for it” (Muslim).

b Avoid smelling foul

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever has eaten garlic, onion or leek should stay away from our masjid, for indeed the angels are troubled by what the children of Ādam are troubled by” (Muslim).

c Beautify yourself

Allah ﷻ said, “O Children of Ādam, beautify yourselves at every masjid” (7:31). The Prophet ﷺ said, “Indeed Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty” (Muslim). Apply perfume (men only), and wear clean and appropriate clothing to the masjid.

d Say the du‘ā’ for leaving the house and the du‘ā’ for walking to the masjid

e Walk with calmness and serenity

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When you hear the iqāmah, walk to prayer with calmness and dignity, and do not hurry. Pray whatever you are able to pray and complete whatever you miss” (Bukhārī).

f Enter the masjid with your right foot and recite the du‘ā’

g Perform taḥiyyat al-masjid

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When one of you enters the masjid, he should not sit until he has prayed two rak‘ahs” (Bukhārī).

h Go early so that you can sit in the first row and preferably at the right side of the imām.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “If the people knew what is the reward of announcing the call for the prayer and of being in the first row (in the congregation), and then they found no other way to get this privilege except by casting lots, they would certainly cast lots for it” (Bukhārī).

He ﷺ also said, “Indeed Allah and His Angels send blessings on the right side of the rows” (Abū Dāwūd).

i Make the intention to wait for ṣalāh

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The servant is constantly in prayer so long as he is in his place of worship waiting for the prayer. The Angels say, ‘O Allah, pardon him. O Allah, have mercy upon him...’” (Muslim).

j Exit the masjid with your left foot and recite the du‘ā'

Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه used to enter with his right foot first and exit with his left foot first (Bukhārī).

Please refer to our publication ‘*Daily Adhkar*’ for the aforementioned du‘ās.

Absorb the Adhān into Your Heart

Always hearing a particular sound can make us indifferent to it. As it melds into the background, we may fail to appreciate its significance.

Imām al-Ghazālī رحمه الله explains that on hearing the mu‘addhin’s call to prayer, remind yourself about how terrifying the call for the Day of Judgement will be. Be eager and prepare yourself physically and spiritually for this call (i.e. the adhān) in this world. If you are of those who hastened to respond to this call in this world, then know that your name will be called out gently on that Terrifying Day.

Another feeling you may experience whilst listening to the adhān is calm and joy. Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله explains that if your heart leaps with joy when you hear the adhān in the dunyā, then only bliss and triumph will accompany your ‘call’ on the Day of Reckoning. It is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Bilāl, give us comfort *through ṣalāh*” (Aḥmad). As his happiness lay in ṣalāh, he was eager to enter it and would ask Bilāl رضي الله عنه to commence it by delivering the adhān.

Respond to the Adhān

Responding attentively to the mu‘addhin while contemplating on the inner and deeper meanings of the words will help you attain khushū' in your ṣalāh:

After the Mu'addhin says...

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah.

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ

Come to Ṣalāh.

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

Come to success.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

There is no god worthy of worship except Allah.

You say...

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah.

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

There is no power or might except through Allah.

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

There is no power or might except through Allah.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

There is no god worthy of worship except Allah.

- 1 The Messenger of Allah ﷺ instructed us to repeat the words of the mu'adhhdhin during adhān. This is with the exception of the following phrase "...when he says **حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ** ، **حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ** ، say: **لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ** . If he says it from his heart, he shall enter Paradise" (Muslim).

Al-Ṭibī رحمه الله wrote, "The meaning of **حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ** ، **حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ** is 'come with your exterior and interior to guidance and triumph immediately'. Therefore, it is only appropriate that one (responds to this) by saying that this is a great matter which - due to my weakness - I am unable to carry out unless Allah ﷻ allows me to through His might and power."

The phrase **لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ** is one of the treasures of Paradise (Tirmidhī). Imām al-Nawawī رحمه الله explains that this is because it embodies complete submission, the entrusting of one's affairs and true obedience of Allah ﷻ. Thus, this phrase acknowledges that Allah ﷻ is the only Creator and none can turn back His Command, and that the slave is powerless in his own affairs.

What does **لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ** mean?

- A slave cannot move from one situation to another (*ḥawl*), nor does he have the strength (*quwwah*) to do this except by the will and help of Allah ﷻ.
- There is no power to stop sinning/avert evil, nor is there any strength to be obedient/attain good except by the will and help of Allah ﷻ.

After the Adhān

Following the completion of the adhān, recite the following phrases (in this order):

2 وَأَنَا أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ ،
رَضِيتُ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا ، وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولًا ، وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا .

I also bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah. He is Alone and He has no partner whatsoever, and that Muḥammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. I am satisfied with Allah as my Lord, with Muḥammad as my Messenger, and with Islam as my religion.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If anyone says [the above] on hearing the mu'adhhdhin, his sins will be forgiven" (Muslim).

3 اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ ، وَعَلٰى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ....

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When you hear the mu’adhdhin calling for the prayer, repeat his words then send blessings upon me. The one who sends blessings upon me once, Allah will send 10 blessings upon him” (Muslim).

4 اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الدَّعْوَةِ التَّامَّةِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْقَائِمَةِ ، آتِ مُحَمَّدًا الْوَسِيلَةَ وَالْفَضِيلَةَ ، وَابْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا تَحْمُودًا الَّذِي وَعَدْتَهُ.

O Allah, Lord of this perfect call and established prayer, grant Muḥammad the status (the highest station in Paradise) and pre-eminence (superiority over the rest of the creation), and resurrect him to the praiseworthy station that You have promised him.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever says [the above] after the adhān shall receive my intercession on the Day of Judgement” (Bukhārī).

- 5 After the adhān and before the iqāmah you should make du‘ā’, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Du‘ā’ is not rejected between the adhān and the iqāmah” (Tirmidhī).

5 FOR 5



1

Glad tidings
of Paradise

2

Forgiveness
of all sins

3

Ten blessings
from Allah ﷻ

4

Intercession of
the Prophet ﷺ

5

Acceptance
of du‘ā’

After al-Rabī b. Khuthaym ربيع became partially paralysed, he used to go to the Masjid helped by two men. It was said to him, “O Abū Yazīd! You may pray at home, as you are excused.” He said, “Whoever hears *يٰٓعَلَى الْفَلَاحِ* should answer it even by crawling.”



PRAY IN THE CONGREGATION & DO NOT DELAY

Pray on Time

Plan your day around ṣalāh. Instead of trying to fit ṣalāh in your busy schedule, make your day revolve around ṣalāh, and aim to always pray on time. Praying ṣalāh at its beginning time will be an indication of you – mentally and physically – giving it the importance it deserves. It will also safeguard against rushing through ṣalāh as you won't worry about whether or not you have sufficient time. Allah ﷻ says, “So woe to those who pray, but are heedless of their prayers” (107:4-5). According to the scholars, this either refers to (a) those who neglect their prayer by not praying at all, or (b) those who delay it all or most of the time.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “That is the ṣalāh of the hypocrite. He sits watching the sun, until when it is between the horns of the Shayṭān, he stands and pecks up and down [i.e. rushes] in the four rak'ahs of prayer, and hardly remembers Allah in them” (Muslim).

The Prophet ﷺ always hastened to the maṣjid when it was time for ṣalāh. Occasionally, he would be spending time with his family, but on hearing the mu'addhin's call to prayer, he would immediately get up and leave them. 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها says, “He ﷺ would be in the service of his family and when he would hear the adhān, he would leave” (Bukhārī).

Yearning for Allah ﷻ and longing to spend time with Him has always been a hallmark of the pious slaves of Allah ﷻ.

“No time for prayer has ever arrived except that I have already made preparations for it. And never has it arrived except that I am eagerly looking forward to it.”

- 'Adī b. Ḥātim رضي الله عنه

Pray in the Congregation

Strive to pray in the congregation as much as possible. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The prayer in congregation is twenty-seven times superior to the prayer offered by the person alone” (Bukhārī).

It is however, more virtuous for a woman to pray at home than in the masjid.

In another ḥadīth, he ﷺ warned, “Whoever hears the adhān and does not come (to the masjid), his ṣalāh is not valid, unless if he has an excuse” (Abū Dāwūd). When ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās ؓ was asked about what constitutes an excuse he replied, “Illness or fear.”

Always aim to arrive early, before the opening takbir (*takbīrat al-taḥrīm*). The Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever performs ṣalāh for Allah for forty days in the congregation, catching the first takbīr, he will be recorded as being free from two things: free from the Hell-fire and free of hypocrisy” (Tirmidhī). Moreover, he ﷺ also said, “A Muslim is not regular in attending the masājid for ṣalāh and dhikr, except that Allah welcomes him happily just as people welcome their loved ones happily upon their return from a journey” (Ibn Mājah).

Sa‘d b. al-Musayyib ؓ said, “For thirty years, the mu‘addhin has not made the call to prayer except that I have already been in the masjid.”

Muḥammad b. Samā‘ah al-Tamīmī ؓ said, “I did not miss the first takbīr for forty years except for once: the day when my mother passed away.”

“When you see a man who is careless in regards to the first takbīr, then wash your hands of him.”
- **Ibrāhīm al-Taymī** ؓ

“Coming to ṣalāh before the iqāmah is an indication of you honouring ṣalāh.”
- **Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah** ؓ



BE PUNCTUAL WITH YOUR SUNNAH PRAYERS

Being punctual with the sunnah and nafl prayers will help you to attain khushū' in ṣalāh.

Performing the sunnah prayers *before* the farḍ prayers is akin to stretching before exercising. Starting with the sunnah prayers awakens your heart and prepares you for attaining greater khushū' in the farḍ prayers. Performing sunnah prayers *after* the farḍ prayers compensates for deficiencies in the farḍ prayers.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The first action which a servant of Allah will be held accountable for on the Day of Judgement will be his ṣalāh. If it is complete, he will triumph and succeed; if it is defective, he will fail and be doomed. If there is something defective in his farḍ prayers, then the Almighty Lord will say, ‘See if my servant has any voluntary prayers that can make up for the shortcomings in his farḍ prayers.’ Then, the rest of his deeds will be [judged] like that” (Tirmidhī).

Try your best to perform the 12 rak'ahs known as the *rawātib* or *sunnah mu'akkadah* prayers on time. These were prescribed by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: two before Fajr, four before Ṣuḥr, two after Ṣuḥr, two after Maghrib and two after 'Ishā'. Whenever you feel lazy, remind yourself of the reward: “There is no Muslim slave who prays twelve rak'ahs for Allah every day voluntarily, apart from the farḍ prayers, except that Allah will build a house for him in Paradise” (Muslim).

He ﷺ also said, “Whoever maintains four rak'ahs before Ṣuḥr and four after it, Allah will make the Hell-fire unlawful for him” (Abū Dāwūd). Furthermore, he ﷺ stated, “The two [sunnah] rak'ahs of Fajr are better than the world and everything it contains” (Muslim).

Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ made a special du‘ā’ for the one who prays the sunnah prayers before ‘Aṣr: “May Allah have mercy upon a person who prays four rak‘ahs before ‘Aṣr” (Aḥmad).

One way to ensure you always arrive before the first takbīr of the congregational prayers is to always come for the sunnah prayers before ṣalāh. If you are delayed for any reason, you will still likely be on time for the first takbīr.

Similarly, if you seek always to pray your sunnah prayers, then aim to arrive early enough to perform nafl prayers. Accordingly, if for any reason you are delayed on the way, you're still likely to arrive on time to complete the sunnah prayers inshā‘Allah.

“Whoever takes adab (the best manner of doing things) lightly will be punished by being deprived of the sunnah. Whoever takes the sunnah lightly will be punished by being deprived of the farā’iḍ (obligations). And whoever takes the farā’iḍ (obligations) lightly will be deprived of becoming acquainted with Allah ﷻ.”

- ‘Abdullāh b. al-Mubārak ﷺ



ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS

Before praying ṣalāh, always try your best to remove distractions. Anything which may distract or worry you in ṣalāh will reduce the khushū‘ in your ṣalāh.

Ibn Kathīr ﷺ says, “Khushū‘ in ṣalāh is only attained by the one who has emptied his heart totally for it, who occupies himself fully for it and does not pay attention to anything else besides it, and who prioritises it over everything else. At that point it becomes a source of comfort and intense joy.”

So if you are hungry, eat before you pray. Similarly, if you need to relieve yourself, do it before you pray. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Ṣalāh should not be performed when the food has been presented, nor when one is fighting the urge to go to the bathroom” (Abū Dāwūd). He ﷺ also said, “If dinner is served, and the iqāmah for ṣalāh has been given, then start with the dinner” (Bukhārī).

Imām al-Munāwī رحمه الله explains that the above narrations indicate that it is more important and virtuous to pray with the presence of the heart, than to pray at the start of the prayer time.

“An insightful person attends to what he needs to before ṣalāh so that he may enter the ṣalāh with his heart unburdened.”
- Abū al-Dardā' رحمه الله

How to eliminate distractions

- Find a quiet place to pray. Avoid praying where others are talking or where there is a noise that is likely to distract you.
- Mentally go ‘offline’ for your ṣalāh by ensuring your phone is on ‘silent mode’. Avoid checking your phone between the farḍ and sunnah prayers.
- If you have a small child, where possible, ask someone to look after them whilst you pray.
- Avoid performing your ṣalāh whilst you have urgent matters waiting. For instance, if you are cooking, then turn off the cooker for the duration of the ṣalāh to stop you worrying about it during your ṣalāh.
- Pray where you are comfortable. Avoid anywhere where it is too cold or too hot, as this might hinder your ability to focus.
- Pray in clothes which are not distracting. The Prophet ﷺ once returned a garment which had patterns on it to one of his Companions رضي الله عنه because it distracted him during his ṣalāh (Bukhārī).
- Ensure you are not surrounded by distracting objects. The Prophet ﷺ told his wife ‘Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها to remove a curtain because its pictures had diverted his attention in ṣalāh (Bukhārī).
- Pray towards a *sutrah* (a barrier or a wall in front of you). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When one of you prays towards a sutrah he should stay

close to it and not let Shayṭān interrupt his ṣalāh” (Abū Dāwūd). The wisdom behind using a sutrah is to prevent your eyes glancing further than the sutrah and, therefore, beyond your place of prayer. It also stops people from passing in front of you, and stops ṣhayṭān from passing by and ruining your prayer.

Occasionally, during ṣalāh, we may find ourselves distracted due to thinking about petty matters. On such occasions, we should try to remember the greatness of the One we are conversing with and the majesty of the One looking at us. We should think about death and the hereafter, and rein in our thoughts to bring our minds back to ṣalāh.

Once a fire broke out in the house of ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn ؑ, whilst he was prostrating. People around him began to say, “O son of the Messenger of Allah ؐ! Fire! Fire!” However, he did not raise his head until the fire was extinguished. When this was mentioned to him, he remarked, “The other Fire (i.e. Hell-fire) distracted me from it.”

Learn the fiqh of ṣalāh

Learn and regularly refresh your knowledge of the legal rulings of ṣalāh, so that you are not distracted by thoughts like, ‘Is my ṣalāh valid/should I be repeating the prayer, or is sajdah al-sahw sufficient?’ This will help you to pray ṣalāh more calmly and with greater khushū‘.

“

Realise in your soul the greatness and sublimity of being able to speak intimately with Allah ﷻ. Focus your attention to Who it is you are speaking with, how you are speaking, and what you are speaking. At that moment, your brow should sweat with shame, your sides should tremble in awe, and your face should turn pale with fear.

- Imām al-Ghazālī ﷺ

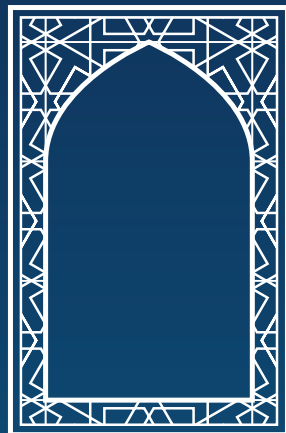
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CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW & REFLECT

- 1 What are the four means you can employ to attain the maʿrifah of Allah ﷻ?
- 2 Why is safeguarding your gaze so significant? How is it linked to your heart?
- 3 How can you soften your heart?
- 4 *Riyā*, *ʿujb* and *kibr* are some of the diseases of the heart. Define each one and explain how they are linked to your ṣalāh.
- 5 On hearing the adhān, what are the five ways in which you can respond?
- 6 What is the wisdom behind praying the sunnah prayers *before* and *after* ṣalāh?
- 7 Internalising the importance of ṣalāh is the first step to attaining khushūʿ in ṣalāh. You will always struggle with khushūʿ until ṣalāh becomes one of the most important matters in your life. Imagine a situation where you are diagnosed with cancer and, therefore, find yourself needing to write a will for your young children, which they will read a few years later. Write the section where you will share your feelings with them about ṣalāh.
- 8 Do you feel emotionally connected to the Names of Allah? What steps can you take to help you achieve this connection?
- 9 Which of the following describes you best in relation to khushūʿ?
 - ☐ Complacent (*‘As long as I’m praying I don’t need to worry about khushūʿ’*)
 - ☐ Lost hope and given up ☐ Actively trying hard

The first two are amongst shayṭān’s strategies. Why is it vital that we are aware of this fact?
- 10 What are the external distractions that are most likely to occur frequently when you are praying?
 - ☐ Smartphone ☐ Children ☐ People around you talking
 - ☐ Household chores ☐ Pending work ☐ Other:
- 11 What steps are you going to take to limit the above distractions?



HOW TO DEVELOP KHUSHŪ': 10 STEPS **DURING** ṢALĀH

Once the Prophet ﷺ was returning with his Companions from the battle of Dhāt al-Riqā'. They stopped to rest at a place. Two of his Companions offered to keep watch for the night: one was from the Muhājirīn, and the other from the Anṣār. The Muhājir decided to take a nap, and the Anṣārī got up to pray. A man from the enemy came and shot an arrow at the Anṣārī. It hit him, but the Anṣārī removed the arrow from his body and continued to pray. The enemy then shot another arrow. The Anṣārī removed it once again and continued to pray. When he shot the third arrow, the Anṣārī could no longer bear the pain, so he went into rukū' and sujūd, and completed his prayer. He then woke the Muhājir up. Upon seeing him seeped in blood, the Muhājir exclaimed, "Subḥanallāh! Why did you not wake me up the first time he shot the arrow?" The Anṣārī replied, "I was reciting a sūrah and I did not like to cut it off." (Adapted from Abū Dāwūd)

Allāhu Akbar! Imagine the level of his khushū'. In order to experience a similar attachment and joy in ṣalāh, we have to take steps *outside* ṣalāh as well as *within* ṣalāh itself. This chapter explores ten further steps which you can adopt within your ṣalāh, so that you can enjoy your ṣalāh and taste its sweetness.



FIGHT SHAYṬĀN AND HIS WHISPERS

Have you ever started praying and then found yourself suddenly remembering an item you thought you'd lost or a message you'd forgotten to reply to?

The Prophet ﷺ stated that these recollections during ṣalāh are the work of Shayṭān. Shayṭān is always busy trying to preoccupy you with thoughts of everything other than Allah ﷻ. He ﷺ said, "When the call to prayer is announced, Shayṭān takes to his heels and passes wind loudly so that he does not hear the adhān. When the adhān finishes, he comes back. When the iqāmah is proclaimed, he takes to his heel (again). When the iqāmah finishes, he comes back so that he can obstruct the person's heart with his whispers, saying 'Remember such and such, remember such and such,' things which he did not remember before, to the extent that the person no longer knows how much he has prayed" (Bukhārī).

Ṣalāh is a link (*ṣilah*) to your Lord which your archenemy, Shayṭān, strives to break by any means. Therefore, he comes to you with all kinds of whispers and doubts.

Shayṭān is like a relentless highway robber. The harder the slave tries to turn to Allah, the harder Shayṭān tries to rob him and divert him from this noble path. It is for this reason that when one of the predecessors ؓ was asked, “Indeed the Jews and Christians say that they do not experience these whispers (in their acts of worship),” he remarked, “They are telling the truth. What will Shayṭān do with a demolished house?”

Anyone who turns to Allah ﷻ will be assaulted with these kinds of whispers, particularly during the beginning of your journey where Shayṭān will try his best to divert you. At the start of your journey to Allah ﷻ, Shayṭān will have a greater ‘share’ of your ṣalāh than you. You will then compete with him, going back and forth, until you secure half of it. You must then continue to fight until you can secure all of your ṣalāh. The Prophet ﷺ said, “A man returns from his prayer and only a tenth, ninth, eighth, seventh, sixth, fifth, fourth, third or half of it, is recorded for him” (Abū Dāwūd).

The initial stages of ṣalāh are the period when Shayṭān will try to convince you that this is a lost battle and there is no hope. Do not give up. Remain steadfast and continue to work on your *khushūʿ* in ṣalāh.

“Shayṭān will not go near the person whose heart has *khushūʿ*.”
- **Sahl al-Tustarī** ؒ

ʿUthmān b. Abī al-ʿĀṣ ؓ came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, “O Messenger of Allah, indeed Shayṭān comes in between me and my ṣalāh and my recitation of the Qurʾān and causes me to doubt.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told him, “That is a shayṭān known as *Khinzab*. When you feel his presence, seek Allah’s protection from him and spit lightly to your left three times.” He says, “I did that and then Allah made him go away from me” (Muslim).

The aforementioned ḥadīth indicates the importance the Companions ؓ gave to ṣalāh and the matter of *khushūʿ*. It also highlights the existence of a specific shayṭān who is assigned just for this task, showing us the severity of this matter. Mentally prepare yourself before ṣalāh, and remember you are in a fight with

Khinzab. Always be on guard and remember that your enemy is lurking, ready to ambush.

HOW TO FIGHT WHISPERS

①

Say:

‘أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ’

and spit lightly to your left three times as mentioned in the above ḥadīth. Continue to do this whenever you feel his presence and not just once in a while (avoid spitting during the congregational prayers).

②

Ignore the whispers and carry on praying. Fight back the whispers and do not let them drag you down.

③

Try hard not to yawn during prayer and, if this is not possible, then cover your mouth. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If one of you yawns during ṣalāh, let him suppress it as much as he can as Shayṭān enters (the mouth)" (Muslim).

④

Force yourself to think of what you are saying.

⑤

Work hard on the other ways of attaining khushū'. They will all aid you in combatting the whispers during your ṣalāh.

Some people mentioned to ‘Āmir b. ‘Abdillāh b. Qays that sometimes they lose concentration during ṣalāh. He went on to ask them, “Do you experience this?” They replied, “Yes.” He replied, “By Allah, I would rather be struck with spears in my stomach than for this to happen to me in my ṣalāh.”

“If you are in ṣalāh and Shayṭān says to you ‘You are showing off!’ then make your ṣalāh longer.”

- Ḥarīth b. Qays



UNDERSTAND THE MEANING & LOFTINESS OF WHAT YOU ARE SAYING

Understanding what you are saying in your ṣalāh will have a profound impact on your khushū‘.

To do this, try your best to learn Arabic and understand the meaning of what you say. This will help you focus and will enhance your ṣalāh. Along with understanding what you are saying, you have to be consciously mindful of what you say. Ibn ‘Abbās said, “Only that which you were mindful of in your ṣalāh will be accepted from you.”

“In every prayer of mine, my only concern has been what I am saying and what is being said to me.”

- al-Rabī

Think back to the last time you found yourself in a foreign country where you barely understood the language. Did you feel lost? Similarly, if you do not understand what you are saying in your ṣalāh, you will feel out of place and not find the peace, belonging and desire to remain in ṣalāh.

Some people avoid learning Arabic as they think it is 'too difficult'. However, this is not true. Like any other language, it will require effort, commitment and time; but the outcome will be sweet.

