***Prayer(Salah)***

Qur'an

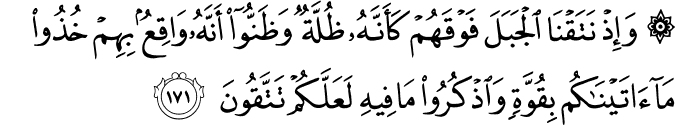




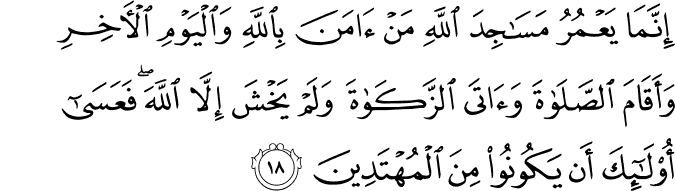
[6:162-163] Say, "My Salat, my worship, my life and my death, are all devoted absolutely to Allah alone, the Lord of the universe.  He has no partner. This is what I am commanded to believe, and I am the first to submit."[[1]](#footnote-2)



[23:2] Successful indeed are the believers; who are reverent during their Salat.[[2]](#footnote-3)



[7: 171]As to those who hold fast by the Book and establish regular prayer (Salat) – never shall We suffer the reward of the righteous to perish.[[3]](#footnote-4)



[9:18] The only people to frequent Allah's masjids are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and observe the Salat, and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and do not fear except Allah. These will surely be among the guided ones.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Hadith

Narrated Abu Huraira: I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "If there was a river at the door of any one of you and he took a bath in it five times a day would you notice any dirt on him?" They said, "not a trace of dirt would be left." The Prophet added, "That is the example of the five prayers with which Allah blots out (annuls) evil deeds."[[5]](#footnote-6)

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RAA) :Rasulullah (SAW) said, "Allah will prepare for him who goes to the mosque in the morning and in the afternoon (for the congregational prayer) an honorable place in Paradise with good hospitality for (what he has done) every morning and afternoon goings.[[6]](#footnote-7)

Narrated Abu Hurairah (RAA) Rasualullah (SAW) said, "Martyrs are those who die because of drowning, plague, an abdominal disease, or of being buried alive by a falling building." And then he added, "If the people knew the Reward for the Zuhr prayer in its early time, they would race for it. If they knew the reward for the 'Isha' and the Fajr prayers in congregation, they would join them even if they had to crawl. If they knew the reward for the first row, they would draw lots for it."[[7]](#footnote-8)

**The Ninth Word**

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

*So glorify God when you reach evening and when you rise in the morning; for all praise is His in the heavens and on earth, and towards the end of the day and when you have reached noon*.1

Brother! You ask me concerning the wisdom in the specified times of the five daily prayers. I shall point out only one of the many instances of wisdom in the times.

The second-hand, minute-hand, hour-hand, and day-hand of a clock which tells the weeks look to one another, are examples of one another, and follow one another. Similarly, the alternations of day and night, which are like the seconds of this world -a vast clock of Almighty God- and the years which tell its minutes, and the stages of man’s life-span which tell the hours, and the epochs of the world’s life-span which tell the days look to one another, are examples of one another, resemble one another, and recall one another. For example:

The time of **Fajr**, the early morning: This time until sunrise resembles and calls to mind the early spring, the moment of conception in the mother’s womb, and the first of the six days of the creation of the heavens and earth; it recalls the Divine acts present in them.

 The time of **Zuhr**, just past midday: This resembles and points to midsummer, and the prime of youth, and the period of man’s creation in the lifetime of the world, and calls to mind the manifestations of mercy and the abundant bounties they contain.

*The time of* ***Asr****, afternoon:* This is like autumn, and old age, and the time of the Final Prophet (PBUH), known as the Era of Bliss, and recalls the Divine acts and favours of the All-Merciful One present in them.

 The time of **Maghrib**, sunset: Through recalling the departure of many creatures at the end of autumn, and man’s death, and the destruction of the world at the commencement of the resurrection, this time puts in mind the manifestations of Divine glory and sublimity, and rouses man from his slumbers of heedlessness.

The time of **Isha**, nightfall. As for this time, by calling to mind the world of darkness veiling all the objects of the daytime world with a black shroud, and winter hiding the face of the dead earth with its white cerement, and even the remaining works of departed men dying and passing beneath the veil of oblivion, and this world, the arena of examination, being shut up and closed down for ever, it proclaims the awesome and mighty disposals of the All-Glorious and Compelling Subduer.

