

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2026

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

Produced by:

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Study 11: Prayer — Its regulated form

- By means of the established form of prayer, called *Ṣalat* in Arabic and *Namaz* in Urdu, we are drawn out of our worldly struggle five times a day, and made to realize that equality, fraternity and love are the real sources of human happiness.
- The time spent on prayer is not, therefore, wasted even from the point of view of actively doing good to humanity.
- On the contrary, the best use of time is made in learning those great lessons which make life worth living.

- The *form* of the prescribed prayers is indicated in the following verses of the Holy Quran:

وَاقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَارْكُعُوْا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾

“And keep up prayer and give the due charity
and *bow down with those who bow down.*” — 2:43

حٰفِظُوْا عَلٰى الصَّلٰوٰتِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ الْوَسْطٰى^ق وَقُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ قٰنِتِيْنَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾

“*Guard the prayers* and the most excellent prayer,
and *stand up* truly obedient to Allah.”
— 2:238

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا ﴿١٠٣﴾

“Prayer indeed has been enjoined on the believers *at fixed times*.” — 4:103

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ
ذِكُّكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

“O you who believe, when the call is sounded for prayer *on Friday*,

hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business.

That is better for you, if you know.” — 62:9

- *Why is prayer regulated in Islam, with a fixed form, and at certain times of the day?*
- The purpose of prayer in Islam is **not only** the purification and development of the individual worshipper. More than that, one purpose of prayer is to level all differences between people, and bring about love, concord and a true union of humanity.
- This object cannot be achieved without a regularly instituted form of prayer, so that everyone should gather together at the stated times and should stand up reverently, bow down and prostrate themselves before their great Maker as one body.

- Even apart from this, prayer as an institution could not have been kept alive unless there was an outward form to which all people should try to conform. An outward form is needed to remind people of the underlying idea.
- The object that Islam has in view is the moral elevation of **the community as a whole** and not the elevation of particular individuals separately.
- Without **uniformity**, the community or nation, as a whole, cannot make any progress. To have uniformity, there must be a form.

- Muslims are required to assemble at particular times in mosques or other appointed places, and to follow the lead of the Imam.

But:

- Every prayer is divided into two parts, one to be performed in congregation, the other alone and separately by individuals.
- Even in the congregational part there is ample scope for the individual to express the soul's sincerest desire before its Maker, and for an outpouring of the true feelings of the heart.

- In the individual part of the prayer, we may select any portions of the Quran to recite, and also give vent to our own feelings by making any supplications and in any language that we choose.
- We can do this in any of the four postures: the posture of *standing, bowing, prostration or sitting*.

- The Islamic mode of worship is designed to concentrate attention on one purpose: the realization of the presence of God. The **ablution** preceding prayer, the reverential attitude in **standing**, **the bowing down**, the **kneeling** with the forehead placed on the ground, and the **reverent sitting posture** — all help the mind to realize the presence of God as a fact.
- The worshipper finds his heart's joy in doing honour to the Great Master, not only with the tongue but with the whole body, adopting a respectful attitude.

- The spirit of humility within us is expressed in particular in the postures of reverence which we adopt in prayer.
- The whole prayer is a most solemn and serious affair during which the worshippers do not turn their attention to anything else, nor indulge in any movement which should distract their attention or disturb their prayerful attitude.

- The prayer is thus an undisturbed meditation on the presence of God. For this reason prayer in Islam is not accompanied with music but by recitations from the Quran, which speaks of God's love, mercy, power and knowledge.
- When someone is sick or is on a journey, any posture of the body which is convenient and suits the situation is permitted for prayers.

- In such a case, the worshipper is **willing** to adopt any position of humility, but the bodily condition does not allow, or the circumstances do not allow, the prescribed postures to be adopted.
- But if prayer cannot be said according to the regular procedure, this does not affect the worshipper's sincerity or the effectiveness, value and worth of the prayer.

END OF STUDY 11