If you cannot learn Arabic, then, at the bare minimum, memorise and reflect on the meaning of what you say in ṣalāh. This includes: (1) the meanings of the adhkār and (2) the meanings of the small sūrah.

Moreover, even if the above is not currently possible, then think of death and the Day of Judgement. Think of how it will feel to stand before Allah ﷻ on that terrifying day. Recall and reflect on the greatness of Allah ﷻ and bear in mind that He is watching you.

“I am amazed at the one who recites the Qur’ān and yet does not know its meaning. How can he enjoy its recitation?”
- al-Tabarī

Move your lips when reciting

Move your lips and tongue when reciting the Qur’ān and the adhkār of ṣalāh. Ensure that you are physically uttering the words in a way that you can hear yourself (assuming you can hear soundly and it is a quiet environment). Merely 'reciting' in your mind is not sufficient and renders your ṣalāh invalid.

Reciting in this manner will help you to concentrate and to repel the whispers of Shayṭān.

There is a misconception amongst some that reciting Qur’ān solely in the mind is acceptable (during and outside ṣalāh) and considered 'recitation'. Others are embarrassed to recite audibly due to fear that their tajwīd is not perfect. However, reciting audibly is the best way to feel the beauty and serenity in Allah's words. Remember, even if you are struggling with the recitation, Allah al-Ra'ūf (the Most Compassionate) will grant you two rewards: one reward for the recitation, and another for struggling!

Reflect on what you are saying

Develop khushū‘ by reflecting on the weight and gravity of what you are uttering. The words may be easy to pronounce, and may roll off your tongue effortlessly, but they are in themselves mighty and heavy. The Prophet ﷺ said that *subhānallāh* and *alḥamdulillāh* fill up what is in between the heavens and the earth (Muslim). Though it may be difficult to understand, the words of praise and glorification leave the worldly realms and travel up to the Throne of Allah. These words gather around His throne “buzzing like bees, mentioning to Allah the person who uttered them” (Ibn Mājah). Try to imagine that! Visualise the words that you utter ascending upwards and acting as your representatives. And this is only in the world. Imagine their impact in the hereafter, where they will come to your rescue, protect you from the Hell-fire and guide you to Paradise!

A Companion رضي الله عنه once uttered a sentence of praise in ṣalāh. After the ṣalāh finished, the Prophet ﷺ said that more than 30 angels were competing with each other to ascend with these words to Allah. On another occasion, he ﷺ said that the doors of the heaven opened for a single utterance of the Companion رضي الله عنه in his ṣalāh! Can you imagine this? One single utterance resulted in the doors of the heaven being opened.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله wrote, “By Allah, if you could hear the sound of the pens of the angels writing your name amongst those who remember Allah, you would die out of joy.”

Likewise, the Qur’ān is the mighty word of Allah ﷻ. Allah refers to it as a “weighty discourse” (73:5). It is a lofty book, revealed by the Most High from above. Stored in a lofty place, a lofty angel brought it down and conveyed it to the heart of a lofty man: Muḥammad ﷺ. Therefore, whoever becomes of its people -the people of the Qur’ān- becomes lofty in the sight of Allah ﷻ.

The Companion Usayd b. al-Ḥuḍayr رضي الله عنه was reciting Qur’ān at night. His horse became startled and disturbed, so he stopped reciting. The horse calmed down. When he resumed his recitation, the horse once again became agitated. When this happened a few times, he stopped reciting out of fear that his son, who was lying nearby, would be hurt. After completing his prayer, he looked up at the sky and saw something which resembled a cloud with shimmering lamps dangling from the sky to the earth. The next day he came and related what had occurred

to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ told him, “Those were angels who had drawn near you to hear you recite the Qur’ān. If you had continued, by Allah, you would have witnessed astounding things” (Composite: Bukhārī and Ḥākim).

In summary, reflect on the greatness of *Who* you are speaking to and reflect on the greatness of *what* you are saying.

When uttering the adhkār (everything other than the Qur’ān in your ṣalāh), reflect on what each utterance means. Praise Allah ﷻ with your tongue and heart. Try to feel the depth of the words you are uttering in your heart. When reciting the Qur’ān, remember that you are reciting *His* words in *His* presence; so recite them with utmost reverence.

When reading the āyāt about Allah ﷻ, let your heart be overcome with humility, awe and love. On reading the āyāt about the stories of the past, reflect on the lessons that they convey. When you read the āyāt of aḥkām (legal rulings), take note of what Allah is asking you to do and make a firm resolution to obey Him. (Adapted from al-‘Izz b. ‘Abd al-Salām ﷺ’s Maqāṣid al-‘Ibādāt)



VARY THE ADHKĀR AND SŪRAHS YOU RECITE

What adhkār do you recite in ṣalāh? Are they always the same adhkār? Do you tend to repeat the ones you memorised when you first learnt how to pray?

To avoid monotony in your ṣalāh, try to memorise and pray the different adhkār and du‘ās within your ṣalāh (particularly in voluntary prayers). This will increase your khushū’, help you to taste the sweetness of ṣalāh, and encourage

you to reflect on the words you are saying. The adhkār of the Prophet ﷺ are very powerful and comprehensive. It would be a huge loss to pass a lifetime without having ever invoked Allah ﷻ with these adhkār in your ṣalāh. (see chapter four)

Try to alternate the sūrahs you recite during ṣalāh. This will mean making an effort to memorise more of the Qur'ān. Also, make a conscious decision before the ṣalāh to choose which sūrah/dhikr/du'ā' you will pray. By the will of Allah ﷻ, this will also help to increase your khushū'.

Reflect on the meanings of the various adhkār

Once you have memorised the adhkār, try to reflect on their meanings in each ṣalāh. Your ṣalāh will become lengthier, and the connection between your heart and Allah ﷻ will deepen.

Three Benefits of Varying Your Adhkār

①

Follow the
Sunnah more
comprehensively.

②

It is a means
of reviving the
(abandoned adhkār
of the) Sunnah.

③

It becomes easier
to reflect on the
meanings, in
comparison to
reading out of habit.

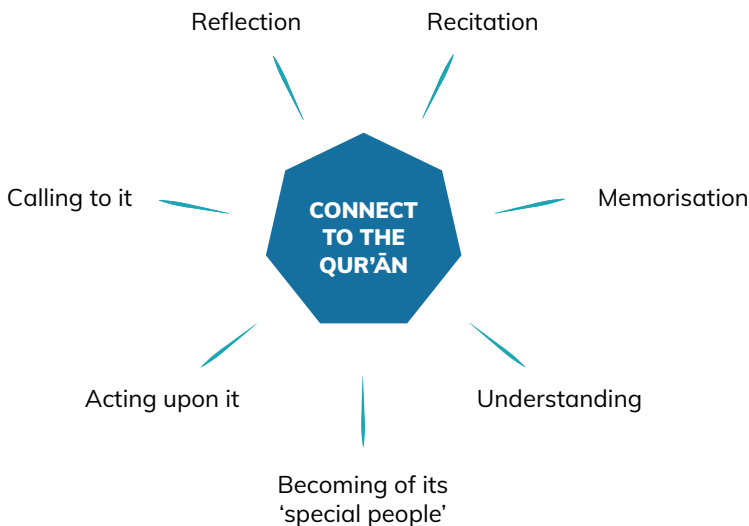


REFLECT AND INTERACT WITH THE QUR'ĀN

A powerful way to attain khushū' in ṣalāh is to reflect upon the Qur'ān. This is known as '*tadabbur*' in Arabic.

The Qur'ān is the eternal book of guidance. It is a cure for every disease - be it spiritual or physical. It is a light which illuminates the path of truth amidst the darkneses of falsehood. The Qur'ān contains legal rulings for humans to live on Allah's earth as His subservient slaves. It is a book of blessings and eternal wisdom; a warner and a giver of glad tidings.

Accordingly, reciting the Qur'ān or memorising its words is in itself not enough. Although both of these acts are essential, they must be accompanied by reflection and a deep commitment to 'live' the Qur'ān.



Allah ﷻ says, “This is a blessed Book which We revealed to you, so that they reflect upon its verses, and those with understanding may take heed” (38:29); and “Do they not, then, ponder upon the Qur’ān? Had it been from someone other than Allah, they would have found in it a great deal of discrepancy” (4:82).

Al-Sa’dī رحمه الله explained, “Allah ﷻ has commanded His servants to reflect on His Book, to ponder on its meanings, and to ponder deeply on its principles and lessons, along with pursuing whatever is necessary to achieve this noble aim. Reflecting on the book of Allah is the key to knowledge and all sciences. It is the source of all good and the fountain of all the sciences. It increases the īmān in one’s heart and makes it firmly rooted in it. The Qur’ān gives the slave the *ma’rifah* (knowledge and deep awareness) of his Lord; how all attributes of perfection belong to Him, and how He is pure from all deficiencies and shortcomings. It sets out the path that leads to Him, describes the characteristics of the people who are treading this path and what they will attain when they come to Him in the hereafter. It informs about the real enemy, the path which will lead to punishment, the characteristics of the people who are treading this path, and how they will be justly punished. The more the slave ponders upon the Qur’ān, the more he will increase in knowledge, good deeds and insight.”

For the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the pious predecessors رحمه الله, tadabbur was not a practice limited to Ramaḍān. It was their way of life. It was how they prayed. For without tadabbur, there is no ṣalāh.

Reflect

The Qur’ān and You

How would you describe your relationship with the Qur’ān? When you recite the Qur’ān, do its words pierce your mind? Do its meanings penetrate your heart? Does its beauty mesmerise you? What does the Qur’ān mean to you?

Once Abū Bakr رحمه الله said to the Prophet ﷺ, “O Messenger of Allah, you have become old.” He ﷺ said, “(The sūrah) هُودُ الْوَاقِعَةُ, الْمُرْسَلَاتُ, هُودُ and إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ have aged me” (Tirmidhī).

Imām al-Munāwī ﷺ mentioned that these sūrahs took a toll on the Prophet ﷺ because they contained descriptions of the horrors of the Day of Judgement and the punishments meted out to earlier nations. They prematurely aged him because he feared similar punishments afflicting his ummah.

Therefore, the Qur'ān cannot just be recited or chanted only for the sake of blessings. Rather, it has to be read with reflection and contemplation. The above ḥadīth demonstrates that the Qur'ān did not just enter the heart of the Prophet ﷺ, but that its impact was so profound that it physically changed him.

Why Your Heart Needs Tadabbur

Ibn al-Qayyim ﷺ wrote, “There is nothing more beneficial for the heart than reading the Qur'ān with contemplation and reflection. This is what inspires love and longing for Allah ﷻ. It generates fear of Him and hope in Him. It makes one turn in repentance to Him and rely on Him. It causes one to fully submit to Him, leave matters in His Hands and be pleased with His Decree. It inspires patience and gratitude and is a means of acquiring all of the characteristics which give life to and perfect the heart.

If people knew what recitation of the Qur'ān with contemplation contains, they would devote themselves to it at the expense of anything else. When one recites with reflection and comes across an āyah that he needs to cure his heart, he repeats it. He may repeat it a hundred times, or even throughout the entire night, as was reported about the Prophet ﷺ and the early predecessors ﷺ. Hence, reciting a single āyah of the Qur'ān with contemplation and reflection is better than reciting the entire Qur'ān without any contemplation or reflection.

This is more beneficial for the heart, more likely to increase one's īmān and leads one to taste the sweetness of īmān and the Qur'ān. This was the habit of the early predecessors ﷺ, whereby one of them would repeat the same āyah throughout the night until morning came. Likewise, it has been reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood repeating one āyah till morning came.”

Abū Dharr ﷺ said, “The Prophet ﷺ stood reciting an āyah and repeating it until morning came. The āyah was, ‘If You punish them, they are Your slaves; and if You forgive them, indeed You, only You, are the Almighty, the All-Wise’ (5:118)” (Ibn Mājah).

“Do not scatter the Qur’ān (i.e. read it hurriedly) like poor-quality dates are scattered, and do not recite it quickly like poetry is recited. Take a pause at its wonders, move the hearts with it, and do not let your concern be to (merely) reach the end of the sūrah.”
- ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd

Practical Tips for Tadabbur

a Think of Who is talking to you

When you begin reciting the Qur’ān, Imām al-Ghazālī advised that you should bring the Greatness of the One who is addressing you to the forefront of your mind. The words you are reciting did not originate from a human being; they are the words of the Lord of the worlds. (See p. 48 to remind yourself of the Greatness of Allah).

b Allah is talking to you

Ibn al-Qayyim said, “If you want to benefit from the Qur’ān, gather your heart when it is recited, focus your hearing, and act like you are being directly addressed by Allah, as it is an address from Him to you upon the tongue of His Messenger. Allah said, ‘Indeed there is a reminder in that for whoever has a heart or whoever listens attentively with his heart present’” (50:37).

Imām al-Ghazālī said, “One is to assume that he is the one who is being addressed in every statement in the Qur’ān. Hence, if he hears a command or prohibition, he assumes that he is the one who is being commanded and prohibited. If he hears a promise or threat, he does the same. If he hears the stories of the past and those of prophets, he realises that entertainment is not the objective, but rather, it is for him to take lessons, and to extract from its content what he needs.”

Try to personalise the Qur’ān to your situation whilst reciting it. Relate it to your own life and your own experiences. Ask yourself: what is Allah telling me? What is Allah asking me to do? How can I apply it to my life?

The āyah also alludes to the importance of having a healthy and sound heart. The Qur’ān can only benefit you if it finds a suitable recipient to enter: a pure

heart. Your heart must be purified from *shirk*, sins, and the diseases of the heart (e.g. envy, pride, hatred, hypocrisy).

“Those before you saw the Qur’ān as a correspondence from their Lord; they would ponder upon it at night and review it in the day.” - **al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī** ﷺ

c Visualise

Think deeply about the words you are reciting and try to visualise the meaning they are conveying. For instance, when reading about the descriptions of Hell-fire in Juz ‘Amma, make the imagery come alive in your mind. To achieve this, repeat the āyāt wherever necessary.

d Feel the emotion and repeat the āyah

The Qur’ān was sent down for us to derive guidance from it and to increase our īmān in Allah ﷻ, the Prophet ﷺ and the hereafter. Allah ﷻ says, “And when His āyāt are recited to them, it increases them in īmān” (8:2). Accordingly, when reciting an āyah about Paradise, feel your longing for Paradise increasing. On feeling this effect in your heart, continue to repeat this āyah. Similarly, when reciting an āyah about Hell-fire, feel fear in your heart. On feeling this effect, keep repeating the āyah. Let it move you to the point of crying over it. Similarly, when reading an āyah about the greatness of Allah ﷻ, feel shyness and awe before Him. Keep repeating this āyah until you feel the effect of it in your heart.

Try to recall the last time you heard Sūrah Yusuf in tarāwīḥ. Did you hear sniffing and people rummaging in their pockets for tissues when the imām recited the latter āyāt of the story? Even though our īmān is weak and we find it easier to cry at the stories which tug at our hearts, the principle is the same. Whether your recitation includes a touching story or an āyah about the creative power of Allah ﷻ, let it move you emotionally. Let it pierce your heart.

Mālik b. Dīnār ﷺ used to recite the āyah ‘Had We sent down this Qur’ān to a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, burst apart from the awe for Allah...’ (59:21), and then say, “I swear to you, no slave truly believes in the Qur’ān except that his heart bursts open.”

e Interact with the āyāt

Strive to emulate the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by interacting with the āyāt you are reciting during voluntary prayers. When you come across an āyah about mercy, stop and ask Allah for His mercy. When you come across an āyah about punishment, stop and ask Allah's protection. When you come across an āyah where you can make a du'ā', stop and ask Allah. 'Awf b. Mālik ؓ said, "I stood up to pray along with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ one night. He got up and recited Sūrah al-Baqarah. When he came to an āyah of mercy, he stopped and made du'ā', and when he came to an āyah of punishment, he stopped and asked for Allah's protection" (Abū Dāwūd).

Masrūq ؓ said, "Ā'ishah ؓ recited the āyah:

فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَّانَا عَذَابَ السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾ إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٨﴾

'But Allah was gracious to us and protected us from the punishment of the scorching fire. We used to pray to Him before. He is surely the Most Kind, the Very Merciful' (52:27).

Then she said, 'O Allah, be gracious to us and protect us from the punishment of the scorching fire.'" A'mash ؓ, one of the narrators, was asked if she said this in her ṣalāh. He replied, "Yes" (Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr).

'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ had two black lines on his face due to weeping excessively. Once, whilst patrolling Madinah at night, he passed by a house and heard a man reciting in his ṣalāh, "By Mount Tūr" (52:1), until he reached, "Indeed, the punishment of your Lord will certainly take place— none will avert it" (52-7:8). He said, "By the Lord of the Ka'bah, this oath is the truth!" He stepped down from his donkey and leaned on the wall. He remained there for a short time, and then returned home. For the next month, he remained ill. People would visit him, and not know the cause of his illness.

“Whoever loves the Qur’ān, loves Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.”
- ‘Abdullāh b. Mas’ūd ؓ

- f Study the Qur’ān.** To achieve the above (points a-e), you will have to make an effort to study and understand the meanings and message of the Qur’ān.

Some ways you can do this are:

- Learn Arabic. This will open the door to understanding the meaning of the Qur'ān.
- Learn the translation of the meanings of the Qur'ān. There are many classes, books, apps and videos dedicated to this subject. Even reading a simple translation is better than reading none at all.
- Attend Qur'ān classes. Increase your knowledge of the Qur'ān by studying it along with the other sciences of the dīn.
- Listen to reliable tafsīr (explanation of the Qur'ān) lectures.
- Read reliable tafsīr books. Some of these have been translated into English.
- Whenever you are reflecting on the words of the Qur'ān, always take heed not to fall into the trap of interpreting the book of Allah according to your own whims and desires, or speaking about His words without knowledge.

Once you have studied the meanings of an āyah and have understood its context and lessons, then you should memorise it, if you have not done so already. Thereafter, recite those āyāt in your ṣalāh - especially in tahajjud. Allah willing, you will feel a huge difference in the sweetness of your ṣalāh. Remember to: **(1) personalise, (2) visualise and (3) interact with the āyāt!**

“Whoever desires knowledge should read the Qur'ān, for indeed it contains the knowledge of the earlier ones and the latter ones.”
- ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd

But I am not a scholar...?

There is a misconception amongst some people that tadabbur is limited to scholars. This is not true. The disbelievers were condemned in the Qur'ān for not doing tadabbur. Allah ﷻ said, “Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'ān, or are there locks upon (their) hearts” (47:24)? Therefore, as believers, we have no excuse for failing to perform tadabbur. Tadabbur is essential to our lives and for building a strong connection with Allah ﷻ.

“Do whatever you wish to get close to Allah ﷻ, but know you will never get closer to Him with anything more beloved to Him than His own words (i.e. the Qur’ān).”

- Khabbāb ؓ



RECITE THE QUR’ĀN SLOWLY AND BEAUTIFULLY

Increase your khushū‘ in ṣalāh by reciting the Qur’ān clearly and slowly. Beautify your voice as much as you can.

Recite with tartīl

When reciting the Qur’ān, the Prophet ﷺ was instructed by Allah ﷻ to recite with ‘tartīl’ (73:4). *Tartīl* refers to reciting slowly and calmly, making each word distinct, and not exceeding the limits. Reciting like this ensures that the tongue, heart and the limbs and organs are in perfect harmony with each other. To recite with tartīl, an effort must be made to learn tajwīd. Reciting with tartīl will also help you do tadabbur.

Qatādah ؓ narrated that Anas b. Mālīk ؓ was asked, “How was the recitation of the Prophet ﷺ?” He replied, “It was elongated. He then recited بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ elongating بِسْمِ اللَّهِ, elongating الرَّحْمَنِ and elongating الرَّحِيمِ ” (Bukhārī).

Pausing at the end of each āyah is essential as it gives you sufficient time to reflect on the words you are reciting. Umm Salamah ؓ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would break down his recitation of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and would pause at the end of each āyah (Abū Dāwūd).

Ḥaḍḥaḥ ؓ said, “I never saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ praying voluntary prayers (*nawāfil*) sitting, until a year before his death. He would pray his voluntary prayers sitting. He would recite the sūrah slowly and distinctly until it would seem to be longer than other sūrahs which were actually longer than it” (Muslim).

Sometimes we recite very fast to complete a sūrah. Similarly, we may witness 'super high speeds' in the tarāwīḥ prayers during Ramaḍān. However, this is contrary to the sunnah and does not help us attain the objectives of the Qur'ān. Slow recitation is vital for absorbing the message of the Qur'ān and for reflecting on what Allah ﷻ is saying. Repeating certain āyāt is critical if you want to strengthen your īmān through the Qur'ān. This, however, is impossible if your aim is just to reach the end of a sūrah, juz or even the whole of the Qur'ān. A man came to 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd ؓ and said, "I recite all the mufaṣṣal sūrahs in one rak'ah." Upon this 'Abdullāh ؓ said, "(Do you recite it) hastily like the recitation of poetry? Indeed, there are people who recite the Qur'ān, but it does not go down beyond their collar bones. However, it benefits when it enters the heart and becomes deeply-rooted in it. The best of (the actions) in ṣalāh are bowing and prostration. I am quite aware of the similar sūrahs which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to combine together: two sūrahs in every rak'ah" (Muslim).

Beautify your voice

Strive to beautify your voice whilst reciting the Qur'ān, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Beautify the Qur'ān with your voices" (Abū Dāwūd). He ﷺ also said, "He who does not recite the Qur'ān melodiously is not one of us" (Abū Dāwūd).

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to hear the Prophet ﷺ recite the Qur'ān? His Companion al-Barā' b. 'Āzib ؓ said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reciting **وَالْقَيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ** in 'Ishā' and I have never heard anyone who had a better voice or recitation than his" (Bukhārī).

Moreover, the spiritual intensity of his recitation is indicated in the following ḥadīth: "Allah does not listen to anything as He listens to the recitation of the Qur'ān by a Prophet who recites the Qur'ān audibly and melodiously" (Bukhārī).

Numerous accounts from the Companions ؓ give us a glimpse into their relationship with the Qur'ān and their beautiful recitation of it. Once the Prophet ﷺ said to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī ؓ, "If you were to see me, as I was listening to your recitation last night (you would have felt delighted). You have certainly been given a 'flute' from the flutes of the family of Dāwūd (i.e. a great melodious voice)" (Muslim).

Heartfelt recitation

The purpose of melodious recitation is not merely to ensure that the recitation of the Qur’ān sounds good; instead, it is to ensure that the recitation is beautiful, with complete focus and khushū’. Such a recitation would inevitably result in the heart being moved. It should increase your fear of Allah ﷻ and provide peace. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Of those who recite the Qur’ān with the best voice is the one who, when you hear him recite, you think that he fears Allah” (Ibn Mājah).

When reciting the Qur’ān, try to cry as this was the practice of the pious people of the past. Allah ﷻ says, “When the āyāt of the Most Merciful were recited before them, they used to fall down in prostration, weeping” (19:58).

Rate your recitation: Would the Prophet ﷺ stand and listen to you recite?

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said, “One night, at the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, I was late returning from ‘Ishā’. When I came after some time, he ﷺ said, ‘Where were you?’ I said, ‘I was listening to the recitation of a man from your Companions رضي الله عنهم; I have never heard a recitation or a voice like his from anyone.’” She says, “So he got up and I got up with him, to go and listen to him. Then he turned to me and said, ‘This is Sālim, the freed slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah. All praise is for Allah who has created such men amongst my ummah’” (Ibn Mājah).



BE CALM AND LENGTHEN YOUR ṢALĀH

Calmness and Tranquility

Attaining khushū' in ṣalāh requires time. Give each posture its due and perform it according to the Sunnah. Be calm and do not rush through your ṣalāh just to get to the end.

Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrated that a man entered the Masjid to pray whilst the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was in the corner of the Masjid. He then came and greeted him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him, “Go back and pray, for you have not prayed.” The man went back and prayed and then came to greet him again. The Prophet ﷺ returned his greeting and said, “Go back and pray, for you have not prayed.” On the third time, the man said, “Teach me.” He ﷺ said, “When you stand up for ṣalāh, perform wuḍū thoroughly, then face the qiblah and do takbīr. Recite what is easy for you from the Qur’ān, and then bow until you feel at rest in your rukū'. Then raise your head until you stand straight. Then prostrate until you feel at rest in your sajdah. Then get up until you feel at rest in your sitting posture. Then prostrate until you feel at rest in your sajdah. Then get up and stand straight. Then do that in your entire prayer” (Bukhārī).

On another occasion, he ﷺ saw a man who did not perform rukū' properly and was pecking in his sujūd whilst he was praying. So he said, “If he was to die like this, he would die on other than the religion of Muḥammad.” Then he said, “The example of the one who does not perform rukū' properly and pecks in his sujūd is like the hungry person who eats a date or two; they are not sufficient for him” (Majma' al-Zawā'id).

Just as eating one or two dates will not satisfy you, rushing through your ṣalāh will prevent you from feeling its sweetness and joy. The ṣalāh will feel laborious and constrictive, and will not nourish your soul. It is for this reason that the

Prophet ﷺ forbade us from ‘pecking’ in our ṣalāh. Pecking refers to the time it takes a bird to peck at its food. The Prophet ﷺ said, “The ṣalāh of a man who does not straighten his back in rukū‘ and sujūd is not sufficient” (Tirmidhī).

Whilst praying, avoid glancing to your right or left. Do not fidget or play with a thread in your clothes. Instead, be calm, give each posture its due and keep your thoughts focused on Allah. Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib ؓ once saw a man playing with his beard, so he remarked, “If his heart had khushū‘, his limbs would also have khushū‘, i.e. they would be still and humble.”

‘Abdullāh b. Muslim ؓ said about his father Muslim b. Yasār ؓ, “When he would pray, it was as though he was a pole. He would not incline like this or like that.” He was also described as being like “a discarded cloth” when he would pray. He would say to his family, “Speak, as I do not hear what you say.” There was once a fire in his house whilst he was praying. This was mentioned to him and he said, “I did not realise (that it happened).”

Be Eager and Lengthen Your Ṣalāh

Lengthen your ṣalāh to attain khushū‘. Do this especially when you feel spiritually inspired and can ward off Shayṭān’s whispers. Likewise, aim to lengthen your ṣalāh in virtuous places and during special occasions, such as in the holy cities and during Ramaḍān. Your heart will be more receptive at such times and places, so take advantage by pushing yourself to stand for long durations. Soon, inshā’Allāh, you will taste the sweetness of standing in front of Him and will rush to it eagerly.

‘Ā’ishah ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ used to pray (for so long) during the night that his feet would swell up. She asked him, “Why do you do this, O Messenger of Allah when Allah has already forgiven your previous and upcoming sins?” He ﷺ replied, “O ‘Ā’ishah, should I not be a thankful slave?” (Muslim).

The Prophet ﷺ would stand up during the night and recite lengthy sūrah. Ḥudhayfah ؓ narrates that he saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ praying at night. He ﷺ “prayed four rak‘āt and recited in them al-Baqarah, Āal ‘Imrān, al-Nisā’, al-Mā’idah or al-An‘ām” (Abū Dāwūd).

In addition to qiyām, the Prophet ﷺ remained in rukū' and sujūd for an equally long amount of time. 'Awf b. Mālik ؓ says, "I stood up to pray along with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ one night. He got up and recited Sūrah al-Baqarah. When he came to an āyah of mercy, he stopped and made du'ā', and when he came to an āyah of punishment, he stopped and asked for Allah's protection. Then he bowed for as long as he stood (reciting Sūrah al-Baqarah), saying in his rukū': *سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْحَبْرُوتِ وَالْمَلَكُوتِ وَالْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَالْعَظَمَةِ* (see p. 155). Then he prostrated for as long as he stood, reciting the (above). Then he stood up and recited Sūrah Āl 'Imrān and then recited many sūrahs, one after the other" (Abū Dāwūd). In another narration, 'Ā'ishah ؓ mentioned that the duration of each of his prostrations would be equivalent to reciting fifty āyāt (Bukhārī).

The Prophet ﷺ would pray for so long that even his Companions ؓ would become tired. 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd ؓ said, "One night, I prayed with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He prayed for so long that an evil thought came to me." It was said, "What was it?" He replied, "I thought of sitting down and leaving him" (Muslim).

The length of the Prophet's recitations and prostrations indicate how much joy and contentment he experienced in his ṣalāh. Following in his footsteps, the Companions ؓ and the righteous of this ummah have also been known to spend hours conversing and pleading with their Lord. 'Uthmān ؓ would complete the entire Qur'ān in one rak'ah. Similar feats have also been reported about Tamīm al-Dārī, Sa'īd b. Jubayr and Imām Abū Ḥanīfah amongst others ؓ. Such lengthy acts were only possible because Allah placed barakah in their time.

“If your hearts were pure, they would never have enough of reciting Allah's words.”

- 'Uthmān b. 'Affān ؓ



REMEMBER DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER IN AND OUTSIDE ṢALĀH

Whenever you stand to pray, pray as though this ṣalāh is your final ṣalāh. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Remember death in your ṣalāh because when an individual remembers death in his ṣalāh, he is more likely to perfect his ṣalāh. And pray the ṣalāh of an individual who thinks he is not going to be able to perform another prayer” (Daylamī).

Whilst praying ṣalāh, imagine that you are standing before Allah ﷻ and your reckoning is about to take place. Imagine you are on the *Ṣirāt* (the bridge): try to visualise Paradise in front of you and the Hell-fire beneath you.

During congregational prayers, try to visualise yourself on the Day of Judgement when you are standing in front of Allah ﷻ as He says, “And they will be presented before your Lord in rows...” (18:48).

A predecessor رضي الله عنه said, “If only you had witnessed one of them when he stood up to pray; when he would stand in his place of prayer and commence with the words of his Master, it would cross his mind that he is now standing in the station where the people will stand in front of the Lord of the worlds. This would rip his heart open and make him forget everything else.”

Allah ﷻ says, “And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for those who have *khushūʿ*; those who are ***certain that they will meet their Lord*** and that they will return to Him” (2:45-6).

This āyah states that in order to enjoy *khushūʿ*, you must firmly believe that you will meet Allah ﷻ. To attain *khushūʿ*, strengthen your *īmān* in the hereafter and in meeting Him. Develop the yearning (*shawq*) and eagerness to meet Him and see Him in Jannah.

Death

Remembering death is vital to eliminate the love of this world from our hearts and getting closer to Allah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Frequently remember the destroyer of pleasures” i.e. death. (Tirmidhī).

An effective way to remember death is to visit graveyards. The Prophet ﷺ said, “I used to forbid you from visiting graves, but now go and visit them; for this softens the heart, makes the eyes weep and reminds one of the Hereafter” (Hākim).

Whilst visiting the graveyard, Imām al-Qurṭubī رحمه الله advises one to ponder and think about the lives and deaths of those who have gone. Reflect on how they achieved their worldly ambitions and gathered wealth, but were then cut off from it all. It is no longer of any use. Consider how the earth has wiped away the beauty of their faces; how they have disintegrated in their graves; and how their wives have become widows and their children orphans. Reflect on the folly of being deceived by material means, relying on good health and youth, and attaching oneself to entertainment and leisure. Reflect on the inevitability of ending up where they have ended up. Ponder on the state of the deceased: his legs are destroyed, his eyes have liquified, the worms have eaten his tongue, and the earth has consumed his teeth (adapted from al-Tadhkirah).

Saīd b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz رحمه الله used to weep when he would pray and tears would drip onto the mat. When praying on the mat, the person beside him would hear his weeping. He was asked, “What is this crying that you do during your ṣalāh?” He said, “Son, why are you asking me this?” The questioner replied, “I am hoping that Allah will benefit me through it.” Saīd رحمه الله said, “I have never stood up to pray except that Hell-fire appears in front of me.”

It was as though he could see Hell-fire burning and raging in front of him, whilst its inhabitants cry out, “‘Lord, let us out, and we will do righteous deeds, not what we did before!’ - ‘Did We not give you lives long enough so that whoever wanted to be mindful could have done so? The warner came to you, now taste the punishment.’ The evildoers will have nobody to help them” (35:37).



ALWAYS BE MINDFUL THAT YOU ARE TALKING TO ALLAH ﷻ AND THAT HE IS RESPONDING TO YOU

In ṣalāh, you are conversing with your Lord. As you talk to Him, He responds to you. Being mindful of this will increase your khushū‘ in ṣalāh.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Indeed, when one of you stands to pray, he stands up and privately converses with his Lord. Therefore, he should be careful in how he converses with Him” (Ḥākim).

Allāhu Akbar! Ṣalāh is your chance to privately converse with your Lord, your Master and your Creator.

This is demonstrated beautifully in the following ḥadīth:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Allah, the Most High, said, ‘I have divided the prayer (i.e. the Fātiḥah) between Myself and My slave equally and My slave shall have what he asked for.’ Therefore, when the slave says, ‘All praises and thanks are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,’ Allah says, ‘My slave has praised Me.’ When he says, ‘The All-Merciful, the Very Merciful,’ Allah says, ‘My slave has extolled Me.’ When he says, ‘Master of the Day of Judgement,’ Allah says, ‘My slave has glorified Me.’ (In another narration, he says, ‘My slave has entrusted his affairs to Me.’). When he says, ‘You Alone we worship and You Alone we ask for help,’ Allah says, ‘This is between Me and My slave and My slave shall have what he asked for.’ When he says, ‘Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have favoured, not of those who incur [Your] anger, nor of those who have gone astray,’ Allah says, ‘This is for My slave and My slave shall have what he asked for’” (Muslim).

(See p. 136 for the Arabic & English table.)

Imagine this! Each time you read an āyah, Allah ﷻ responds to you. Though you may be a weak, sinful and broken slave, Allah ﷻ listens to you! Not only does He listen, but He responds. Continuous awareness of Allah being present, listening and responding will increase your khushū' in ṣalāh.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said, "How extreme is the delight and happiness of the slave when his Lord says 'My slave' three times. By Allah, if the hearts were not clouded by the smoke of desires and lusts, they would erupt from joy and delight when their Lord, Creator and God says, 'My servant has praised Me, My servant has extolled me, My servant has glorified Me.'"

Once, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Ubayy b. Ka'b رضي الله عنه, "Indeed Allah has commanded me to recite the Qur'ān to you." Ubayy asked him, "Did Allah mention me to you by my name?" The Messenger ﷺ replied, "Allah mentioned you by your name." Upon hearing this, Ubayy started crying (Bukhārī). On hearing that Allah had mentioned him by name to His Prophet, Ubayy was overwhelmed with joy. Similarly, you should feel deep happiness and privileged to have Allah call you "My slave".

To be in direct conversation with the King of kings is truly a privilege. Bakr b. 'Abdillāh al-Muzanī رحمه الله said, "Who is like you, O son of Ādam? If you wish to enter upon your Master without permission, you can do so." He was asked, "How so?" He replied, "By perfecting your wuḍū and entering your place of prayer, you have entered upon your Master to speak to Him without any intermediaries."

“It is disliked for a person to stand up for prayer whilst he is feeling lazy. Rather, he should stand up for it happily, eagerly and enthusiastically, as he is conversing with Allah. Truly, Allah ﷻ is in front of Him, forgives him and responds to him when he asks from Him.”

- ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās رحمه الله



BRING YOUR HEART TO ṢALĀH: LOVE, HOPE AND FEAR

Think of the human being you love the most. Imagine a situation where you have not met for a year. Now is the time for you to finally reunite.

How will you feel? What will be running through your mind? How fast will your heart be beating?

Similarly, every ṣalāh is an occasion in which you reunite with Allah ﷻ after having been parted. You should feel the same trepidation and excitement at its arrival. As you journey towards Allah ﷻ, in and outside of your ṣalāh, there are three primary emotions you should try to cultivate in your heart: hope, fear and love.

“The heart in its journey to Allah is like a bird. Love is its head, and fear and hope are its two wings. When the head is healthy, then the two wings will fly well. When the head is cut off, the bird will die. When either of the two wings is damaged, the bird becomes vulnerable to every hunter and predator.”

- Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله

Hope

Hope in Allah ﷻ (*raḡā'*) is the first of these three emotions. Open your heart and allow it to become overwhelmed with the mercy and kindness of Allah ﷻ. *Raḡā'* springs from thinking good of Him and attaching your heart to Him. In a ḥadīth qudsī, Allah stated, “I am as My slave thinks of Me” (Bukhārī).

Remember that Allah ﷻ wants to forgive you. Allah does not want to ‘catch you out.’ Rather He ‘catches’ you when you fall, so long as you turn to Him. Allah ﷻ wants to forgive you, shower you with His mercy and guide you to Paradise. Believe this from the bottom of your heart.

Belief in the heart is not enough however. Your belief must be accompanied by action. You must make a distinction between *rajā'* and *tamannī* (wishful thinking). *Tamannī* is when you fail to take action, yet you still hope for a good outcome. Conversely, *rajā'* is when you take the means and place your hope in Him.

Such a hope, or *rajā'*, is achieved by acknowledging everything Allah has blessed you with. Always return to the Source of every blessing in your life Allah ﷻ, the Supreme Provider (*al-Razzāq*).

Another powerful way to fill your heart with hope in Allah ﷻ is by reflecting on His Beautiful Names. The more you know Allah, the more hope you will have in Him. Allah is *al-Muṣawwir* (The Fashioner); He has created you in the most beautiful form. Allah is *al-Raḥmān* (The Extremely Merciful); His mercy encompasses all of His creation. Allah ﷻ is The Concealer of sins (*al-Sittir*); He ﷻ will not expose you despite the multitude of your sins. Allah ﷻ is Gentle (*al-Raḥīm*); He loves gentleness. Allah is The Most Compassionate (*al-Ra'ūf*); His compassion knows no ends. Allah ﷻ is The Most Modest (*al-Ḥayy*); He feels shy to turn you back, empty-handed.

What choice do you have other than to have hope in Him?

Fear

Fear is the second emotion which should overwhelm you in ṣalāh. Fearing Allah ﷻ should make you tremble in awe of Him and humble you in front of Him.

Some say that we should mainly focus on loving Allah ﷻ and having hope in Him. They argue that positivity will bring people closer to the dīn. However, this is misleading and can damage our understanding and application of the dīn. Allah ﷻ says, "...They used to race towards the good deeds and invoke Us with hope and fear; and they were humbly submissive to Us" (21:90).

In a ḥadīth qudsī, Allah ﷻ says, "By My Glory, I will not combine two fears nor two assurances for My slave: if he feared Me in the world, I will grant him safety on the Day of Judgement. And if he felt safe from Me in the world, I will make him fear Me on the Day of Judgement." (Ibn Ḥibbān)

In life, you tend to run away from what you fear. For example, anyone who is scared of spiders or rodents will freeze or run away upon seeing them. However, fearing Allah ﷻ is unique and beautiful. It makes you flee to Him, and not away from Him. The more you fear Him, the more you turn to Him.

A fear of worldly matters is usually accompanied by a dislike of it. However, the fear of Allah is coupled with love and respect. You are in awe of Him. Although Allah ﷻ is beyond all worldly examples, think of an elderly grandfather or an older person who is well-respected. As soon as he enters the room, everyone falls quiet out of respect for him. The silence is not because this elder is a tyrant of the household; rather, it is because of the respect that his family accords him. This type of fear is known as *haybah* or *khashyah*, a reverential type of fear. It is this emotion that the senior Companion ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣؓ felt when he was in the presence of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He said even though he ﷺ was the most beloved of people to him, he could not describe him. This is because whenever he was in his company, he was unable to look directly at his blessed face. He would lower his head and humbly gaze downwards, out of deep respect and awe.

The fear of Allah ﷻ is not an irrational fear. It is a fear built on knowledge. The more you get to know Him, the more you fear Him. You are in constant awe of His majesty, greatness and power.

When the Prophet ﷺ saw Jibrīl in his original form, he had 600 wings, and his huge size filled the horizon between the sky and the earth. Jibrīl is the best of angels, who was tasked with the most prestigious responsibility of transmitting the word of Allah ﷻ. Despite his physical and spiritual greatness, the Prophet ﷺ saw him on the night of Mi‘rāj (ascension) looking like “a worn-out piece of cloth due to the fear of Allah” (Ṭabarānī). Jibrīl’s knowledge of Allah’s majesty and greatness reduced him to this state.

Aim to strike a balance between excessive fear and a lack of fear. If there's too much fear, you'll end up in despair. And if there's too little, you'll become complacent and feel secure from Allah's punishment. Fear is a deterrent. It prevents you from becoming distracted, disobeying Allah and falling off the right path.

Three steps to cultivate fear in your heart

①

Reflect on Allah's greatness, grandeur and majesty.

②

Reflect on the gravity of standing before Allah ﷻ, the terrors of the grave, the horrors of the Day of Judgement, the sharpness of the ṣirāṭ and the torment of the Hell-fire.

③

Think about your sins and shortcomings. Reflect on how little you have prepared for your journey to the hereafter.

A life between hope and fear

The pious people of the past would advise that during good times, when you are more likely to forget Allah ﷻ, you should increase your fear of Him. And during difficult times, you should increase your hope in Him. Other scholars stated that throughout one's life, fear should be dominant over hope; but towards the end of one's life, hope should become dominant.

When Mu'ādh b. Jabal ؓ was in his final moments, he turned to Allah ﷻ and said, "O Allah, indeed I used to fear you, but now I have hope in You. O Allah, indeed, you know that I did not love the world nor want to remain in it for long to dig wells or plant trees. Rather it was to experience thirst in the midday heat during the long fasts; to struggle through standing for hours at night in prayer; and to kneel in the company of scholars in the gatherings of dhikr."

Anas ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ entered upon a young boy who was dying. The Prophet ﷺ asked him, "How are you?" The boy replied, "O Messenger of Allah, I swear by Allah that I have hope in Allah and I am scared over my sins." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "These two (qualities) do not gather in a slave's heart in such a moment except that Allah gives him what he hopes for, and protects him from what he is scared of." (Tirmidhī)

Love

Love is the third - and most important - emotion.

Love is the greatest station the seeker on the path to Allah ﷻ can attain. The love of Allah ﷻ is the purest and greatest of all loves. It gives life to the heart, it is sustenance for the soul, and is the roadway to eternal success. When your heart overflows with His love, you will experience genuine bliss and contentment. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, “Know that there are three things that push the hearts towards Allah: love, fear, and hope. The strongest of these three is love; and it is something that is sought-after in and of itself, since it is something that is desired both in this world and the hereafter, as opposed to fear, which will disappear in the Hereafter. Allah says, *‘For certain, the friends of Allah shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve’* (10:62).”

Our purpose in life is to worship (‘ibādah) Allah. ‘Ibādah consists of: (1) utmost humility and (2) utmost love. Without love, there is no ‘ibādah. Without love, we fail in actualising our purpose of existence. Love is the ‘soul’ of worship.

Loving Allah ﷻ is beautiful. It cannot be compared to loving any of His creation, as His creation will cease to be, whilst He is the Ever-Lasting. His creation has limits, whilst He is the Limitless, the All-Encompassing and the Most Able. Loving Allah ﷻ is beautiful because there is no one kinder, more giving and more appreciative than Him. As humans, we are prone to making mistakes, and we are prone to not forgiving those who have erred. On the other hand, Allah ﷻ loves to forgive and will forgive us even if we go to Him with mountains of sins. Our fellow humans tire of our persistent questioning and begging. However, Allah ﷻ, our Generous Lord, does not stop giving and is angered when we *don’t* ask from Him!

“Love puts the slave on the path to his Beloved; and the speed and strength of his journey to Him is in accordance with how strong or weak this love for Him is.”

- Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله

Loving Allah ﷻ can only be achieved when you prefer Him over everything else. You must love Him more than you love your parents, children, spouse, friends and wealth.

Love - by the consensus of the scholars - is an obligation (*farḍ*) and one of the fundamental aspects of the dīn. When considering matters that are farḍ in our dīn, loving Allah ﷻ does often not cross our minds. Moreover, when we reflect on loving Allah ﷻ, we tend to equate love to obedience. We often limit our perception of Allah ﷻ as someone Very Powerful and Scary. Yes, Allah ﷻ is Extremely Powerful, and this should make us tremble, yet equally, there is nothing more soothing and comforting to the soul than His love.

There is a vast difference between someone who obeys Allah ﷻ out of love for Him, and someone who obeys Him without love. When a lover obeys his beloved, the obedience is done willingly and sincerely. Such a level of obedience differs from that brought on by force. The former experiences happiness and joy in willingly complying to the orders, whereas the latter feels burdened, and may even resent the order. Love, therefore, is the driving force and the impetus of 'ibādah.

It is this love of Allah ﷻ that makes the slave-Creator relationship special. This love makes the servant eager to be in His company, to converse with Him and do everything possible to please Him. Obedience with love is not just a tick-box exercise that solely involves the fulfilment of obligations. Instead, it consists of a sincere desire to be with Him and remember Him. Love makes the slave eager to meet Him. Love is what makes him cry out in the depths of the night, "My Lord, do not deprive me of the greatest joy: the joy of seeing You in the Final Abode."

The next time you stand up for your ṣalāh, fill your heart with the aforementioned emotions: hope, fear and love.

(اللَّهُمَّ) إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ ، وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ ، وَحُبَّ عَمَلٍ يُقَرِّبُنِي إِلَى حُبِّكَ.

(O Allah), I ask You for Your love, the love of those whom You love, and the love of deeds which will bring me closer to Your love (Tirmidhī).

“Know that when the love of Allah ﷻ becomes firm in the heart, its effects appear on the limbs: the slave diligently obeys Him, eagerly serves Him, and strives to attain His pleasure. He finds joy in privately conversing with Him, is content with His decree, and longs to meet him. He derives comfort in remembering Him, feels estranged with other than Him, flees from the people, and seeks intimacy with Him in seclusion. The world departs from his heart; he loves everything Allah loves and prefers Him over everything other than Him.”

- Ibn Juzayy رحمه الله



THE SECRET OF ṢALĀH: FOCUS YOUR HEART FULLY ON HIM

We now arrive at the final and potentially the most important way to achieve khushū' in your ṣalāh. Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله has described it as 'the secret and essence of ṣalāh.'

The secret of ṣalāh, and what transforms it from being a lifeless body to a real, moving and powerful force is: turning to Allah ﷻ fully and completely with your heart. During ṣalāh it is not permissible to turn your face away from the qiblah. Similarly, as His sincere slave, it is not befitting to turn your heart away from your Lord to matters other than Him.

When placing your heart before Allah ﷻ, do it with utmost humility, as though you are seeing Him. When asked by Jibrīl عليه السلام to define iḥsān, the Prophet ﷺ said, "That you worship Allah as though you are seeing Him; for if you cannot see Him, He truly sees you" (Muslim).

The attainment of iḥsān should be every believer's life goal. Iḥsān is to strive to worship Allah ﷻ with the presence of the heart and watchful awareness

(*murāqabah*). The reward of this will be the best of rewards: seeing Allah ﷻ Himself in Jannah inshā'Allah.

Ṣalāh is akin to a heavily guarded treasure chest that can be opened only with a special key. That key is to turn towards Allah ﷻ and turn away from everything other than Him.

Go to Allah ﷻ with full presence and concentration. Incline to Him completely. Focus on Him Alone. If you turn to Him, He will turn to you. If you turn away from Him, He will turn away from you.

Achieve this by removing the world from your heart and purifying your heart from desires and doubts.

Think of a cup which is full. To add to it, you must first throw out some of its contents. Likewise, the treasures of ṣalāh cannot enter a heart that is filled with concerns for the dunyā, is steeped in desires, and is riddled with doubts. These must first be removed.

Similarly, clear your mind from all evil thoughts and ideas. Instead, steer your mind to think about Allah ﷻ: His majesty, His beauty, His kindness, His love and His Generosity.

Ḥassān b. 'Aṭiyyah ؓ said, "Indeed two men can be performing the same ṣalāh, but the difference between them is as vast as the distance between the heaven and earth. This is because one of them has fully directed his heart towards Allah ﷻ, whereas the other one is heedless and inattentive."

“When you stand to pray with humility in front of Allah ﷻ, then stand as Allah has commanded you to do so. Beware of forgetfulness and being distracted. Beware of Allah ﷻ looking at you, yet you look at other than Him. Beware of asking Your Lord for Paradise and seeking His protection from the Hell-fire whilst your heart is elsewhere and has no idea of what your tongue is uttering.”

- al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ؓ

The 3 components of focusing your heart on Allah

①

The focus of the heart: Safeguard your heart from desires, from the worldly thoughts and the whispers of Shayṭān as they will reduce the reward of ṣalāh.

②

The focus of iḥsān: Completely give your heart and its focus to Allah ﷻ. Worship Him as though you see Him.

③

The focus of reflection: Contemplate on the Qur'ān and each component of the ṣalāh with its distinctive characteristics.

Following this chapter's exploration of the ten ways of attaining khushū' in ṣalāh, the next chapter will take you on a journey through ṣalāh. By understanding and recollecting the significance of each posture, you will find your khushū' increasing by the will of Allah ﷻ.



CHAPTER 3 - REVIEW & REFLECT

- 1 When your mind wanders in ṣalāh, what was the practical action taught to the Companion ﷺ by the Prophet ﷺ that you can also implement in your ṣalāh?
- 2 Are you able to teach a child/friend the meanings of everything you say in ṣalāh? Learn the meanings of what you utter in ṣalāh. Continuously repeat it to yourself (orally, by writing, listening to an audio of the meanings) until you feel confident to teach it to them.
- 3 What are the three benefits of alternating between the adhkār within your ṣalāh?
- 4 Why is the act of simply reciting the Qur'ān not enough? Why must it be accompanied with *tadabbur* (reflection)?
- 5 List five practical steps to reciting Qur'ān with *tadabbur*.
- 6 How is reciting the Qur'ān slowly and beautifully conducive to attaining *khushū'*?
- 7 How can you increase your hope in Allah ﷻ?
- 8 List three means for cultivating the fear of Allah in your heart.
- 9 "When the love of Allah becomes firm in your heart, its effect appears on the body." Explain how this manifests itself.
- 10 What is the secret of ṣalāh?
- 11 What are the different stages of the hereafter you can visualise in your ṣalāh?
- 12 It is vital to form a strong bond with the Qur'ān *outside* of ṣalāh and to feel the sweetness of the Qur'ān *within* your ṣalāh. What new habit are you going to try and cultivate starting from today to strengthen this bond?
- 13 Are you able to pause at the end of each āyah of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, and absorb into your heart how Allah ﷻ is responding to you?

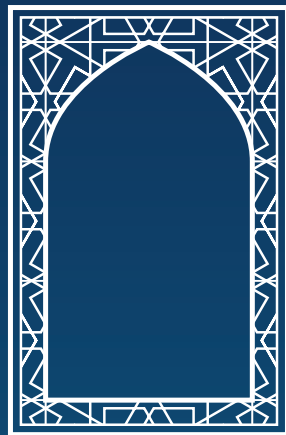
“

Remember death in your ṣalāh because when an individual remembers death in his ṣalāh, he is more likely to perfect his ṣalāh. And pray the ṣalāh of an individual who thinks he is not going to be able to perform another prayer.

- The Messenger of Allah ﷺ (Daylamī)

”

CHAPTER FOUR



A JOURNEY THROUGH ŞALĀH

Ṣalāh is a unique act of worship involving every one of our body parts. Every requirement and component of ṣalāh has its own impact, its own flavour and experience. Every action and statement have their own form of servitude (*‘ubūdiyyah*) to Allah ﷻ. The journey through ṣalāh is remarkable. Each part is a unique milestone, bringing its own sweetness (*ḥalāwah*) and joy.

Ṣalāh combines the recitation of the Qur’ān, dhikr and du’ā’. Each one of these is an extremely praiseworthy act of worship outside of ṣalāh. Ṣalāh, however, combines all three acts in one setting. Moreover, ṣalāh is an act where you simultaneously worship Allah ﷻ using your tongue, body and heart.

Ṣalāh differs from fasting, zakāh and ḥajj in that we are obligated to perform ṣalāh every day; not once but five times. Praying five times a day allows us to renew our pledge to Allah ﷻ five times a day. As humans, we immerse ourselves in this world and, therefore, tend to forget Him. As soon as we are about to drown in our heedlessness (*ghaflah*), ṣalāh intervenes, offering a lifeline that pulls us swiftly out of it. The sins perpetrated in between the prayers take us away from Him, harden our hearts and stop us from being true slaves. Ṣalāh is, therefore, our ‘spiritual cleanser’, expiating the sins committed between two prayers.

This chapter will take you on a journey through ṣalāh, exploring the secrets and significance of each posture, along with their various adhkār.



ATTENDING THE COURT OF THE ALMIGHTY

If you are going to meet an important leader or king, you will make sure that you are prepared. You will shower, perfume and wear your smartest clothes. When preparing for ṣalāh, you are actually preparing to meet the King of all kings: Allah ﷻ Himself. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When one of you performs ṣalāh, let him wear both of his garments, for Allah is most worthy of being adorned for” (Bayhaqī).

Studies in psychology and science have shown that what you wear affects your behaviour and mental state. Allah ﷻ says, “O Children of Ādam, take on your adornment at every place of worship.” (7:31). Commenting on this āyah, the scholars have mentioned that it is praiseworthy to adorn oneself, apply perfume and use miswāk in preparation for ṣalāh. Doing this will:

- 1 Give us reward for acting upon the Sunnah.
- 2 Prepare us, mentally and psychologically, for ṣalāh.
- 3 Helps us give ṣalāh its due importance and seriousness, and thereby improve the quality of our ṣalāh.

Adorn yourself for the honour of meeting Allah ﷻ, *al-A'la* (The Greatest). Preparing yourself in such a manner should be out of your humility and respect for Him, not out of personal vanity or pride.

Miswāk

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

“When the servant uses the siwāk and then stands to pray, an angel stands behind him and listens to his recitation. The angel draws near until he puts his mouth on (the reciter’s) mouth. Nothing of the Qur’ān comes out of his mouth except that it enters the heart of the angel. Thus, purify your mouths for the Qur’ān” (Bazzār).

“If I were not afraid of overburdening my ummah, I would have commanded them to use the siwāk for every ṣalāh” (Bukhārī).

“The siwāk purifies the mouth and pleases the Lord” (Nasā’ī).

Reflect

Just as you cover your body in ṣalāh (*satr al-‘awrah*), Allah ﷻ, the Concealer of sins (*al-Sittir*), covers your sins. Remembering your sins (of which only Allah ﷻ knows) should invoke shyness in you, and fill your mind with remorse and embarrassment. It should make you lower your head and turn to Him in the manner befitting of a sincere repentant slave.



WUḌŪ'

Performing ṣalāh is one of the most rewarding actions. However, its fruits are not just within ṣalāh itself, but also extend to the preparations carried out beforehand. The principal preparation is wuḍū'.

Wuḍū' is a compulsory requirement for ṣalāh. Without it, your ṣalāh is invalid.

Wuḍū, however, is not just a physical action. It is deeply spiritual. Like the majority of deeds, wuḍū' has both an inner and an outer dimension. Whilst its outer dimension is to purify the body's various parts from physical dirt, its inner dimension is to purify yourself from the 'dirt' of your sins. This is why Allah ﷻ says, "Indeed Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves" (2:222).

To transform your wuḍū' from a mere physical act of cleansing to the great act of devotion that it is, try to keep in mind at least one of the four pointers below during your wuḍū:

1 Visualise your sins being forgiven

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Whoever performs wuḍū', and does so in an excellent manner, his sins will leave from his body, even coming out from under his nails" (Muslim). In another ḥadīth, the Prophet ﷺ explained in detail how sins leave each part of the body that is washed in wuḍū' (Muslim).

Once, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān ؓ performed wuḍū' and then smiled. He then asked, "Do you know what made me smile?" He went on to say, "The Prophet ﷺ performed wuḍū' like I just did, and then smiled. He then asked, 'Do you know what made me smile?'... We replied, 'Allah and His Messenger ﷺ know best.' He ﷺ said, 'Indeed when the servant performs wuḍū', and perfects it; and then enters his prayer, and perfects it – he comes out from his prayer as he came out from his mother's stomach without any sins'" (Aḥmad).

Whilst performing wuḍū', imagine your sins are leaving your body. Imagine the sins committed by your hands are being forgiven as you wash them. Imagine all the foul things that you said are being washed away as you gargle. And imagine the sins that you walked towards are leaving you as you wash your feet.

2 Your status raised

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Shall I not inform you of that through which Allah forgives sins and raises ranks by?" They said, "Of course, O Messenger of Allah!" He ﷺ said, "Performing wuḍū' thoroughly despite the difficulties, walking lots of steps towards the Maṣājid and waiting for one ṣalāh after the other..." (Muslim).

When it is cold, and you would rather remain warm under your duvet, remember this ḥadīth and know that Allah is elevating your rank as a result of you battling your nafs.

3 Your identity marker

Abū Hurayrah ؓ narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once went to the graveyard and said, "Peace be upon you, dwelling of believing people, and we will - if Allah wills - join you soon. I wish I had seen our brothers!" They said, "Are we not your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?" He ﷺ replied, "Of course. You are my Companions. My brothers are those who have not yet come. I will welcome them at the ḥawḍ (pool)." They asked, "How will you recognise those who are still yet to appear amongst your ummah, O Messenger of Allah?" He ﷺ replied, "Do you think that if a man had a horse with a white blaze and hoof along with a completely jet-black horse, will he not recognise his horse?" They said, "Certainly, O Messenger of Allah." He ﷺ said, "They will come with radiant white faces and marks from the wuḍū', and I will be there to welcome them at the ḥawḍ (pool)" (Muslim).

Reflect

- The Prophet ﷺ missed you and longed to see you.
- He will be waiting for you in the hereafter.
- How will he ﷺ know who you are? The body parts you regularly washed in wuḍū' will shine, and that is how he will recognise you.

4 Eight gates of Paradise will be opened for you

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever perfects his wuḍū’ and then says,

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ ، وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ.

I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah. He is Alone and He has no partner whatsoever. I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave and His Messenger. O Allah make me amongst the repentant, and make me amongst those who purify themselves.

the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him. He may enter through whichever one he wishes” (Tirmidhī).

Likewise, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whosoever does wuḍū’ and says,

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ.

You are free from imperfection, O Allah, and all praise is to You. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except You. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance.

it will be recorded in a parchment and then sealed with a seal which will not be broken till the Day of Judgement” (Nasā’ī in ‘Amal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah).

Both of these du‘ās will purify you from shirk (‘I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah’) and from sins (‘make me amongst the repentant’). This is why wuḍū’ is a comprehensive form of purification - both externally and internally.

In wuḍū’, we only wash those body parts that are easy to wash, which are exposed the most, and we sin with the most.

Now that you have thoroughly purified yourself, you are ready to stand in the court of the All-Powerful Himself.

Remember to say bismillāh before starting your wuḍū’ (Abū Dāwūd).

Reflect

I will ensure my place of prayer is clean, and that my body and clothes are both clean. I will ensure that my heart is purified for meeting my Lord and conversing with Him. I will purify it through repentance. I will regret my past sins and firmly resolve to abandon them in the future.

Tahīyyat al-Wuḍū'

On completing your wuḍū', pray two rak'ah of *tahīyyat al-wuḍū'* in the hope that your past sins will be forgiven. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If anyone performs wuḍū' like that of mine and offers a two rak'ah prayer during which he does not think of anything else, his past sins will be forgiven" (Bukhārī).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Bilāl ؓ at the time of the Fajr prayer, "O Bilāl! Inform me of the most hopeful act you have performed in Islam, for I heard your footsteps in front of me in Paradise." Bilāl ؓ said, "I have not done anything more hopeful than that whenever I perform wuḍū', be it in the day or night, I pray as much as has been decreed for me after wuḍū' (i.e. *tahīyyat al-wuḍū'*)" (Bukhārī).

When 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn ؓ would finish his wuḍū' and get ready to start praying, he would start trembling and shaking. When this was mentioned to him, he said, "Woe to you! Do you know who I am going to stand in front of? Who I intend to converse with?"



FACING THE QIBLAH AND RAISING THE HANDS

Whilst turning your face in the direction of the Ka'bah, simultaneously turn your heart towards the Lord of the Ka'bah, Allah ﷻ. Remove everything else other than Him from your heart.

When soldiers or opponents surrender, they will raise their hands, as if to say 'You've got me. I'm all yours!' Similarly, raising your hands in ṣalāh is a physical manifestation of your surrender to Allah ﷻ. However, this differs from surrendering to another human. It is not a surrender of humiliation or weakness. Instead, it represents great honour and strength, for there is no greater honour in this world than being a true slave of Allah. Even before declaring himself the Messenger of Allah, the Prophet ﷺ described himself as the 'slave of Allah'.

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله described the raising of the hands as 'the embellishment of ṣalāh'.

Go to Allah ﷻ and give yourself up to Him. As you raise your hands, throw the world behind you and get ready to converse with your Creator.



TAKBĪR

What does Allāhu Akbar mean?

Allāhu Akbar is one of the greatest statements any human being can utter. It is the statement through which you enter into your ṣalāh. It is also known as *takbīrat al-taḥrīm*. Once you enter ṣalāh, what was previously ḥalāl for you (e.g. eating, drinking and talking) has now become ḥarām for you. Similarly, you should make worldly thoughts ḥarām upon yourself.

You are now entering the *ḥaram*: a sacred space where you prevent others and your thoughts from coming in between you and Allāh.

In Arabic, you may say: Zayd is bigger than Maḥmūd (زيد أكبر من محمود). Here we say Allāhu Akbar, hence, Allāh ﷻ is greater than ... Thus, what He is greater than has not been specified. This lack of specification (also known as ellipsis) indicates that Allāh ﷻ is greater than everything.

Allāh ﷻ is Greater than anything we can imagine. His greatness encompasses all things: He is Great in His Essence, His Names, His Attributes and His Actions. Allāh is Supreme and Transcendent above every limitation and deficiency that is inherent in created beings.

Our limited minds are unable to comprehend the greatness of Allāh. However, we can try to appreciate His greatness by pondering over His creation. By pondering over the greatness of the heavens, the earth, Allāh's *Kursī* and His Majestic Throne, and then realising how we are unable to comprehend them due to their greatness, we arrive at the most important realisation: how Great must their Creator be!

To understand His greatness, it helps to reflect on His greatest creation: His Throne (the 'Arsh of Allah). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The seven heavens in comparison to the Kursī is nothing but like a ring thrown in a desert, and the excellence of the Throne of Allāh over the Kursī is like the excellence of that desert over that ring" (Bayhaqī).

In other words, imagine the Sahara Desert. The entire desert is the Kursī of Allah ﷻ, and the size of the heavens and the earth in proportion is equivalent to a ring thrown in the desert.

Now close your eyes, and let your mind ascend. Wander around this desert, which is now the Throne of Allah ﷻ, and remember that the Kursī in proportion is the size of a ring. Can you even imagine the size of the Throne of Allah ﷻ? It is truly mind-boggling.

If we cannot comprehend the above, how can we then comprehend the greatness of Allah ﷻ?

Mean what you say!

On uttering the phrase Allāhu Akbar, you say that Allah ﷻ is greater than everything in your heart. It is not sufficient to simply say this phrase. You have to also believe it. To be sincere in your utterance, you cannot give greater importance to something or someone other than Allah ﷻ in your heart. Let Him be the One.

Each time you utter the words 'Allāhu Akbar', remind yourself of the Greatness of Allah and say: Allah is Greater... He is greater than me, greater than my desires, greater than my loved ones, greater than my hobbies, greater than the most powerful armies and empires, greater than everything.

Saying Allāhu Akbar with conviction should make you appreciate the Greatness of the One whom you are standing in front of. When you remind yourself of His Greatness, your self-importance should disappear as you remember how weak and insignificant you are. Thus, saying Allāhu Akbar also safeguards you from pride as you will no longer think of yourself or what you possess as great.

Saying Allāhu Akbar humbles you in front of Allah ﷻ, and frees you from every type of servitude other than His. It gives you the strength and courage to confront falsehood and call to the truth.



QIYĀM (STANDING)

*Now that you have uttered the takbīr, remind yourself
that you are standing in front of Allah.*

Lower your head

Stand in front of Allah ﷻ the way a humble slave stands in front of his master. Remember whom you are standing before. Let your worldly *qiyām* (standing) remind you of the final *qiyām*, when you will stand on the Day of Judgement in front of the Compeller of the heavens and the earth. Lower your head and your gaze. Stop your eyes from wandering right or left. Do not glance at your surroundings. Keep your gaze fixed to the ground to help keep your focus.

‘Ā’ishah ﷺ asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about when one looks here and there in ṣalāh. He ﷺ said, “It is snatching, which Shayṭān steals from the slave’s prayer” (Bukhārī).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Allah will continue to turn towards the slave whilst he is in his prayer for as long as he does not look away. If he looks away, He will turn away” (Abū Dāwūd).

Ibn al-Qayyim ﷺ wrote, “The slave of Allah ﷻ stands in front of his Lord on two occasions: the first is when he stands in his ṣalāh and the second is when he will meet Him on the Day of Judgment. Whoever fulfils the rights of the first standing, the second standing will be made easy for him. And whoever belittles, neglects and does not fulfil the rights of the first standing (i.e. ṣalāh), the second standing will be made very difficult for him.”

Once, ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar ؓ recited Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn, until he reached the āyah:

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

“The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds” (83:6).

He cried until he collapsed and was unable to resume his recitation.

The positioning of the hands

Why do you fold your hands and place them over each other?

Imagine you walk into a palace and see two groups of people: one group have their hands on their hips, eyes roaming around everywhere, whilst the second group have their hands neatly clasped together and are respectfully looking down. Seeing this, you would easily identify those who are royalty and those who are the slaves. Similarly, as you are a slave standing in front of Allah, placing one hand on the other respectfully symbolises your humility in front of Him.

Placing one hand over the other also prevents fidgeting and is conducive to attaining khushū‘.

“When you stand in prayer, stand in obedience and humility as Allah ﷻ has ordered you. Beware of negligence and looking here and there. Beware of looking at something else whilst Allah is looking at you. Beware of asking Allah ﷻ for Paradise and seeking His protection from the Hell-fire, yet your heart is heedless, and you do not know what your tongue is saying.”

- al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ؓ



ISTIFTĀḤ (OPENING DU'Ā')

Now that you are in your ṣalāh, you have entered the court of Allah ﷻ. On meeting someone you love and revere, you greet them. Likewise, when meeting Allah ﷻ, you will greet Him with words of respect and reverence. You may also choose to enter through the door of forgiveness (see du'ā #2), or you may combine both (see du'ā' #6).

You may read any of the following du'ās:

1 سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ ، وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ.

How Perfect are You O Allah, and all praise is Yours. Your Name is most blessed, Your majesty is exalted and there is no god worthy of worship except You (Muslim).

سُبْحَانَ : Negates all negative attributes from Him. Thus, Allah ﷻ is Perfect; free from any weakness, defect and oppression. Allah ﷻ does not bear resemblance to any of His Creation.

حَمْدٌ : Affirms all of His positive attributes. *Ḥamd* is to describe the praised one with perfection, love and utmost respect.

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ : Your Name is Perfect, Exalted, Holy and is the source of all good in the heavens and the earth.

The Name of Allah ﷻ is full of blessing and good. Uttering His Name before eating prevents Shayṭān from sharing your meal. Similarly, if you slaughter an animal without uttering the Name of Allah, it remains unlawful for you to eat. Thus, all matters which are not preceded by the Name of Allah ﷻ are deficient and defective.

Reflect

If the name of Allah ﷻ is full of blessing and good, then how blessed must the Named One be?

جَدُّكَ: This refers to Allah’s majesty, greatness and grandeur.

وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ: This is the *kalimah* (utterance) of *tawhīd* (oneness), which all Messengers were sent with. It means there is none worthy of worship except for Allah ﷻ.

All of the above naturally guides us to this ultimate word of truth. After affirming and uttering Allah’s absolute unique perfection, it only makes sense that He is the Only One who should be worshipped.

2 **اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ ، اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّنِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْ خَطَايَايَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ .**

O Allah, distance me from my sins as You have distanced the East from the West. O Allah purify me from sins as a white cloth is purified from dirt. O Allah wash away my sins with water, hail and snow (Bukharī).

3 **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ .**

All praise is for Allah; an abundant, sincere and blessed praise (Muslim).

Anas ﷺ narrated that a man came panting and joined the row (of congregants in ṣalāh), and then uttered [the above]. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ finished his ṣalāh, he said, “...I saw twelve angels competing with each other to ascend with it.” (Muslim).

4 **اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَبِيرًا ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَثِيرًا ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا .**

Allah is Greater, the Greatest: abundant praise is for Allah, and how Perfect is Allah, in the morning and the evening (Muslim).

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar ﷺ narrated, “Once we were praying with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when a man said [the above]. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ (after the ṣalāh) asked, “Who uttered those words?” The man replied, “It was me, O Messenger of Allah.” He ﷺ said, “I was amazed by them - the doors of heaven were opened for them.” Ibn ‘Umar ﷺ said, “I have not stopped saying these words since I heard this statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ” (Muslim).

5 اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرٰئِيْلَ وَمِيكَائِيْلَ وَإِسْرَافِيْلَ ، فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ، عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ، أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ، إِهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ ، إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

O Allah, Lord of Jibrā'il, Mikā'il and Isrāf'il; Creator of the heavens and the earth; Knower of the unseen and seen, You will judge between Your servants in what they used to differ. Guide me in what is contentious to the truth, by Your Will. Certainly, You guide whomsoever You will to the straight path (Muslim).

6 وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ، إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ، اَللّٰهُمَّ أَنْتَ الْمَلِكُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، أَنْتَ رَبِّي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ ، ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَاعْتَرَفْتُ بِذُنُوبِي فَاعْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي جَمِيعًا ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، وَاهْدِنِي لِأَحْسَنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ لَا يَهْدِي لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، وَاصْرِفْ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا لَا يَصْرِفْ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، لَبَّيْكَ وَسَعْدَيْكَ ، وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي يَدَيْكَ ، وَالشَّرُّ لَيْسَ إِلَيْكَ ، أَنَا بِكَ وَإِلَيْكَ ، تَبَارَكْتَ وَتَعَالَيْتَ ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ.

I have turned my face towards the One who created the heavens and the earth, turned away from all that is false having surrendered to Allah, and I am not of the polytheists. My ṣalāh, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the worlds, who has no partners. I have been commanded of this, and I am of those who submit. O Allah, You are the King, there is no god worthy of being worshipped except You. You are my Lord and I am Your slave. I have wronged myself and I confess my sins. Forgive all of my sins, for no one forgives except You. Guide me to the best of character, for no one guides to the best of it except You; and turn the evil of it away from me, for no one turns it away except You. Here I am, seeking Your pleasure and at Your service. All good is in Your hands and no evil is attributed to You. My (existence, protection and success) is from You and I am returning to You. You are Most Blessed and You are Most Exalted. I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You (Muslim).

By saying this du'ā', you remind yourself of what Ibrāhīm ؑ said. You affirm the Oneness of Allah and disassociate yourself from shirk. The du'ā' acts as a reminder of your purpose in life and that everything you do is for Him. You seek forgiveness and you ask Allah ﷻ to grant you beautiful character. You praise Him and show your desperate need of Him.

7 اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ ، أَنْتَ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ، وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ قَيِّمُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ، وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ الْحَقُّ ، وَوَعْدُكَ حَقٌّ ، وَقَوْلُكَ حَقٌّ ، وَلِقَاؤُكَ حَقٌّ ، وَالْجَنَّةُ حَقٌّ ، وَالنَّارُ حَقٌّ ، وَالسَّاعَةُ حَقٌّ ، وَالنَّبِيُّونَ حَقٌّ ، وَمُحَمَّدٌ حَقٌّ ، اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ أَسْلَمْتُ وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ ، وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْتُ وَبِكَ خَاصَمْتُ وَإِلَيْكَ حَاكَمْتُ.

O Allah, for You Alone is all praise; You are the Light of the heavens and the earth and whatever is therein. For You Alone is all praise; You are the Maintainer of the heavens and the earth and whatever is therein. And for You Alone is all praise; You are the Truth, Your promise is the truth, and Your speech is the truth. The meeting with You is the truth, Paradise is the truth, and Hell-Fire is the truth. The Final Hour is the truth, the Prophets are the truth and Muhammad ﷺ is the truth. O Allah, I surrender myself to You Alone, I put my trust in You Alone, and I believe in You Alone. I turn to You Alone, I complain of my opponents to You Alone and I refer judgement to You Alone (Bukhārī).

The Messenger ﷺ would recite the above du'a' in his tahajjud ṣalāh.

8 سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ.

Allah is free from imperfection, the Lord of all the worlds. Allah is free from imperfection, and all praise is due to Him (Nasā'ī).

Rabī'ah b. al-Ka'b رضي الله عنه said, "I used to spend the night by the room of the Prophet ﷺ. I would hear him stand up at night (for prayer), and he would say سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ for a long time. Then he would say سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ for a long time."

9 اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ (10x) ، الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (10x) ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ (10x) ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (10x) ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ (10x) ،

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَاهْدِنِي وَارْزُقْنِي وَعَافِنِي ، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ ضَيْقِ الْمَقَامِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

Allah is the Greatest (10x). All praise be to Allah (10x). Allah is free from imperfection (10x).

There is no god worthy of worship but Allah (10x). I seek Allah's forgiveness (10x).

O Allah, forgive me, guide me, grant me sustenance and wellbeing. I seek Your protection from the anguish of standing on the Day of Judgement. (Nasā'ī)

‘Āsim b. Ḥumayd ؓ said, “I asked ‘Ā’ishah ؓ about what the Messenger of Allah ؐ used to start his night prayer with. She said, “You have indeed asked me something which no one before you has asked me. The Messenger of Allah ؐ used to say [the above]” (Nasā’i).



ISTI‘ĀDHĀH

Following the completion of the opening du‘ā’, you will proceed on to seeking the protection of Allah from Shayṭān.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ. 1

I seek protection in Allah from the rejected Shayṭān.

أَعُوذُ: I take refuge, safeguard myself, take precaution, and I am careful. عَاذَ means to flee from that which you fear will harm you to that which will protect you from it.

Isti‘ādhah (seeking protection) is essentially an act of the heart. When seeking protection with Allah, you are: (1) throwing yourself in front of Him, displaying your need of Him, and (2) submitting and humbling yourself in front of Him.

Isti‘ādhah also acts as an acknowledgement of Allah’s ultimate power, and the human being’s weakness and inability to combat the unseen enemy, Shayṭān.

Ṣalāh is the Shayṭān's battlefield. No other situation enrages and annoys Shayṭān more than ṣalāh. First, Shayṭān will try to make you miss your ṣalāh. If he fails, he will try to make you delay it as much as possible. Again, if he fails, he will try to dissuade you from your sunnah and nafl prayers. If he still fails to deter you, he will come to you in your ṣalāh and try to ruin it with his constant whispers.

Be vigilant and constantly guard your ṣalāh, for Shayṭān is a thief who wants to ‘steal’ from your ṣalāh until you have nothing left in it. Shayṭān is an evil enemy. His invisibility makes him even more deadly. Because we cannot see him, we forget about him. In an increasingly material world, when we have a problem, we tend to look for physical causes. It would not be considered ‘intellectual’ or ‘scientific’ to blame Shayṭān and his cronies. Although he is not always the culprit, Shayṭān is constantly inflicting his evil on the children of Ādam. He comes and goes. He is described in the Qur’ān as *‘khannās’*: the one who retreats and comes back. He always lurks about to inflict maximum damage wherever possible.

Reflecting (*tadabbur*) on the Qur’ān gives life to the heart, and is the secret of worldly and heavenly bliss. Shayṭān however will try his best to prevent this and be a barrier between you and the Qur’ān.

Shayṭān rages with envy. The angels prostrated to Ādam in obedience to Allah’s command, whilst he refused and was thrown out of Paradise. Up until today, he tries his utmost to prevent the sons of Ādam from prostrating. When you understand his envy and his tenacity in pursuing you, remember that you cannot defeat him by yourself: you need his and your Master, Allah ﷻ, on your side.

It is for this reason that Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله once told his student, Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله, “If a shepherd-dog attacks you, don’t bother fighting him back. Instead seek the help of the shepherd because he will push the dog away from you and will protect you from him.” Thus, the protection of Allah ﷻ - the All-Powerful (*al-Qawiyy*), the Guardian (*al-Ḥafīz*) - is our most effective weapon to defeat Shayṭān.

You may also choose to recite the slightly longer form of the isti’ādah:

2 أَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ، مِنْ هَمَزِهِ وَنَفْخِهِ وَنَفْثِهِ.

I seek protection in Allah, the All-Hearing and All-Knowing from the rejected Shaytān; from him inciting madness, pride and reprehensible poetry (Aḥmad).



BASMALAH

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very Merciful.

You start by asking for the help of Allah ﷻ. Through this, you are expressing your servitude to Him. By uttering His Name, you are also asking Him to bless you in all that you do.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ : By stating ‘In the Name of Allah’ you are saying ‘I begin with every Name that belongs to Him.’ This includes all of His Most Beautiful and Perfect Names, and you are asking Him through all of His Names. By saying bismillāh, you are acknowledging His *rubūbiyyah* and *ulūhiyyah* (Oneness in His Lordship and right to being worshipped).

اللَّهُ : The only One deserving of being singled out for worship due to His Perfect Godly Attributes. Many scholars have regarded this Name to be ‘the Greatest Name of Allah’. It is a comprehensive name which includes all of His Names. It can only be used for Him.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ : see p. 140



SŪRAH AL-FĀTIḤAH

Next, you will pray Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. Have you ever wondered why Allah chose this specific sūrah from all the other sūrahs in the Qur’ān? Why are we required to read Sūrah al-Fātiḥah at least 17 times a day?

Why is it repeated in every single rak‘ah? What’s so amazing about this sūrah?

Al-Fātiḥah means ‘the Opening’ as it opens the Qur’ān. It is the entrance for the Qur’ān and your ṣalāh; and your entry for attaining closeness to your Lord. Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is also known as the Mother of the Qur’ān, the Seven Oft-Repeated āyāt and the Cure. It is the greatest sūrah in the Qur’ān and the key to the entire Qur’ān. It is also both an introduction and a summary of the whole Qur’ān.

Al-Ḥasan ؑ said, “Allah sent down 104 books from the heavens and He condensed these books into four books: the Torah, the Zabūr, the Injīl and the Qur’ān. Then He condensed the content of the first three books into the Qur’ān. He then condensed the content of the Qur’ān into the *Mufaṣṣal* (Sūrahs 50-114). He then condensed the content of the *Mufaṣṣal* into Sūrah al-Fātiḥah.” Others added that that the content of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah can be condensed into the āyah: “You Alone we worship, and You Alone we ask for help.”

The 3 Key Themes

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah was revealed in Makkah. In keeping with the other Makkan sūrahs it focuses on the three fundamental principles:

①

Establishing the
Oneness of Allah ﷻ.

②

Establishing
Prophethood

③

Belief in the
Hereafter

Ṣūrah al-Fātiḥah: A Special Conversation

A distinctive quality that makes Ṣūrah al-Fātiḥah extremely special is that it forms a unique conversation between you and Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ responds to you after every āyah that you read in it.

Memorise the following ḥadīth, as it will transform your ṣalāh. (See p. 102 for the full ḥadīth)

You say:	Allah ﷻ replies:
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ	My slave has praised Me
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	My slave has extolled Me (i.e. repeatedly praised me)
مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ	My slave has glorified Me (or My slave has entrusted his affairs to Me.)
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ	This is between Me and My slave and My slave shall have what he asked for.
إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ، صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ	This is for My slave and My slave shall have what he asked for.

At the end of reading each āyah, pause like the Prophet ﷺ would when reciting al-Fātiḥah. Take a moment to reflect on Allah's reply to you.

Reflect

On reading 'My slave' in the above hadith, what feeling does this invoke in you?

Think back to when you would visit your parents or grandparents, and they would affectionately say, 'My child/son/daughter has come.' How did this phrase make you feel?

Allah ﷻ is above all examples. He is the Most Powerful and the Lord of the worlds. Despite being an unworthy sinful slave of His, He still addresses you here as, 'My slave.'

Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said, "How extreme is the joy and happiness of the slave when his Lord says 'My slave' three times. By Allah, if the hearts were not clouded by the smoke of the desires and lusts, they would erupt from joy and delight when their Lord, Creator and God says, 'My slave has praised Me, My slave has extolled me, My slave has glorified Me.'"

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah: The Best Du'ā'

Each time you recite Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, do you remember that it is a du'ā'?

Allah ﷻ taught us this perfect du'ā' because of His endless Mercy. As humans, we continuously make mistakes and commit sins, and are in constant need of guidance. We need this guidance more than food and drink. By guiding us, Allah ﷻ helps us to obey Him and to stop sinning. Thus, no evil will befall us in this world nor the hereafter. For this reason, this sūrah is one of the most comprehensive du'ās.

The sūrah is also a lesson and a reminder on how to make du'ā'. Firstly, you ask Allah ﷻ through His Perfect Names, and, secondly,

you express your servitude and need for Him. Sūrah al-Fātiḥah also reminds you of the importance of repetition and persistence when making du‘ā’, as you make this du‘ā’ at least 17 times every day.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

All praises and thanks are for Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.

In the very first āyah of Ṣūrah al-Fātiḥah, the central fact of this life is conveyed to us: who Allah ﷻ is. Knowledge of Allah ﷻ is the pinnacle of all knowledge and the greatest of all sciences, as there is no one greater than Him.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ: Endless, infinite and inherent praise belongs to Allah Alone.

Alḥamdulillāh is an expression encompassing both:

- 1 **Gratitude for what Allah ﷻ has blessed us with; īmān, life, health etc.**
- 2 **Praise:** Allah ﷻ is worthy of every possible praise on account of His ﷻ very existence, His mercy, beauty, generosity and all of His other Noble Attributes and Names. All of His Attributes are perfect; be they of His majesty (*jalāl*) or beauty (*jamāl*). Even if none of His slaves praised Him, He would still be worthy of all praise.

In truth, it is Allah ﷻ who praises Himself on the tongues of His slaves. Any slave who praises Him is only able to do so following His permission for such praise.

Our praise of Him emanates from our love and reverence of Him. Our praise of Him is, in fact, a blessing from Him which deserves even more praise. Even if we were to spend our entire life praising Him, this would be insufficient.

How much we praise Allah ﷻ depends on how well we know Him (*ma‘rifah*). The more knowledge we have of Him and the more intimate we are with Him, then the more we will praise Him.

رَبِّ: The Owner, The Master, The Nurturer, The One who nourishes and sustains the whole of creation. It is He who regulates their affairs and grants them

endless blessings. He is their sole Creator and Provider. He is their Protector and Caretaker.

Allah ﷻ did not create the world and abandon it to its devices. Rather, He constantly and actively manages the affairs of His creation. *Rabb* is a beautiful Name that draws us closer to Him and guides us to reflect upon His endless favours: how He created us, provides for us and takes care of us. This should make us worship Him Alone wholeheartedly.

الْعَالَمِينَ [the worlds]: *Al-‘Ālamīn* is the plural of *‘ālam*. According to Qatādah رحمه الله, *‘ālam* refers to everything in existence besides Allah.

Al-‘Ālamīn indicates that the universe should remind us about its Creator, Allah ﷻ. Moreover, it reminds us that Islam is a universal religion and is not restricted to any race or nation – Allah is the Lord of everyone.

In summary, Allah ﷻ is worthy of all praise: (1) simply because He is Allah, and (2) because He created us, nurtures us, provides for us and manages the affairs of the entire universe.

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

The All-Merciful, The Very Merciful

Following on from the earlier āyah where we learnt that Allah is the Lord of the worlds, it is logical to wonder: what kind of a Lord is He? Is He a vengeful, angry and harsh Lord? Or is He a Loving, Kind and Generous Lord?

The answer to this question is provided in the next āyah: Allah ﷻ is an Extremely Merciful Lord.

Allah ﷻ sustains us, but He does not do so because He needs us; rather, He sustains us out of His mercy. His Lordship is characterised by mercy and justice, and not oppression. Even His punishment arises from pure justice.

Both the words that constitute this āyah - *al-Raḥmān* and *al-Raḥīm* - originate from the word *raḥmah*. *Raḥmah* can be understood as mercy, compassion and tenderness.

What is the difference between al-Raḥmān and al-Raḥīm?

Al-Raḥmān is a Name which encompasses the mercy Allah shows to all of His creation. However, al-Raḥīm is a specific attribute that is exclusive to the believers, both in this world and in the hereafter. The form of raḥmah He extends to the believers - particularly to His friends (awliyā') - differs from His general mercy which He extends to all of His ﷻ creation.

Al-Raḥmān can also mean the one who is extremely merciful, whereas al-Raḥīm is the one who is permanently merciful. Together, these Names describe Allah ﷻ as extremely merciful, all the time.

Although the scholars have mentioned other differences, it is important to remember that both Names encompass all aspects and dimensions of mercy.

The mercy of Allah knows no bounds. He said, “My mercy encompasses everything” (7:156). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that Allah said, “Indeed My mercy has preceded My anger” (Muslim).

Every blessing we have stems from His mercy. We were created through His mercy; the Messengers and the Books were sent down to guide us towards the truth through His Mercy and Paradise was created through His Mercy.

It is because of His mercy that we are invited to stand before Him, humbling ourselves, pleading with Him, praising Him and talking to Him. It is because of His mercy that – through ṣalāh – you become more aware of and closer to Him.

If we want to be recipients of Allah’s mercy, we must be merciful to His creation, as he ﷻ said, “Have mercy on those who are on the earth, and the One who is in the Heaven will have mercy on you” (Tirmidhī). Just as Allah ﷻ nourishes us with love and mercy, we should nurture ourselves and those under our care with love and mercy.

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ.

The Owner of the Day of Judgement.

The previous āyah established the supreme and unending mercy of Allah ﷻ. However, if it is taken on its own, we may become complacent. Excessive hope in His mercy could lead us to neglect His rights and those of His creation. Because of this, this next āyah reminds us that Allah is the Owner of the Day of Judgement. What is the Day of Judgement? Allah ﷻ answers this in Sūrah al-Infīṭār, “What will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is? Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is? The Day when no soul will have the power to do anything for another; on that Day, command will belong to Allah” (82:17-19).

The Day of Judgement is the Day when all souls will have to account for their actions, and will be held responsible for everything they did in the world.

Allah ﷻ is the *Mālik* (Owner) and according to another recitation, the *Malik* (King) of the entire universe. Thus, Allah ﷻ does not need any of His creation; but His creation need Him. Although He is the Owner and King of the entire universe, this Day has been singled out because, unlike in this world, on that Day, nobody will vie with Him for Supreme Authority. All of His creation will stand before Him; the slaves and the worldly kings, the downtrodden and the elite, the poor and rich will all be the same. They will all be assembled in the court of Allah ﷻ, humbled before the King of kings, waiting for their judgement, hoping for His reward and terrified of His punishment. Allah ﷻ says, “The Day they will all appear. Nothing about them will be hidden from Allah. Who does all authority belong to today? To Allah—the One, the All-Dominant!” (40:16). The Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah will hold the whole earth, and roll up the heavens in His Right Hand. Then He will say, ‘I am the King! Where are the kings of the earth?’” (Bukhārī).

This āyah establishes a fundamental principle: belief in the hereafter. We are reminded that life is temporary. Instead of becoming besotted with it, we should prepare for what is to come. Death is inevitable and the hereafter is eternal. Preparing for it will help us survive the tribulations of that Terrible Day. This āyah reminds us to be humble before the Almighty, and to be humble before His creation. Furthermore, it is a snapshot of the beautiful balance between mercy and justice inherent in Islam.

Reflect

When you are reciting this āyah, think about your plight on the Day of Judgement. Visualise yourself, standing in front of Allah ﷻ. Imagine how terrified you will be: naked, thirsty, hot and desperate for water. Your parents will disown you, your spouse will turn away, and your friends will be disinterested. Only the Lord of the Worlds, the Master of this Horrific Day, will have the power to save you.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ.

You Alone we worship, You Alone we ask for help.

نَعْبُدُ is derived from *ʿibādah*, a comprehensive term for every action and utterance that Allah loves and is pleased with.

Every human has a void in his heart. Some try to fill this with the worship of money, others with the worship of power. Others worship fame, pleasure, beauty, knowledge, people, nature and even animals! All these objects of worship are delusions that leave its adherents unfulfilled. To be truly free, happy, and at peace, the heart's void can only be filled with the worship of Allah ﷻ. We must connect to Him, be in awe of Him, remember Him, and we must love Him above everyone and everything, including our desires. Worship comprises of:

- 1 Utmost humility and submission
- 2 Utmost love

To be His true slave, we must submit to Him *and* love Him. Solely focusing on obedience will lead to a limited focus on the external aspects of the dīn, at the expense of the inner. And only focusing on love will lead to a rejection of Allah's commands. Therefore, our outer actions must complement the inner actions of our hearts.

For our worship to be accepted by Allah ﷻ, it must be:

- 1 Sincere and only for His sake (*ikhhlās*)
- 2 In accordance with the teachings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

Reflect

What do you really worship? What is it that you really desire? Crave? Love?
What occupies most of your day? What occupies your thoughts and dreams?

وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ.

Asking Allah ﷻ makes us humble and submissive before Him. By asking Allah ﷻ we are acknowledging our dependence upon Him and our need for Him. We are certain that He will grant us good and remove harm from us. We are placing our complete trust in Him (*tawakkul*).

Isti'ānah (the verbal noun of *nasta'in*) combines trust and reliance. Trusting someone does not mean they are necessarily reliable. Conversely, relying on someone does not mean they are trustworthy. The reliance may be due to compulsion or a lack of alternatives. With Allah ﷻ, we rely on Him and trust Him. We will never trust anyone as much as Him, nor will we rely on anyone as much as Him. He is the Most Powerful and we know that no one loves us as much as He does, so long as we obey Him.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said, “I reflected on what the most beneficial *du'ā'* was, and realised it was the *du'ā'* of the servant asking His Lord to help him achieve His Pleasure. I then found it in *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ*. In this āyah, it is as though we are saying, “O Allah, help us fall in love with You, to remember You always and to be outstanding in worshipping You.”

This is also found in the beautiful du‘ā’ of the Prophet ﷺ:

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ.

O Allah help me in remembering You, in being grateful to You, and in worshipping You in an excellent manner (Abū Dāwūd).

The word ‘*‘iyyāka*’ has been repeated in this āyah. This repetition emphasises that both worship and asking for help should be reserved for Allah Alone. Therefore, *I worship Only You, Ya Allah*. Moreover, this āyah is also a reminder that we should not allow our actions to become tarnished by showing off (*riyā’*) or seeking fame (*sum‘ah*). Instead, we should ensure our actions are purely for His sake Alone.

‘*Ibādah*’ is neither a chore nor a burden. On the contrary, it is where genuine happiness and sweetness lie. It is because of this that Ibrāhīm b. Adham رحمه الله said, “If the kings and their sons knew what we experience of spiritual pleasure and happiness, they would fight us for it with their swords.”

In conclusion, in this āyāh we are seeking Allah’s help for everything. Moreover, we are specifically asking Him for the most important purpose and goal in our lives: worshipping Him. Unless He helps us, we cannot achieve this purpose.

Muḥammad b. ‘Awf al-Ḥimṣī رحمه الله saw Aḥmad b. Abī al-Ḥawārī رحمه الله pray ‘*Ishā*’ by the Ka‘bah. When he finished, he stood up to pray voluntary prayers and started with الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ until he reached إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ. Muḥammad al-Ḥimṣī رحمه الله proceeded to do ṭawāf of the Ka‘bah and when he finished, he found Ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī رحمه الله still repeating the same āyah. He continued to repeat it till Fajr.

Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله would frequently say, “إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ wards off showing off (*riyā’*) and إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ wards off pride.”

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ.

Guide us on the Straight Path:

The previous āyah involves asking Allah ﷻ for help. In this āyah, we ask Allah ﷻ for the greatest matter in which we require His help: guidance to and on the straight path. Attaining this guidance and direction on the straight path is impossible without His direction, care and mercy.

The du‘ā’ in this āyah is essential as guidance will determine our eternal success.

[إِهْدِنَا]

O Allah, define the right path for us, explain it to us, direct us to it and grant us the *tawfiq* (ability) to follow it. O Allah, we are weak and we need You to show and guide us to Your path.

[الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ]

The straight path is the way of Allah ﷻ, the path of truth, the path of His beloved Messenger ﷺ and the path to paradise. Allah ﷻ has defined the straight path for us to ensure we are led to Him. On this path we single Allah ﷻ out for worship, and remain obedient to Him and His Messenger. It is the path of truth (*haqq*) which is embodied in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the way of his Companions رضي الله عنهم.

There is only one path of truth and that is the path of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says, “This is My path which is straight, so follow it. Do not follow other ways, for they cause you to deviate from His way. This is what He has instructed you to do, so that you will have *taqwā* (piety)” (6:153).

Why pray for guidance if you’re already a believer?

Why do we have to repeat this supplication every single day? Why do we repeat it at least 17 times daily, even though, by the grace of Allah ﷻ we have already been guided to Islam. The following are some reasons:

- 1 **Lack of Knowledge.** Though you are a believer, you may lack the knowledge of the essentials of this path. Alternatively, you may have knowledge of the essentials, but may lack the finer details and the subtleties of the various branches of knowledge.
- 2 **Knowledge but no capability.** You may have knowledge, but you face barriers to performing righteous actions. For instance, you may wish to go for ḥajj, but you cannot afford to do so.
- 3 **Knowledge and capability but no determination.** For example, you know about the importance of ḥajj, and you're able to afford it, but you have no desire to perform it.
- 4 **Knowledge, capability and desire but a lack of sincerity.** You may have the knowledge, the financial abilities, the desire to perform it, yet you may lack sincerity when performing it.
- 5 **Sincerity, but not in accordance with the Sunnah.** You may have knowledge, capability, desire and sincerity, but you may not perform the deed in accordance with the Sunnah. For instance, you may be carrying out a deed which is an innovation (*bid'ah*). Despite being sincere in your efforts, your deed will not be accepted because it is not in accordance with the Sunnah.
- 6 **Lack of consistency.** Again, you may have knowledge, capability, desire, sincerity and perform the deed as prescribed in the Sunnah, but you may lack consistency. By saying 'Guide us', you ask Allah to give you firmness and consistency on these deeds. Or you may be guided at this moment, but you do not know if you will remain steadfast on the path in the future.

It is for this reason that Allah ﷻ describes the ones firmly grounded in knowledge as saying, "Our Lord, do not let our hearts swerve from the truth after You have guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Yourself. Surely, You, and You Alone, are the Great Bestower" (3:8).

- 7 **A never-ending pursuit.** *Iḥsān* (worshipping Allah ﷻ as though you can see Him) and *ma'rifah* (knowledge of Allah ﷻ) are endless pursuits. No one can claim to have reached their pinnacle or attained a level close to the best of

Allah's creation. Accordingly, we are continuously in need of 'guidance' from The Ultimate Guide (*al-Hādī*), which will help us ascend these levels.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ.

The path of those upon whom you have bestowed favours. Those upon whom neither is there anger nor are they astray.

Regarding guidance, people can be divided into three categories:

The Blessed [أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ]

1

The blessed people stated in this āyah are described in Sūrah al-Nisā'. Allah ﷻ says, "Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger will be with those whom Allah has blessed: the Prophets and the *Ṣiddīqīn*, the martyrs and the righteous. What excellent company such people are!" (4:69).

The *Ṣiddīqīn* are those who have attained the highest status of *īmān*, conviction and truthfulness. Even in difficult times, their actions consistently verify their words. Examples of such people include the best of the Prophets' followers, such as Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ؓ.

This āyah reminds us of the importance of good company. Those who we spend time with and who influence us - consciously or subconsciously - will determine our future. The Prophet ﷺ said, "A man is upon the religion of his friend, so let him look carefully as to whom he befriends" (Tirmidhī).

The word 'أَنْعَمْتَ' - You have favoured' indicates that bestowed guidance and obedience are only through Allah's *tawfīq* (divine accord). Accordingly, if Allah ﷻ had willed, we would not have been guided. Instead of taking it for granted, we should thank Allah ﷻ for the blessings of *īmān* and guidance.

The āyah also reminds us to be optimistic, ambitious and extremely hopeful in making *du'ā'*. Through the words of this āyah we are specifically asking Allah ﷻ to place us in the company of His best creation. Thus, it directs us to have lofty aspirations (*uluww al-himmah*) and strive towards the best.

Moreover, this āyah is an antidote to loneliness. Traversing the Straight Path can be lonely. It is a path for which we may be shunned and ridiculed. The āyah helps us recall those who traversed this path before us. This should comfort us, and help us to remain focused, so that we can be united with them in the hereafter inshā'Allah.

Reflect

Read the stories and biographies of the Prophets, our Messenger ﷺ, the Companions رضى الله عنه and the pious people رضى الله عنه of the past. Be inspired by their devotion and steadfastness and try your best to emulate them. Consider how you can bring their example into your own life.

2 Those who incurred anger [غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ]

The second group defined by the above phrase is those who had the knowledge but did not act upon it. Instead, they deliberately rejected the truth and invented their own falsehood.

By making this du‘ā’, we seek to safeguard ourselves from losing the guidance and spurning the knowledge given to us. There is a danger that we may end up belittling the truth. We may become intolerant of it and begin thinking that other sources of guidance fabricated by humans are superior. To prevent this, we ask Allah ﷻ in this sūrah to protect us from such transgression, to safeguard us from sliding into error, and to keep us firm on the Straight Path.

3 The misguided [وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ]

The third group consists of those who lacked the knowledge and hence veered off the Straight Path.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The Jews are those who incurred anger and the Christians are the misguided ones” (Tirmidhī).

Three lessons from this āyah:

①

To only seek knowledge is not enough. To ensure you are amongst the blessed ones, you must combine knowledge ('ilm) with action ('amal).

②

Do not follow the ways of those who have deviated from the Straight Path. Emulate those who have secured their place in Paradise.

③

Loving and hating for the sake of Allah ﷻ is essential.

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah reminds me...

- of who Allah ﷻ is
- to affirm the Oneness of Allah ﷻ and to strengthen my īmān in Him
- of the endless mercy & love of Allah ﷻ
- of my end & my ultimate destiny
- to not only contemplate deeply over Paradise and the love of Allah ﷻ, but also to think about the Hell-fire & the fear of Allah ﷻ
- to praise Allah ﷻ with His Beautiful and Perfect Names
- of the importance of gratitude
- of my purpose in life, while also answering my questions of 'Where did I come from?' and 'Where am I going?'
- of the most important relationship in my life: the slave-Master relationship
- to ask, trust, humble myself and worship Him Alone
- of who I should and should not aspire to be like
- of the importance of following the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger ﷺ and of loving him
- not to become complacent and to always ask Allah ﷻ for guidance and firmness.

	Opens the door of:	Protects you from:
أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ	Clinging on to Allah ﷻ	Vanity and self-admiration ('ujb)
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	Remembrance (dhikr)	Relying on yourself
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ	Gratitude (shukr)	Ingratitude
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ	Love (ḥubb) and hope (rajā')	Despair
مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ	Fear (khawf)	Complacency and disobedience
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ	Sincerity (ikhhlās)	Shirk and showing off (riyā')
وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ	Reliance on Allah ﷻ (tawakkul)	Pride and stress
إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ	Supplication (du'ā')	Deviancy
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ	Having pious role models	Loneliness
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ	Submission and humility	Arrogance and stubbornness
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ	Knowledge and adherence to the Sunnah	Ignorance and bid'ah (innovation)

“

While the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was sitting with Jibrīl ﷺ, he heard a creaking sound above him. Jibrīl ﷺ looked up towards the sky and said, “This is (the sound of) a gate that has been opened in Paradise today, and it has never been previously opened.” Then an Angel descended through it and came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “Rejoice in the good news of two lights that have been given to you, which no Prophet before you was given: Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and the concluding (two) verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah. You will never recite a word from them, except that you will be given (its blessings).”

(Nasā’i)

”

The previous discussion provides just an outline of this sūrah, for this sūrah is an endless ocean. Carve out time to read or listen to its tafsīr regularly so you can stay connected to it.

Āmīn

Remember to seal Sūrah al-Fātiḥah with Āmīn. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When the imām says Āmīn, then say Āmīn; for indeed the one whose Āmīn coincides with the Āmīn of the angels will have his previous sins forgiven” (Bukhārī).

Āmīn means, “O Allah, accept my du‘ā.” ‘Alī ؓ said, “Āmīn is the seal of the Lord of the worlds. It is with it that His slaves seal their du‘ā’.”



RECITING QUR’ĀN

Following the completion of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, you should recite a sūrah or a selection of āyāt from anywhere else in the Qur’ān. (See p. 87 for how you should recite in ṣalāh).

How to recite the Qur’ān in your ṣalāh:

- 1 Always recall that you are standing in front of Allah ﷻ and that you are conversing with Him.
- 2 Recite slowly and beautifully.
- 3 Reflect on the words you are reciting. Fill your heart with love, hope and fear according to the words you are reciting.

- 4 When you come across an āyah about mercy, stop and ask Allah for His mercy. When you come across an āyah about punishment, stop and ask Allah's protection. When you come across an āyah where you can make a du'ā', stop and ask Allah.
- 5 Whilst reciting, try to visualise and interact with what you are saying.
- 6 Alternate between what you recite.

“Know that everything that distracts you from understanding the meaning of your recitation is a whispering of doubt from Shayṭān.”

- al-Ghazālī



RUKŪ'

Once you have completed your recitation, go down into rukū', saying 'Allāhu Akbar' (Allah is Greater than....!). Reflect on the meaning of this great phrase when you say it.

Lower your head in awe of the Lord of the worlds. Straighten your back, let every joint in your body relax, and glorify Him by uttering:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ.

How perfect is my Lord, the Magnificent!

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “As for the rukū', then magnify the Lord in it” (Muslim).

Rukū' is one of the most significant pillars of ṣalāh. Its position is one of the most intense symbols of servitude, submission and humility. In rukū', not only do you glorify Allah ﷻ but you also simultaneously humble: the heart, the tongue and the limbs. Feel your self-importance diminishing, whilst the awe and glory of Allah ﷻ expand in your heart. The more your heart glorifies Allah ﷻ, the fear and awe of His creation will slowly vanish from your heart.

Everything other than Allah ﷻ will begin to appear small and insignificant.

Do not rush this position. Take your time, prolong your rukū' whenever possible and inshā'Allah you will feel the sweetness and joy in this position.

The secret of rukū'

The *adhkār* (remembrances) of rukū' are the secret of this pillar. Make every effort to memorise them. They will help you in internalising the greatness and grandeur of Allah ﷻ. The Prophet ﷺ would lengthen his rukū' to the same duration as his qiyām in his voluntary prayers, repeating the following adhkar with humility, devotion and reflection:

1 سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ.

How perfect is my Lord, the Magnificent (Muslim).

In stating the word '*subḥan*', you are declaring the perfection of Allah and negating all deficiencies. This is followed by the word '*rabbī*' (my Lord). Note the use of the pronoun 'my'. Saying 'my' should stir a sense of closeness, bonding and love. Allah ﷻ is my Lord, the One who created me, nurtures me, feeds me, clothes me, heals me and manages all of my affairs. Next, you describe Him ﷻ as 'al-'Aẓīm': the Magnificent, the Great.

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ means to glorify Allah ﷻ above any imperfection or deficiency i.e Allah ﷻ is free from all defects. Allah ﷻ is the Most Glorified who has no partner or rival, who possesses every aspect of perfection, and whose actions are pure and free from evil.

2 سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْجَبَرُوتِ ، وَالْمَلَكُوتِ ، وَالْكِبْرِيَاءِ ، وَالْعَظَمَةِ.

How perfect is the Owner of might, dominion, grandeur and greatness! (Abu Dawūd).

الْجَبْرُوتِ [might]: the origin of this word is *jabr*. This refers to:

- a The power and might of Allah ﷻ, through which He compels His creation according to His will, and through which He will seize the worldly *jabābirah* (tyrants).
- b Allah ﷻ mending and restoring the condition of those who are 'broken', weak and oppressed.
- c The sublimeness of Allah ﷻ which cannot be comprehended by the limited human mind.

الْمَلَكُوتِ [dominion]: Allah ﷻ is the King, whose dominion is everything that surrounds us; that which we can see and cannot see. Of the latter are the Kursī, the Throne of Allah, Paradise and the Hell-fire.

الْكِبْرِيَاءِ [grandeur]: This quality is only praiseworthy for Allah ﷻ, and is not one that human beings should have. Only He is entirely Perfect in every sense.

الْعَظَمَةِ [greatness]: There is nothing greater, more vast and more powerful than Allah. Our limited minds cannot perceive His greatness.

3 اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ رَكَعْتُ ، وَبِكَ اٰمَنْتُ ، وَلَكَ اَسْلَمْتُ ، خَشَعَ لَكَ سَمْعِي ، وَبَصَرِي ، وَمَتْنِي وَعَظْمِي ، وَعَصْبِي .

O Allah, for You Alone I have bowed in prayer, in You Alone I have believed, and to You Alone I have submitted. My hearing, sight, mind, bones and nerves are humble to You (Muslim).

In this *du'ā*, you are affirming your devotion and submission to Allah ﷻ, the Almighty.

سَمْعِي [My hearing]: My hearing has humbled to You, thereby, ensuring I will not listen to anything that displeases you. I will not listen to evil speech, backbiting or music.

بَصْرِي [My sight]: My sight has humbled to You. I will, therefore, not look at anything unlawful.

These two senses have been singled out in this du‘ā’ because they are responsible for most of our distractions. The humbling of both these senses and ensuring they submit to Allah ﷻ will result in an automatic decrease in the whispers of Shayṭān. The impact of this will then appear on the rest of the body.

Reflect

Ask yourself: Have I really submitted?

Am I watching ḥarām content? Am I engaging in ribā? Am I being good to my neighbours? Am I observing ḥijāb as per the commands of Allah ﷻ, or am I being swayed by society’s false interpretation of it?

سُبُّوحٌ، قُدُّوسٌ، رَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ. 4

The Supremely Perfect, The Most Pure, The Lord of the Angels and the Spirit [Jibrīl] (Muslim).

قُدُّوسٌ [The Most Pure]: Allah ﷻ is Pure from all defects and evil. He is Pure in His ﷻ Essence and in all of His actions. He is Free from what our imaginations perceive about Him; He transcends what we think of as ‘perfection’. He is Free from oppression, partner or child. There is no one like Him. He ﷻ purifies the hearts of His believing slaves, and is glorified by them and the angels.

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا وَبِحَمْدِكَ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي. 5

How perfect are You, O Allah, our Lord, and all praise is for You. O Allah, forgive me (Muslim).

This du‘ā’ affirms the positive attributes of Allah ﷻ, and negates all negative attributes. The praise also precedes the request for forgiveness, making it likelier to be accepted.

The Prophet ﷺ would supplicate regularly with this du‘ā’. ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها reported, “I did not see the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performing any prayer since (Sūrah al-Naṣr) was revealed, except that he supplicated or said in it [the above supplication]” (Muslim).

This is because Sūrah al-Naṣr contains the direct commandment of Allah ﷻ to His beloved ﷺ: “Then extol the perfection and praise of your Lord, and seek forgiveness from Him. Surely He is Ever-Relenting” (110:3).

The above command was revealed to him at the end of his life to prepare him to meet his Lord. Thus, he ﷺ was instructed to occupy himself in glorifying, praising and seeking forgiveness from Him.

6 سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ.

How Perfect are You, and all praise is for You. There is no god worthy of worship except You (Muslim).

Reflect

Ask yourself, how is my submission to Allah ﷻ? Do I submit to Him ﷻ equally both in private and in public? Is my submission to Allah ﷻ the same when I am serious and when I am joking around? Do I take jokes too far by lying, just to make others laugh? Do I submit in times of anger like I do when I am calm? Or do I often dispose of the beautiful conduct which my faith in Allah ﷻ requires from me, and hurt those around me?

When the night would approach, Uways al-Qarnī رضي الله عنه would say, “This night is for bowing”, and he would bow until the morning. Sometimes he would say, “This night is for prostrating”, and he would prostrate until the morning.

Reflect

A temporary submission

Do I submit to Allah inwardly and outwardly in Ramaḍān, but then forget Him ﷻ throughout the rest of the year?

Do I return to Allah ﷻ and beg His ﷻ forgiveness when I become ill or am undergoing difficulty, and then forget about Him ﷻ once my health has improved or the difficulty has passed?

Do I cry and does my heart soften when a loved one passes away, but quickly become distracted again by the glamour and glitz of this life?

Do I wear ḥijāb when I visit the house of Allah ﷻ, but then remove it after leaving?



PRACTICAL TIPS ON HOW TO MEMORISE THE ADHKĀR OF ṢALĀH

- 1 Listen to the adhkār on repeat by downloading an app that enables you to listen to them on loop.
- 2 Write them out as many times as possible. If you cannot write in Arabic then write out the transliteration.
- 3 Encourage your family and friends to join in. Suggestion: Children often memorise faster than adults, and like to see themselves outdoing the adults in games/competitions. Allocate a set of adhkār as a competition task, and set a treat/chore-free week to incentivise it. Inshā'Allah when they grow up, they will appreciate your efforts.
- 4 To reap the full benefits of the adhkār, memorise them with the translation.

- 5 To ensure you do not forget the adhkār, read them in your ṣalāh.
- 6 Take advantage of the special times of the year - Ramaḍān and the first 10 days of Dhul-Ḥijjah - to memorise the various adhkār. Read them in your ṣalāh, especially during the night prayers.



STANDING UP FROM RUKŪ‘

After rukū‘, stand up straight and raise your hands saying:

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ.

May Allah respond to the one who praises Him.

Take your time in this posture as it is a unique posture that precedes and prepares you for the greatest pillar of ṣalāh: sujūd. Stand up calmly and give this posture its due. The Prophet ﷺ used to lengthen this posture, just as he would lengthen his rukū‘ and sujūd.

This pillar of ṣalāh is a special pillar in which you praise the Lord of Majesty and Honour. Therefore, once you are peacefully standing, say one of the following:

1 اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ.

O Allah, our Lord, to You Alone belongs all praise.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When the Imām says: سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ say: اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ, for indeed whoever coincides in saying this with the angels, his past sins will be forgiven” (Bukhārī).

2 رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ ، حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ.

Our Lord, to You Alone belongs all praise; abundant, pure and blessed praise.

Rifā'ah b. Rāfi' ؓ narrated, "One day we were praying behind the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When he raised his head from rukū', he ﷺ said سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ

A man behind him ؓ said [the above]. When he ﷺ finished, he asked, 'Who uttered those words?' The man replied, 'Me.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'I saw some thirty-something angels racing to write it first'" (Bukhārī).

3 لِرَبِّي الْحَمْدُ ، لِرَبِّي الْحَمْدُ.

For my Lord alone is all praise. For my Lord alone is all praise. (Abū Dāwūd)

4 اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ مِلْءَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمِلْءَ الْاَرْضِ وَمِلْءَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ ، اَهْلَ الثَّنَاءِ وَالْمَجْدِ ، اَحَقُّ مَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ - وَكُنَّا لَكَ عَبْدٌ - اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا اَعْطَيْتَ وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ ، وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ.

O Allah, for You Alone is all praise; praise which fills the heavens and the earth, and which fills whatever You wish after that. You are most worthy of praise and glory. The greatest truth the slave can utter is - and we are all Your slaves - O Allah, there is none who can withhold what You give, and none can give what You withhold; and the wealth of the wealthy does not avail him from You (Muslim).

In this dhikr, you are praising Allah ﷻ to a level beyond your imagination!

لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا اَعْطَيْتَ ، وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ [O Allah, there is none who can withhold what You give, and none can give what You withhold]: This is reminiscent of the Prophet's advice to his cousin 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās ؓ, who narrated, "One day I was behind the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (on a camel) and he said to me, 'Son, I will teach you some words: Be mindful of Allah and He will be mindful of you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. When you ask, then ask Allah. When you seek help, then seek help from Allah. Know that if the nation gathered together to benefit you with something, they would only benefit you with something that Allah has already written for you. If they gathered together to harm you with something, they would only harm you with something that Allah had already written against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried' (Tirmidhī).

الحُجْدُ : *Jadd* means good fortune and includes: wealth, power, and fame. None of these can protect you from the punishment of Allah ﷻ.

Reflect

I am content with all that Allah ﷻ has decreed for me. I am not anxious or envious. I do not hold grudges in my heart towards someone who may have more than me. Rather my daily ṣalāh - and this reminder in particular - fills my heart with contentment and peace.

5 اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ مِلْءَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمِلْءَ الْاَرْضِ وَمِلْءَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمِلْءَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ.

O Allah, Our Lord, for You Alone is all praise; praise which fills the heavens, which fills the earth, which fills whatever is in between them, and which fills whatever You wish after that (Muslim).

6 اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ مِلْءَ السَّمَاءِ وَمِلْءَ الْاَرْضِ ، وَمِلْءَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ ، اَللّٰهُمَّ طَهِّرْنِيْ بِالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرْدِ وَالْمَاءِ الْبَارِدِ ، اَللّٰهُمَّ طَهِّرْنِيْ مِنَ الذُّنُوْبِ وَالْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنْقَى الثَّوْبُ الْاَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْوَسْخِ.

O Allah, for You Alone is all Praise which fills the heavens and the earth, and which fills whatever You wish after that. O Allah, purify me with snow, hail and cold water. O Allah, purify me from sins and mistakes as white cloth is purified of dirt (Muslim).

Reflect

This pillar of the ṣalāh is characterised by the praising and thanking of Allah. Praise Him ﷻ for allowing you to bow down to Him ﷻ and to express your humility to Him, especially as there are so many people who do not share this privilege. Thank Him for all His ﷻ blessings upon you.



SUJŪD

You will now proceed on to say Allāhu Akbar and fall into prostration. Sujūd is the secret of ṣalāh and its greatest pillar. Ibn al-Qayyim rahimahillāhi stated that all the actions before this great deed were just preludes to it.

Every preparation you make before ṣalāh is for this meeting point with Allah ṣubḥānahu. Sujūd is the closest you can be to Allah ṣubḥānahu, despite your weaknesses and many sins. Sujūd is a unique and special meeting point with Allah ṣubḥānahu. When you are in ṣajdah, peeping at someone or something becomes very difficult. When in ṣajdah, you lower your entire body, your face and ultimately your heart. You submit to Him, glorify Him and pour out your heart to Him. There is no greater manifestation of your servitude to Him than this great act.

Furthermore, Allah ṣubḥānahu has dignified sujūd by making its effect manifest on the face, the most noble part of the human body. Allah ṣubḥānahu says, “...Their distinguishing feature – as a result of prostration – is on their faces” (48:29).

According to some scholars, this āyah signifies the brightness and radiance of their faces on the Day of Judgement. Others say it refers to khushū‘, humility and outstanding character as a result of their sujūd.

On the Day of Judgement, the Prophet ṣallāllāhu alayhi wa alayhi salām will recognise his ummah from their shining faces. Their faces will be radiant as a result of their sujūd in this world. The more sujūd you perform in this world, the more radiant your face will be in the hereafter and the quicker you will be identified by the Prophet ṣallāllāhu alayhi wa alayhi salām.

Allah ṣubḥānahu has made the Hell-fire ḥarām for the face which prostrates itself to Him. The Messenger of Allah ṣallāllāhu alayhi wa alayhi salām said, “Hell-fire will consume all of the son of Ādam except the mark of prostration. Allah has forbidden the Fire to consume the mark of prostration” (Ibn Mājah).

The 7 Objectives of Sujūd

1 Humility and showing your absolute need

In sujūd you are rubbing your face (the noblest part of your body) onto the ground, and thereby completely humbling yourself to Allah ﷻ. Therefore, show Allah ﷻ your absolute need for Him. Go to Him completely and broken. Think of how weak and helpless you are.

Ensure there is no barrier between the ground and your face. The Prophet ﷺ purposely rubbed his blessed face in the mud, demonstrating the extent to which he humbled himself in front of Allah ﷻ.

Prostrating on the earth acts as a reminder of your humble origins and the place of your ultimate return: the grave. People walk and trample on the earth, yet this is the same substance you have been created from. As you lower your face, lower your ego and place it onto the ground. Purify yourself from pride and humble yourself to the Most Magnificent.

“There is no slave who offers even one sajdah for the sake of Allah on any portion of the earth, except that it will testify for him on the Day of Judgement and will cry for him the day he dies.”
- ‘Aṭā’ al-Khurāsānī ﷺ

Let each part of your body humble itself for Allah ﷻ and show its servitude (*‘ubdiyyah*) to Him. Not only should your face be lowered and humbled, but so should your hands, knees and feet. Lift your stomach from your thighs and your arms from the sides of your body. Ensure your arms are not spread out on the floor. Let each part of your body physically demonstrate its servitude to its Master and do not let them be dependent on each other. Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله explained that in sajdah, the lower body ends up at a higher level than the upper body, and this emphasises the submission of the slave. In this broken and lowly state, the slave glorifies and magnifies Allah ﷻ.

The secret of the prostration is the prostration of the heart. Thus, it is vital that just as your body performs sajdah, your heart should also perform sajdah. One of the predecessors was asked, “Can the heart prostrate too?” He replied, “By Allah, of course! A prostration from which he does not raise his head, until he meets Allah.”

Reflect

The need, desperation and humility you feel in sujūd and in front of Allah ﷻ should extend beyond your ṣalāh. You will only have internalised servitude (your ultimate purpose in life) when you think entirely of yourself as nothing, and desperately turn to Him for everything. Not only will you rely solely on Him, but you will also strive to please Him and abstain from disobeying Him. Similarly, this humility should prevent you from looking down on others and remove every trace of pride from your heart.

2 Closeness

Savour the sweetness of being close to Allah *al-Qarīb* (The Ever-Near) in sujūd. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The closest a slave is to his Lord is when he is prostrating” (Muslim).

Allah ﷻ instructed His beloved ﷺ, “...Prostrate and draw near (to Allah)” (96:19).

The longer your sajdah, the greater your chance of enjoying Allah’s close intimacy. In this world, we seek closeness with those whom we love since we derive peace and tranquillity in their company. With Allah ﷻ, there is even more peace and tranquillity if we sincerely seek His closeness. To truly feel the sweetness of ṣalāh, you have to feel the sweetness of sujūd.

3 Du‘ā’

Sujūd is one of the best times to make du‘ā’. Pour your heart out to Allah ﷻ in this time, and cry out of fear of Him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “As for sujūd, go to great lengths in making du‘ā’ in it, as it is likely that your du‘ā’ shall be answered” (Muslim).

Make du‘ā’ for everything, be it minor or major. (See our publication ‘*I Am Near*’ for a detailed guide on how to make du‘ā’). Be selfless and make du‘ā’ for your family, friends and the ummah. Be like Abu al-Dardā’ ؓ who said, “Indeed I make du‘ā’ for thirty of my brothers whilst I am in sujūd, with their names and their fathers’ names.”

Have conviction that Allah ﷻ will accept your du‘a’. Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah ؓ said, “Whatever (evil) you know about yourself should not prevent you from making du‘ā’, because Allah accepted the du‘a’ of the worst of Allah’s creation. Iblīs - may he be cursed - said, ‘My Lord, give me respite until the Day when they are resurrected.’ (Allah) said, ‘You are of those given respite.’”

Reflect

Five times a day I will knock at the door of Allah ﷻ and go to Him ﷻ with my problems, worries and needs. The longer I spend in conversation with Him, the more at ease my heart feels. I feel lighter and I feel calmness enveloping me. I also remember my loved ones and I make du‘ā’ for all those suffering in the ummah.

4 Sins being forgiven

Visualise your sins being perched on top of your shoulders as you are in sujūd. The greater your khushū‘, the more you will cry. The more sincere you are in your crying, the faster your sins will fall off your shoulders, like leaves off a tree.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When the slave stands to pray, all of his sins are brought and placed on his head and shoulders. Whenever he bows or prostrates, they fall off him” (Ṭabarānī).

The greater your sins, the lengthier you should stay in sujūd. By the will of Allah ﷻ, your tears will wash away the dirt accumulated on your heart due to your sins.

Ma‘ dān b. Ṭalḥah ؓ said, “I met Thawbān ؓ, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. So, I asked him, ‘Inform me of a deed through which Allah will grant me good and admit me into Paradise.’ He remained silent for quite a while. He then turned to me and said, ‘Hold on to sujūd, for indeed I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: There is no slave who performs a sajdah except that Allah raises him a level through it, and wipes away a sin from him through it’” (Tirmidhī).

5 Be with the Prophet ﷺ in the highest heaven

Rabī'ah b. Ka'b ﷺ would spend the night in the service of the Prophet ﷺ and bring him water for his purification and wuḍū'. Once, the Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Ask!" Rabī'ah said, "I ask you for your company in Paradise." When the Prophet ﷺ asked him if he would like anything else, he replied, "Only that." The Prophet ﷺ then told him, "Then help me to achieve this for you through abundant sujūd" (Muslim).

Perform additional voluntary prayers and prostrations, and have the intention of being raised to the highest heaven so that you can be in the company of the Prophet ﷺ.

“If you saw Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit, you would think that he has died (due to his long prostration).”

- Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh ﷺ

6 Feel happy about overcoming your enemy

Feel happy that you have overcome your greatest enemy, Shayṭān who detests that you fall into prostration to your Lord. Visualise him crying in the corner of your room, saying, "Woe to me! The son of Ādam was commanded to prostrate, and he prostrated so for him is Paradise. I was commanded to prostrate, and I refused so for me is Hell-fire" (Muslim).

7 Feel a sense of self-honour

Feel honoured that you only bow your head to Allah ﷻ and to none of His creation. You are only relying on Him and it is Him ﷻ Alone that you ask for help. Be like Imām Aḥmad ﷺ who said, "O Allah, as you have protected my face from prostrating to other than You, then protect it from asking anyone other than You."

“I saw Sufyān al-Thawrī in sajdah. I went around the Ka'bah seven times before he raised his head.”

- 'Alī b. Fuḍayl ﷺ



THE ADHKĀR OF SUJŪD

It was the practice of the Prophet ﷺ to lengthen his sujūd. He said, “When one of you prays, he should complete his rukū‘ and he should not peck in his sujūd, for the example of this is like the hungry person who consumes one or two dates. What use will they be for him?” (Ṭabarānī). He ﷺ also said, “The ṣalāh of a person will not suffice unless he straightens his back in rukū‘ and sujūd” (Abū Dāwūd).

One way of lengthening your sujūd is by memorising and supplicating (especially in your nafl prayers) with the following sunnah adhkār:

1 سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى.

How Perfect is my Lord, the Most High (Muslim).

When you are in sujūd, you are at your lowest having placed your face on the ground. Therefore, it is most apt that you proclaim His greatness, along with affirming His ﷻ perfection above anything which does not befit His ﷻ greatness and grandeur.

2 سُبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ، رَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ.

The Supremely Perfect, The Most Pure, The Lord of the Angels and the Spirit (Jibrīl) (Muslim).

3 سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا وَبِحَمْدِكَ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي.

How Perfect are You, Allah our Lord, and for You is all praise. O Allah, forgive me (Muslim).

4 سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ.

You are free from imperfection, and all praise is to You. There is no god worthy of worship except You (Muslim).

5 **اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ سَجَدْتُ ، وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ ، وَلَكَ أَسَلْتُ ، سَجَدَ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي خَلَقَهُ
وَصَوَّرَهُ وَشَقَّ سَمْعَهُ وَبَصَرَهُ ، تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ.**

O Allah, for You Alone I have prostrated, in You Alone I have believed, and to You Alone I have submitted. My face has prostrated to the One who created and fashioned it, and who formed its hearing and sight. Blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators (Muslim).

Whilst reading this du‘ā’, feel a sense of shame and shyness from the One who granted you all of the aforementioned blessings; and yet you still disobey Him. Imagine you were blind and Allah ﷻ had not bestowed you with the gift of sight. Imagine you were deaf and you could not hear your loved ones or the recitation of the Qur’ān.

6 **سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْجَبَرُوتِ ، وَالْمَلَكُوتِ ، وَالْكِبْرِيَاءِ ، وَالْعَظَمَةِ.**

How perfect is the Owner of might, dominion, grandeur and greatness (Abū Dāwūd).

7 **اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي كُلَّهُ ، دِقَّةَ وَجَلِّهِ ، وَأَوَّلَهُ وَآخِرَهُ ، وَعَلاَيَتَهُ وَسِرَّهُ.**

O Allah, forgive for me all of my sins: the minor and major, the first and the last, the public and the private (Muslim).

8 **اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ ، وَبِمُعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ ، وَبِكَ مِنْكَ ،
لَا أُحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ ، أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ.**

O Allah, indeed, I seek protection in Your pleasure from Your anger, and in Your forgiveness from Your punishment, and in You from Your [aforementioned anger and punishment]. I cannot enumerate Your praise. You are as You have praised Yourself.

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها said, “One night, I noticed that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was missing. I found him (in the Masjid), in prostration with his feet upright; he was saying [the above]” (Nasā’i).

‘Abdul-A‘lā al-Taymī رحمه الله used to say in his sujūd, “My Lord, increase me in my khushū‘ of You, as Your enemies increase in their aversion to You. And do not throw us into the Hell-fire upon our faces after they have prostrated to You.”

The optimum time for du‘ā’

Whilst in sujūd, you can make any du‘ās you wish to; you are not limited to the above du‘ās. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The closest a slave is to his Lord is when he is prostrating, so make plenty of du‘ā” (Muslim). Therefore, you should make as much du‘ā’ as you can in your sajdah, especially in your voluntary prayers. It is best to supplicate with the du‘ās from the Qur’ān and Sunnah. (For a list of these supplications, along with the translation, see our publication ‘I Am Near’).

Muslim b. Yasār رضي الله عنه used to say in his sujūd, “When will I meet You and You are happy with me?”. He would continue making du‘ā’, and then say, “When will I meet You and You are happy with me?”



SAJDAH AL-TILĀWAH

During the prostrations of recitation, you can recite any of the aforementioned adhkār of sujūd. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to also recite the following:

سَجَدَ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي خَلَقَهُ ، وَشَقَّ سَمْعَهُ وَبَصَرَهُ بِحَوْلِهِ وَقُوَّتِهِ ، فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ
أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ.

My face has prostrated to the One who created it, and who formed its hearing and sight through His power and strength. How Blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators (Ḥākim).

اللَّهُمَّ اكْتُبْ لِي بِهَا عِنْدَكَ أَجْرًا ، وَصَعْ عَنِّي بِهَا وَزْرًا ، وَاجْعَلْهَا لِي عِنْدَكَ ذُخْرًا ،
وَتَقَبَّلْهَا مِنِّي كَمَا تَقَبَّلْتَهَا مِنْ عَبْدِكَ دَاوُدَ.

O Allah, record for me a reward by You through it [i.e. the prostration] and remove from me my sins because of it. Make it a treasure for me in Your keeping, and accept it from me as You accepted it from Your slave Dāwūd ؑ (Tirmidhī).



BETWEEN THE TWO SAJDAHS

Following the first sajdah, raise your head and sit up straight.

The Prophet ﷺ used to lengthen this posture, to the degree that al-Barā' ؓ said, “The standing of (the Prophet ﷺ), his rukū', when he raised his head from rukū', his sujūd and the time between the two sajdahs were almost the same” (Muslim). To lengthen the period between the two sajdahs, try to memorise and supplicate with the following du'ās of the Prophet ﷺ:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ، رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي .

My Lord, forgive me. My Lord, forgive me (Abū Dawūd).

Imagine yourself kneeling, waiting for your name to be called out on the Day of Fear in order to be punished. Then you are given a chance to seek pardon; this is your chance. Before it is too late, you implore Allah: ‘My Lord, forgive me...My Lord, forgive me...My Lord, forgive me.’

The aforementioned du'ā' need not be limited to two repetitions; rather, it should be repeated as many times as possible.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ ، وَاَرْحَمْنِيْ ، وَعَافِنِيْ ، وَاهْدِنِيْ ، وَارْزُقْنِيْ .

O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, grant me wellbeing, guide me and grant me sustenance (Abū Dāwūd).

All the benefits of this world and of the hereafter are combined in this du'ā'.

Reflect

I take a trip down memory lane... and I remember my past indiscretions. I feel guilty about my sins; the unlawful glance, the morsel of harām, missing a ṣalāh, attacking the honour of my fellow believer, hurting my spouse, raising my voice to my mother. I recall these sins and I repeatedly plead to my Lord: 'Forgive me.'



SECOND SAJDĀH

You will then go back into sajdah. It is as though one sajdah does not satiate, and you need a second sajdah to satisfy yourself. Sujūd is repeated because it is the most honourable and virtuous element of ṣalāh. It is the most expressive posture of your servitude to the Almighty ﷻ and the closest you are to Him on this earthly realm.



TASHAHHUD

After the second sajdah, sit up straight. You are now almost at the point of concluding your ṣalāh assuming it is a two rak'ah prayer. Prior to concluding your ṣalāh, you will sit before Allah ﷻ, glorifying and praising Him, while also making any final requests.

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās ؓ said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would teach us the tashahhud like he would teach us a sūrah from the Qur’ān” (Muslim).

Although there are slight variations to the wording of the tashahhud, the following is one of them. Try your best to memorise what it means.

التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ ، وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ ،
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا
عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

All royal greetings belong to Allah, as do prayers and good (deeds and words). May peace, the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you O Prophet. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger (Bukhārī).

التَّحِيَّاتُ [All royal greetings]: In different cultures, royalty are shown respect in different ways. Some stand upon their arrival and wait for them to be seated before they themselves sit down. Others bow and curtsy. Royalty are also addressed with specific terms of honour ('Your Honour/Majesty, Your Royal Highness', etc.) and protocols usually dictate what can and cannot be uttered when greeting them.

Taḥiyyāt is plural of the word *taḥiyyah*, and is derived from the word 'ḥayāt', meaning life in Arabic. It is a form of greeting similar to 'Long live the King/Queen...' For Allah ﷻ, it means that everlasting kingship, ownership and sovereignty belong only to Him as He Alone is the Ever-Living, the only One who will never die. Thus, He ﷻ is most worthy of all praises and greetings. This is why we say the plural form *at-Taḥiyyātu* (all royal greetings) and not *at-Taḥiyyatu* (the singular form) to Allah.

وَالصَّلَوَاتُ [All prayers]: All of the ṣalāh we pray and the supplications we make are only directed to Allah.

وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ [All good]: *Ṭayyibāt* refers to pure attributes, actions and words. Allah ﷻ is Pure and only accepts the 'pure'. All of His Actions and Attributes are Pure. He is the Lord of the pure ones, and it is only the pure ones who will be granted closeness to Him in the Abode of eternal honour (Paradise). Only pure actions and words, which are carried out solely for His sake, ascend to Him.

An Alternative Meaning to the Tashahhud:

TAḤIYYĀT

All verbal
forms of
worship

ṢALAWĀT

All physical
forms of
worship

ṬAYYIBĀT

All monetary
forms of
worship

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ : Along with the right Allah ﷻ, the Creator, has over you, His creation also has a right over you. They have a right to share a portion of your ṣalāh. Accordingly, you should begin with praying for the best of creation, Muḥammad ﷺ, and then follow this by praying for the righteous servants of Allah.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ [May peace be upon you O Prophet]: al-Salām is one of the Perfect Names of Allah ﷻ. By stating ‘peace be upon you’, you are seeking the protection of Allah ﷻ for the person you are greeting. You are asking Allah ﷻ to take care of him and to keep him safe from all harm and evil.

What you are saying is, “O Allah, protect Muḥammad ﷺ in his da‘wah and protect his ummah from every type of deficiency, so that his message reigns supreme, and the glory and honour of his ummah increase.”

رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ [The mercy of Allah]: You are asking Allah ﷻ to give Muḥammad ﷺ every possible good, and to reward him for everything he did for us.

In offering our salām to Muḥammad ﷺ we are also benefitting, as he responds to our greetings. Allah ﷻ has greatly privileged us by making us the beneficiaries of the du‘ā’ of the greatest man to have walked on this earth. He ﷺ said, “There is no one who sends salām upon me, except that Allah returns my soul to me so that I may respond to his salām” (Abū Dāwūd).

وَبَرَكَاتُهُ [His blessings]: Barakāt is the plural of *barakah* which linguistically means growth and increase. You are asking Allah ﷻ to bless the Prophet ﷺ and to bless him ﷺ in his followers by: (1) increasing their numbers and (2) by occupying them in worship as he will share in their reward.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ.

After this, you send greetings upon yourself and upon the chosen righteous servants of Allah ﷺ, in accordance with the command of Allah ﷻ to His beloved ﷺ, “Say, all praise is for Allah, and may peace be upon His servants whom He has chosen” (27:59).

The caveat here of the ‘righteous’ shows you the importance of trying your best to be from them and to always keep their company.

The Prophet ﷺ said that when one utters the above, the supplication “reaches every slave in the sky and the earth” (Bukhārī).

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Then attest to the Oneness of Allah ﷻ. Through this phrase you affirm that He is the only One worthy of being worshipped, loved and obeyed. Everything and anything other than Him ﷻ that is worshipped is falsehood.

أَشْهَدُ [I testify]: *Ash-hadu* means ‘I testify’. You ‘testify’ to something being true when you are certain of its authenticity. Accordingly, this word is befitting here as you are certain that Allah ﷻ is the only One worthy of being worshipped and Muḥammad ﷺ is the slave and Messenger of Allah.

When uttering these words, re-affirm these words by simultaneously raising your index finger to indicate the Oneness of Allah ﷻ. When doing so, you must also strive to feel the impact of these words, feeling that you are strangling Shayṭān with this action. When ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar ؓ would sit down in ṣalāh, he would place his hands on his knees and point with his finger and keep his eye focused on it. He said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that the finger is “harder on Shayṭān than iron” (Aḥmad).



ṢALAWĀT UPON THE PROPHET ﷺ

Next, after greeting and paying respect to the Lord of the worlds, you now move on to paying your respect to the best of creation ﷺ.

You are continuing your assault on Shayṭān by stating the name of the person who irks him the most: his chief enemy, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

After sending ṣalāh, you will go on to making du‘ā’. The *adab* (propriety) of du‘ā’ is that you first praise Allah ﷻ, and then send ṣalawāt upon His beloved ﷺ, before asking Allah ﷻ for your own needs. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When one of you makes du‘ā’, he should start with praising Allah and glorifying his Lord, and should then invoke ṣalāh on the Prophet ﷺ. He should then make du‘ā’ for whatever he wishes” (Abū Dāwūd). Hence, the ṣalawāt follow the tashahhud which includes the praises of Allah.

Take time out to ponder on the meaning of this beautiful Prophetic utterance, often referred to as *al-ṣalāh al-ibrāhīmiyyah*:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ، إِنَّكَ
حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ، كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ .

O Allah, honour and have mercy upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as You have honoured and had mercy upon Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm: indeed, You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious. O Allah, bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as You have blessed Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm: indeed, You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious (Bukhārī).

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ [O Allah, honour and have mercy]: O Allah, have mercy upon Muḥammad and praise him in the lofty assembly. The ‘lofty assembly’ refers to the elite angels who are close to Allah ﷻ.

Ṣalāh also means ‘honour him’ i.e. honour him in this world by elevating his mention, granting victory to his dīn and preserving his sharī‘ah; honour him in the hereafter by rewarding him abundantly, accepting his intercession on behalf of his ummah and granting him the loftiest station of glory (*maqām maḥmūd*).

وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ [And upon the family of Muḥammad ﷺ]: This phrase could be a reference to: 1) His family 2) His followers. By invoking ṣalāh on his followers, you are honouring the Messenger ﷺ by honouring those who are dear to him.

بَارِكْ [Bless]: *Bārik* is derived from *barakah*, and linguistically has two meanings: (1) to be firm and continuous and (2) to grow and increase. Thus, it is similar to stating, “O Allah continue to bless and honour Muḥammad ﷺ and his followers. Increase him and his followers in every form of good. Bless him in the mission that he came with and make his legacy universal.”

حَمِيدٌ [The Most Praiseworthy]: Allah ﷻ is worthy of all praise in His Essence, His Attributes and His Actions. He also praises His praiseworthy slaves. One of His greatest blessings is that He allowed His creation to praise Him.

مَجِيدٌ [The Most Glorious]: His glory and greatness know no ends. He is the Most Generous and bestows endless favours. He is Noble and Exalted.

The glory of Allah ﷻ refers to His beautiful actions combined with nobility.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Allah has angels who travel around the earth conveying to me the salām of my ummah.” (Nasā’ī).

Why do the ṣalawāt end with these two specific names?

In asking Allah ﷻ to bestow ‘ṣalawāt’ on His beloved ﷺ, you ask Him to praise him, honour him, and elevate his mention. Thus, it is befitting that you ask ‘*al-Ḥamīd*’ (The Most Praiseworthy) and ‘*al-Majīd*’ (The Most Glorious) - the real and ultimate source of praise and glory - to increase the Messenger ﷺ in praise and glory.

Why do we send ṣalawāt upon the Messenger ﷺ?

Along with complying with Allah's command, sending ṣalawāt on the Messenger ﷺ is a manifestation of our love, reverence and obedience to him. He was sent as a mercy for mankind, and he always remembered us and worried about us.

On one occasion he lifted his hands and while weeping, invoked, "O Allah! My ummah, my ummah!" Allah sent Jibrīl down with the glad tidings, "Muḥammad, surely we will please you in regards to your ummah and we will not cause you grief" (Muslim).

In every ṣalāh, he would ask Allah ﷻ to forgive us (Ibn Ḥibbān). He missed us and yearned to see us. He once said, "I wish to see my brothers!" The Companions ﷺ asked, "O Messenger of Allah, are we not your brothers?" He replied, "You are my Companions, but my brothers are those who have not yet come in the world. I will welcome them at the Ḥawḍ (blessed fountain)" (Nasā'ī).

Unlike the other Messengers who had their exclusive du'ā' accepted in this world, the Messenger ﷺ reserved his du'ā' for the Day of Judgement where he will intercede on our behalf (Bukhārī).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Whoever sends ṣalāh upon me once, Allah will send ṣalāh upon him tenfold, erase ten sins from him, and will raise him ten degrees in status." (Nasā'ī).



DU'Ā'

Before the end of the ṣalāh, Allah ﷻ gives us another opportunity to make du'ā'. This is one of the best times for du'ā' and is likely to be accepted. The Prophet ﷺ was asked, "Which du'ā' is most likely to be responded to?" He replied, "During

the last part of the night and at the end of the obligatory prayers” (Tirmidhī). Thus, even if you have forgotten to make du‘ā in your sajdah, you can ask now. Through His mercy, Allah ﷻ has blessed you with two opportunities during ṣalāh to make du‘ā’.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that after the tashahhud, “He should choose any supplication which he likes, and then ask Allah with it.” (Abū Dāwūd).

During your du‘ā’, it is best to utter any of the following adhkār, or to utter any other du‘ās from the Qur’ān and Sunnah; you may also ask with words similar to them. Imām al-Ghazālī رحمه الله said, “At the end of your ṣalāh, supplicate with the du‘ās transmitted from the Prophet ﷺ with humility, fear, earnest pleading and the conviction that it will be answered. Also include your parents and the believers in your du‘ā’.” (See our publication ‘I Am Near’ for a collection of du‘ās.)

“Whoever performs the five daily prayers, has thanked Allah; and whoever supplicates for his parents at the end of the five daily prayers, has thanked his parents.” - **Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah** رحمه الله

Try to memorise and supplicate (especially in your nafl prayers) with the following adhkār of the Prophet ﷺ:

1 **اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ظُلْمًا كَثِيرًا ، وَلَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، فَاعْفِرْ لِي مَغْفِرَةً مِنْ عِنْدِكَ ، وَارْحَمْنِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.**

O Allah, I have wronged myself greatly and no one forgives sins except You; grant me forgiveness from You and have mercy upon me. You are the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful (Bukhārī).

In this du‘ā’, you are acknowledging that only He ﷻ can forgive. You are simultaneously humbling yourself, admitting your shortcomings and asking Him ﷻ through His Blessed Names.

2 **اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ ، وَمِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ ، وَمِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَالِ.**

O Allah, I seek Your protection from the punishment of the fire, from the punishment of the grave, from the trials of life and death, and from the evil of the trial of al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl (Muslim).

3 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَالِ ،
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَفِتْنَةِ الْمَمَاتِ ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْمَأْثَمِ وَالْمَغْرَمِ .

O Allah, I seek Your protection from the punishment of the grave, and I seek Your protection from the trial of the al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl, and I seek Your protection from the trials of life and death. O Allah, I seek Your protection from sin and debt (Bukhārī).

4 اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ ، وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُ ، وَمَا أَسْرَفْتُ
وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي ، أَنْتَ الْمُقَدِّمُ ، وَأَنْتَ الْمُؤَخِّرُ ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ .

O Allah, forgive me for what I have done in the past and for what I am yet to do, for what I have done privately and for what I have done publicly, for my excesses and for that which You know more than me. You are the One who brings forward and the One who puts behind, and there is no god worthy of worship except You (Muslim).

5 اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ ، وَشُكْرِكَ ، وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ .

O Allah, help me to remember You, be grateful to You and worship You in an excellent manner (Abū Dāwūd).

6 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجُبْنِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ
أُرَدَّ إِلَى أَرْدَالِ الْعُمُرِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الدُّنْيَا وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ .

O Allah, I seek Your protection from miserliness, I seek Your protection from cowardice and I seek Your protection from being sent back to a miserable old age. I seek Your protection from the trials of the world and the punishment of the grave (Nasā'ī).

7 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ .

O Allah, I beg You for Paradise and I seek Your protection from Hell-fire (Abū Dawūd).

8 اللَّهُمَّ بِعِلْمِكَ الْغَيْبِ ، وَقُدْرَتِكَ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ ، أَحْيَيْنِي مَا عَلِمْتَ الْحَيَاةَ خَيْرًا
لِي وَتَوَفَّنِي إِذَا عَلِمْتَ الْوَفَاةَ خَيْرًا لِي ، اللَّهُمَّ وَأَسْأَلُكَ خَشْيَتَكَ فِي الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ ،
وَأَسْأَلُكَ كَلِمَةَ الْحَقِّ فِي الرِّضَا وَالْغَضَبِ ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ الْقَصْدَ فِي الْفَقْرِ وَالْغِنَى ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ
نَعِيمًا لَا يَنْقُذُ ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ قُرَّةَ عَيْنٍ لَا تَنْقَطِعُ ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ الرِّضَا بَعْدَ الْقَضَاءِ ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ

بَرَدَ الْعَيْشِ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ لَذَّةَ النَّظَرِ إِلَى وَجْهِكَ ، وَالشَّوْقَ إِلَى لِقَائِكَ ، فِي غَيْرِ
صَرَاءَ مُضِرَّةٍ ، وَلَا فِتْنَةٍ مُضِلَّةٍ ، اللَّهُمَّ زَيِّنَا بِزِينَةِ الْإِيمَانِ ، وَاجْعَلْنَا هَذَاهُ مُهْتَدِينَ.

O Allah, with Your knowledge of the unseen and Your absolute power over the creation, let me live in this world as long as You know my living is good for me; and give me death when You know death is better for me. O Allah, I ask You for Your fear in secret and in public. I ask You for the word of truth in times of joy and anger. I ask You for moderation in poverty and wealth. I ask You for endless blessings and perpetual delights. I ask You to make me pleased with destiny; a cool, comfortable life after death; the pleasure of gazing at Your face, and the longing to meet You, without any painful ordeals and tribulations that misguide. O Allah, adorn us with the beauty of faith, and make us those who guide others and are guided themselves (Nasā'ī).

9 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْمَنَّانُ ، بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ، يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ، يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ.

O Allah, I beg You as all praise only belongs to You. There is no god worthy of worship except You, the Giver of all good, the Originator of the heavens and the earth. O Lord of Majesty and Honour, O the Ever Living, O the One who sustains and protects all that exists.

Anas رضي الله عنه narrated that he was sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ whilst a man was praying. The man went on to supplicate [with the above]. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “He has certainly invoked Allah by His Greatest Name. When He is supplicated by it, He responds; and when asked by it, He gives” (Abū Dāwūd).

10 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِأَنِّي أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، الْأَحَدُ الصَّمَدُ
الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ.

O Allah, I ask You as I bear witness that You are Allah, there is no god worthy of worship except You, the One, the Self-Sufficient Master, the One who has not given birth and was not born, and to whom no one is equal.

Buraydah al-Aslamī رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ heard a man supplicating [with the above]. He ﷺ remarked, “By the One in whose Hand is my life, he has certainly asked Allah with His Greatest Name: when He is supplicated by it, He responds; and when asked by it, He gives” (Tirmidhī).



SALĀM: THE END OF AN EPIC JOURNEY

Now that you have made du‘ā’, turn to your right and left side, saying,

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ.

May the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you.

When performing your salām, your intention should be to convey greetings to the angels and your fellow congregants (when praying in congregation).

Be grateful to Allah ﷻ who has allowed you to undertake this amazing journey. Thank Him for allowing you to be from those who remember Him ﷻ and are not drowning in heedlessness.

Always consider the ṣalāh you are praying as potentially the last one. Feel a sense of shyness and grief about the shortcomings in your ṣalāh. Fear Allah ﷻ not accepting it, even though you may have done your best. It may be that a single sin acts as a barrier between you and your ṣalāh being accepted, so seek Allah’s forgiveness by saying **أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ** three times. Then spend some time seated in your place of prayer and recite the adhkār after ṣalāh

Feel sad on completing your ṣalāh, for it is the end of a special journey - a journey in which you were conversing with The Most Loving. Similarly, be careful of becoming conceited (*ujb*) about your khushū’ and devotion in your ṣalāh.

When Yaḥyā b. Waththāb ؓ completed his ṣalāh, he would remain in his place for some time afterward, and the worry of ṣalāh would be apparent on him. Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī ؓ would also remain in his place for some time after the prayer, as if he was ill.

Reflect

Now that you have prayed, consider how the angels are at that moment ascending to Allah ﷻ with your ṣalāh. Think of them as being your envoys presenting your special gift in the court of the king. What kind of gift will you present? Have you sent the least important thing to you? Or have you given the matter careful thought and been diligent in preparation of the gift, and sent the best of what you have to offer?

“

When Ḥātim al-Aṣamm ؓ was asked about his ṣalāh, he said, “When the time for ṣalāh comes close, I perform wuḍu thoroughly, go to the spot where I intend to pray, and sit there until all my limbs are in a collected state.

Then I stand up to perform my prayer, placing the Ka‘bah in front of my eyes, the ṣirāṭ (bridge over Hell-fire) beneath my feet, Paradise to my right and Hell-fire to my left, and the Angel of Death behind me, thinking all the while that this is my last prayer.

Then I stand between hope and fear. I carefully pronounce ‘Allāhu Akbar’. Then I recite the Qur’ān carefully in a measured pace, bow in humility, and prostrate submissively. I then present it with sincerity to Allah ﷻ. Then I wonder whether or not my prayer has been accepted.”

”



QUNŪT

اَللّٰهُمَّ اهْدِنِيْ فَيَمِّنْ هَدِيَّتْ ، وَعَافِنِيْ فَيَمِّنْ عَافِيَّتْ ، وَتَوَلَّنِيْ فَيَمِّنْ تَوَلَّيْتُ ، وَبَارِكْ لِيْ فَيَمَّا
اَعْطَيْتْ ، وَقِنِيْ شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتْ ، اِنَّكَ تَقْضِيْ وَلَا يُقْضٰى عَلَيْكَ ، وَاِنَّهُ لَا يَذِلُّ مَنْ وَّالَيْتْ ،
وَلَا يَعْزُّ مَنْ عَادَيْتْ ، تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتْ .

O Allah, guide me amongst those You have guided, grant me wellbeing amongst those You have granted wellbeing, and befriend me amongst those You have befriended. Bless me in what You have given me and protect me from the evil of what You have decreed: You are the One who decrees and You are not decreed against. Whomsoever You befriend will never be disgraced, and whomsoever You oppose will never be honoured. You are the Most Blessed, our Lord and You are the Most Exalted (Abū Dāwūd).

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَسْتَغِيْنُكَ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُكَ ، وَنُؤْمِنُ بِكَ وَنُثْنِيْ عَلَيْكَ الْحَيْرَ وَلَا نَكْفُرُكَ ، وَنَخْلَعُ
وَنَتْرُكُ مَنْ يَّفْجُرُكَ ، اَللّٰهُمَّ اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ ، وَلَكَ نُصَلِّيْ وَنَسْجُدُ ، وَاِلَيْكَ نَسْعٰى وَنَخْفِدُ ،
وَنَرْجُو رَحْمَتَكَ وَنَخْشٰى عَذَابَكَ ، اِنَّ عَذَابَكَ الْجَدِّ بِالْكَفَّارِ مُلْحِقٌ .

O Allah, we beg You for Your help and we seek Your forgiveness. We believe in You, we praise You highly, and we are not ungrateful to You. We move away from and leave those who disobey You. O Allah, You Alone we worship, to You Alone we pray and prostrate, to You Alone we strive and hasten. We hope for Your mercy and we fear Your punishment: Your severe punishment will surely be meted out to the disbelievers (Ibn Abī Shaybah).

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ ، وَاَعُوْذُ بِمُعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوْبَتِكَ ، وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ ،
لَا اُحْصِيْ ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ ، اَنْتَ كَمَا اَثْنَيْتَ عَلٰى نَفْسِكَ .

O Allah, I seek protection in Your pleasure from Your anger. I seek protection in Your forgiveness from Your punishment. I seek protection in You from Your [aforementioned anger and punishment]. I cannot enumerate Your praise. You are as You have praised Yourself (Tirmidhī) .



ADHKĀR AFTER SALAH

1 أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ (3x) ، اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ السَّلَامُ ، وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ ،
تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ.

I seek the forgiveness of Allah (3x). O Allah, You are The Flawless and The Source of Peace, and from You comes peace. Blessed are You, full of Majesty and Honour (Muslim).

2 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ،
اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا اَعْطَيْتَ ، وَلَا مُعْطِي لِمَا مَنَعْتَ ، وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ.

There is no god worthy of worship but Allah. He is Alone and He has no partner whatsoever. To Him Alone belong all sovereignty and all praise. He is over all things All-Powerful. O Allah, there is none who can withhold what You give, and none can give what You withhold; and the wealth of the wealthy does not avail them against You (Bukhārī).

3 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ،
لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ، وَلَا نَعْبُدُ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ، لَهُ التَّعَمُّةُ وَلَهُ الْفَضْلُ
وَلَهُ الثَّنَاءُ الْحَسَنُ ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ، وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ.

There is no god worthy of worship but Allah. He is Alone and He has no partner whatsoever. To Him Alone belong all sovereignty and all praise. He is over all things All-Powerful. There is no power (in averting evil) or strength (in attaining good) except through Allah. There is no god but Allah, and we do not worship any other besides Him. To Him Alone belong grace, bounteousness and noble praise. There is no god but Allah. We sincerely devote our religion for Him, even though the disbelievers may dislike it (Muslim).

4 اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ.

O Allah, help me in remembering You, in being grateful to You, and in worshipping You in an excellent manner. (Abū Dāwūd).

5 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجُبْنِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ أُرَدَّ إِلَى أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الدُّنْيَا، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ.

O Allah, I seek Your protection from miserliness and I seek Your protection from cowardice. I seek Your protection from being sent back to a miserable old age. I seek Your protection from the trials of the world and I seek Your protection from the punishment of the grave (Bukhārī).

6 سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ (33x)، الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (33x)، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ (33x)،

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.

Allah is free from imperfection (33x). All praise be to Allah (33x). Allah is the Greatest (33x). There is no god worthy of worship but Allah. He is Alone and He has no partner whatsoever. To Him Alone belong all sovereignty and all praise. He is over all things All-Powerful.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “He who recites [the above] after every prayer will have all his sins forgiven even if they are as abundant as the foam of the sea” (Muslim).

Abū Hurayrah ؓ narrated that Abū Dharr ؓ said, “O Prophet of Allah, the wealthy people have all the rewards; they pray as we pray; they fast as we fast; and they have surplus wealth which they give in charity; but we have no wealth which we may give in charity.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “O Abū Dharr, should I not teach you phrases by which you acquire the rank of those who excel you? No one can acquire your rank except one who acts like you.” He said, “Why not, Messenger of Allah?” He said, “Say [the above] after each prayer” (Abū Dāwūd).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “There are certain utterances, the repeaters of which or the performers of which at the end of every obligatory prayer will never be deprived of the reward: ‘Subhānallāh’ 33 times, ‘Alhamdulillah’ 33 times and ‘Allāhu Akbar’ 34 times after every prayer” (Muslim).

7 اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ، لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ، لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ، مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ، يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ، وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ.

Allah, there is no god but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him Alone belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except with His permission? He knows what is before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursī extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great (2:255).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever reads [Āyah al-Kursī] after every obligatory prayer, there is nothing that will prevent him from entering Paradise except death” (Nasā’ī).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

8 قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ، اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ، لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ.

Say, He is Allah, the One, the Self-Sufficient Master, Who has not given birth and was not born, and to Whom no one is equal (112).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ، مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ.

Say, I seek protection of the Lord of the daybreak, from the evil of what He has created, and from the evil of the darkening night when it settles, and from the evil of the blowers in knots, and from the evil of the envier when he envies (113).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ، مَلِكِ النَّاسِ، إِلَهِ النَّاسِ، مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ، الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ، مِنَ الْغِيَةِ وَالنَّاسِ.

Say, I seek protection of the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws, who whispers in the hearts of mankind, whether they be Jinn or people (114) (Abū Dāwūd).

9 سُبْحَانَكَ وَيَمْدُكَ ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ.

You are free from imperfection, and all praise is to You. There is no god but You. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance.

‘Ā’ishah ؓ said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ never sat in a gathering, or recited Qur’ān, or performed a prayer except that he would conclude that act with these words.” She says: “So I asked him: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I see that you do not sit in a gathering, recite Qur’ān or perform prayer except that you conclude with these words?’ He replied: ‘Yes. Whoever uttered good words, then these words [the above] will be a seal for them, and whoever uttered something evil, then these words will be its expiation’” (Nasā’ī).

(10x after Fajr & Maghrib)

10 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.

There is no god worthy of worship but Allah. He is Alone and He has no partner whatsoever. To Him Alone belong all sovereignty and all praise. He gives life and He gives death. He is over all things All-Powerful.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever says [the above] 10 times after Maghrib and Fajr, whilst sitting in the position of tashahhud and before moving, Allah will write 10 good deeds for him for each time he says it. (Likewise) He will forgive 10 sins and raise 10 stages for him. It will be a shield for him against all repulsive things and he will be guarded from Shaytān. No sin will be allowed to reach him that day (i.e. destroy him or invalidate his actions) except for shirk. He will be from the best of people in terms of actions, except for the one who recites it even more than him” (Tirmidhī).

(7x after Fajr & Maghrib)

11 اللَّهُمَّ أَجِرْنِي مِنَ النَّارِ

O Allah, protect me from the Hell-fire.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “When you finish Maghrib, say [the above] seven times. If you say that and then die during that night, it will be a protection for you. And after praying Fajr, say the same. If you die on that day, it will be a protection for you” (Abū Dāwūd).

After Fajr

12 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَرِزْقًا طَيِّبًا، وَعَمَلًا مُتَقَبَّلًا.

O Allah, I ask You for beneficial knowledge, wholesome sustenance, and deeds which are accepted (Ibn Mājah).

3x After Witr

13 سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ.

How perfect is the Sovereign, the Most Holy.

After praying witr, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would say [the above] and would raise and extend his voice the third time (Nasā’i).



CHAPTER 4 - REVIEW & REFLECT

- 1 What are the four points you should keep in mind when performing wuḍū?
- 2 What is the significance of raising the hands at the beginning of ṣalāh?
- 3 Beyond the literal translation, what do we mean when we say “Allāhu Akbar”?
- 4 What is the significance of lowering the head and clasping the hands during qiyām?
- 5 Why is Sūrah al-Fātiḥah the key to the entire Qur’ān?
- 6 What emotions should you experience in rukū’?
- 7 What are the seven objectives of sujūd?
- 8 What is the secret of sujūd?
- 9 Have you memorised the du‘ā’ between the two sajdahs?
- 10 Can you explain *al-ṣalāh al-ibrāhīmīyyah* beyond a simple translation?
- 11 Write down the translation of the tashahhud.
- 12 The next time you ring or meet a friend, summarise for them the section on Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and discuss its importance in the life of the believer. Re-read the section if necessary.
- 13 Can you recall how Allah ﷻ responds to each āyah you recite in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah?
- 14 What emotions does Sūrah al-Fātiḥah invoke in you?
- 15 “Ṣalāh is the gateway to knowing and becoming deeply acquainted with Allah ﷻ.” Can you explain this statement in detail, in light of what you have read about the postures and various utterances of ṣalāh?

A JOURNEY THROUGH ṢALĀH: A SUMMARY

1

WUḌŪ

- Recite the du'ā' before and after wuḍū'.
- Pray two rak'ahs after wuḍū' (taḥiyyat al-wuḍū').
- Make an intention to purify yourself from three impurities: (1) shirk, (2) sins and (3) dirt.
- When performing wuḍū, visualise:
 1. your sins being forgiven,
 2. your status being raised,
 3. the eight doors of Paradise being opened,
 4. the Prophet ﷺ recognising you on the Day of Judgement because of wuḍū.

2

WALKING TO THE MASJID

- The masjid is the most beloved of places to Allah ﷻ. Have the intention that, by walking to the masjid, you are returning to your Master to set aright your negligence of Him.
- Walk calmly and mentally prepare to enter ṣalāh.
- For every step you take, hope for: (1) one good deed, (2) being raised a degree and (3) one sin being wiped away.

3

TAKBĪR

- Renew your sincerity and empty your heart of anything besides Allah ﷻ.
- Strive to eliminate pride from your heart.
- Magnify and glorify Allah ﷻ with your tongue & heart.
- As you enter the court of the Almighty, surrender to Allah ﷻ by raising your hands and mentally throw the world behind you.

4

THE OPENING DU'Ā'

- Fill your heart with the greatness of Allah ﷻ and praise Him.
- Just as you are facing the Qiblah with your body, turn your heart to Allah ﷻ.
- Renew your repentance and make a firm intention to stop sinning.

5

ISTI'ĀDHAH & BASMALAH

- Seek protection in the mighty and invincible power of Allah ﷻ against your worst enemy.
- Start by seeking Allah's help and blessings.

6

QIYĀM (STANDING)

- Clasp your arms like a humble slave and lower your gaze. Do not look to the left and right.
- Continuously recall that you are now in front of Allah ﷻ and He is talking to you.

7

RECITING QUR'ĀN

- Recite slowly and beautifully.
- Reflect on the words you are uttering and fill your heart with love, hope and fear (depending on what you are reciting).
- Vary the sūrahs you have memorised.
- Visualise and interact with what you are reading.
- Increase in knowledge and your īmān of Allah ﷻ as He manifests Himself through His words.

8

FĀTIḤAH

- Learn & reflect on the meaning.
- Take a moment and pause at the end of each āyah, as Allah ﷻ responds.
- Recall and reflect on all of the blessings Allah ﷻ has given you (manifestations of His mercy). This will increase your love for and hope in Him. (Āyah 1-2)
- Visualise your plight on the Day of Judgement, and feel scared. (Āyah 3)
- Feel yourself expressing your servitude and need of Him ﷻ, whilst simultaneously magnifying Him. (Āyah 4)
- Know that Sūrah Fātiḥah is one of the best du'ās, so learn its meaning and recite it as though you really mean it!

9

ĀMĪN

- Be certain that Allah ﷻ will accept your du'ā'.
- Intend for your āmīn to coincide with the āmīn of the angels so that you are forgiven.

10

RUKŪ'

- Glorify Allah ﷻ Alone.
- Bow physically and mentally.
- Remove the glorification of anyone other than Him from your heart.
- Don't make your humility and submission to Allah ﷻ temporary. Be humble and submit to him outside of ṣalāh as well.

11

STANDING FROM RUKŪ'

- Praise Allah ﷻ once again.
- Fill your heart with His love, awe and majesty.
- Acknowledge your servitude to Him and be certain that only He can give and withhold.
- Hope that your praise coincides with the praises of the angels, so that Allah ﷻ will forgive your sins.

12

SUJŪD

- Prostrate to Allah ﷻ with humility – go to Allah like a beggar would.
- Experience delight in being close to Him, as this is the closest you can get to Him on this earth.
- Feel honoured that you only prostrate to Him, and not to any of His creation.
- Have hope that your sujūd will wipe away your sins and remove the burdens off your shoulders.
- Take advantage and make du'ā'.
- As you perform this most honourable deed, consider how you are triumphing over Shayṭān, who is now crying.
- By performing more sujūd (through extra nafl prayers), hope to be in the company of the Prophet ﷺ in Paradise.

13

BETWEEN TWO SAJDAHS

- Sit up straight and don't rush this step.
- Humbly plead for forgiveness. Remember that you are sitting on your knees, with your eyes lowered.
- Recite and reflect on the supplication that the Prophet ﷺ made in this moment: for Allah ﷻ to forgive you, have mercy upon you, grant you well-being, guide you and provide for you.

14

TASHAHHUD

- Through tashahhud, you are now bidding farewell to your ṣalāh.
- Respectfully greet Allah ﷻ and pay your respect to Him.
- Send salām on the Prophet ﷺ and feel the joy as he replies to you.
- Feel a sense of brotherhood with all the believers in general, and with the pious slaves specifically.
- Renew your tawḥīd with **أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ** and raise your finger to demonstrate this.
- In the final du'ā', enjoy another chance to ask Allah for your needs.

15

TASLĪM & END OF ṢALĀH

- Intend that you are greeting the angels and those around you.
- The taslīm concludes this epic journey. Feel sad that you are now leaving your Creator and returning to the worries of the world.
- No matter how hard you have tried, your ṣalāh will have deficiencies. So, seek Allah's forgiveness and recite the adhkār after ṣalāh.
- Beware of 'ujb (self-admiration and conceit) about your ṣalāh.
- Be grateful to Allah ﷻ who has allowed you to undertake this amazing journey.

MOVING FORWARD

Date: / /

Describe in detail how you would like your ṣalāh to be in one year’s time, if Allah ﷻ blesses you with life.

What practical steps, by Allah’s Permission are you going to take to make the above a reality?



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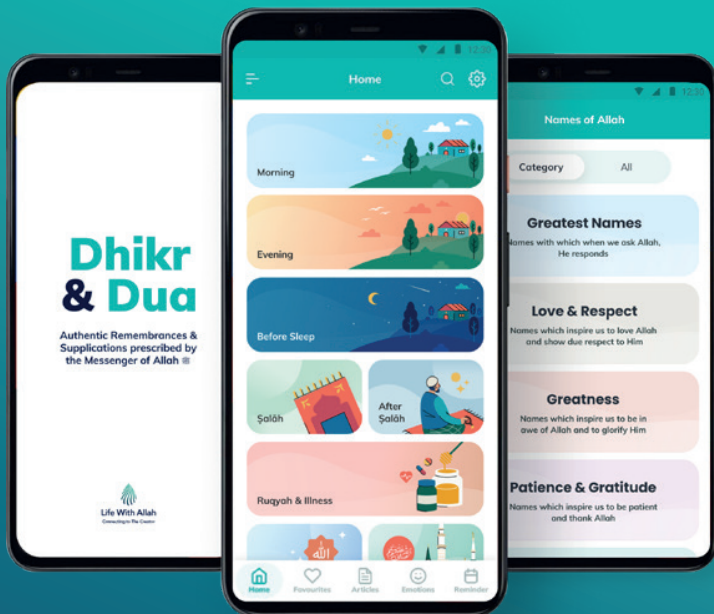
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“Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their ṣalāh...” (23:1-2).

As the second of Islam's five pillars, ṣalāh is one of the greatest acts of worship. Our beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ described it as the 'joy' of his life, and it was his greatest recourse throughout his noble years of Prophethood.

Gifted to us directly from above the seven heavens by Allah Most High, ṣalāh remains the key to all good. Sadly today, despite its unmatched virtues, many of us consider ṣalāh as inconvenient, and even burdensome. Instead of 'wanting' to pray, we feel like we 'have' to.

Taste the Sweetness of Salah is a guide on how to break this apathy; and to start immersing ourselves in ṣalāh and begin tasting its sweetness and joy. Interlaced with stories of the righteous, it explores how we can attain khushū' (complete humility and concentration) and, thereby, delight in this lofty worship.

With its focus on the spiritual elements and inner dimensions of ṣalāh, this book will hopefully benefit every believer, regardless of where they are in their spiritual journey.



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