**The Twenty-First Word**

One time, a man great in age, physique, and rank said to me: “The prayers are fine, but to perform them every single day five times is excessive. Since they never end, it becomes wearying.”

A long time after the man said these words, I listened to my soul and I heard it say exactly the same things. I looked at it and saw that with the ear of laziness, it was receiving the same lesson from Satan. Then I understood that those words were as though said in the name of all evil-commanding souls, or else they had been prompted. So I said: “Since my soul commands to evil, one who does not reform his own soul cannot reform others. In which case, I shall begin with my own soul.”

O my wretched soul! Is your life eternal, I wonder? Have you any incontrovertible document showing that you will live to next year, or even to tomorrow? What causes you boredom is that you fancy you shall live for ever. You complain as though you will remain in this world to enjoy yourself for ever. If you had understood that your life is brief and that it is departing fruitlessly, it surely would not cause you boredom, but excite a real eagerness and agreeable pleasure to spend one hour out of the twenty-four on a fine, agreeable, easy, and merciful act of service which is a means of gaining the true happiness of eternal life.

O my stomach-worshipping soul! Every day you eat bread, drink water, and breathe air; do they cause you boredom? They do not, because since the need is repeated, it is not boredom that they cause, but pleasure. In which case, the five daily prayers should not cause you boredom, for they attract the needs of your companions in the house of my body, the sustenance of my heart, the water of life of my spirit, and the air of my subtle faculties. Yes, it is by knocking through supplication on the door of One All-Compassionate and Munificent that sustenance and strength may be obtained for a heart afflicted with infinite griefs and sorrows and captivated by infinite pleasures and hopes. And it is by turning towards the spring of mercy of an Eternal Beloved through the five daily prayers that the water of life may be imbibed by a spirit connected with most beings, which swiftly depart from this transitory world crying out at separation. And being most needy for air in the sorrowful, crushing, distressing, transient, dark, and suffocating conditions of this world, it is only through the window of the prayers that a conscious inner sense and luminous subtle faculty can breathe, which by its nature desires eternal life and was created for eternity and is a mirror of the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal One and is infinitely delicate and subtle.

**What is the Point of Worship, and Why Does it Have to Be Done in a Certain Way?**

Consider our position in this universe. We are neither omnipotent nor self-sufficient, and so have needs, many of which we cannot satisfy. We are weak and vulnerable, and subject to worry, illness, and other negative events. This realization awakens a deeply embedded need to acknowledge the Divine and to worship the great mysterious power that controls everything. Since whatever we can see and touch is both transient and dependent on something else, it is unworthy of our worship, for logic dictates that behind them is a Supreme Being, a Transcendent Will guiding and controlling everything. This Being, therefore, must be the goal of our worship.

Reflecting more carefully on existence, we see the all-encompassing lawfulness and order of things and events, as well as their uniformity, regularity, and obedience to an All-Powerful Will. We thus become aware of the fact that everything has a part in that lawfulness and order. That part is its purpose or duty. As we realize that each one of us is also just a part, we conclude that each individual's existence cannot be a purposeless accident; rather, each individual has a specific purpose and duty to fulfill.

The world is presented as a richly laid table of foods and ornaments for our use. As we reach for any item, we inevitably sense the Giver's presence, and so experience an even greater joy and wonder. Every system, balance, and order indicates the one who established and sustains it. In sum, we naturally feel grateful for what God has provided and so worship Him in response to His making Himself known.

Knowing God entails worshipping Him. As he provides everything for us, we are obliged to serve Him. One of these blessings is that of prayer. God tells us how to pray so that we will do it correctly and effectively.

God told the Prophet how to pray, and we are told to follow his example. Praying in the manner taught through Divine teachings and guidance is the best worship, for it flows from the love, awe, and submission to God that belief in Him and knowledge of His Divine Being engender. Following the method prescribed by God and His Prophet please Him further and benefit us the most.

We are in constant need of help, guidance, and counsel. Imagine that a successful business owner gives you sound and free advice on how to run your business. Would you refuse such advice? If we pray according to the revealed method, we avoid the pitfalls of excess and impropriety, and obtain advantage and blessings beyond our imagination. Maybe saying Allahuakbar releases the Divine Mercy and inspires our soul to undertake a journey like the Prophet's ascent to heaven. Maybe reciting the opening chapter of the Qur'an opens the way to the highest mystery. With every word, gesture, movement, and pattern, we may be opening hidden doors and secret locks leading to hidden realms and eternal bliss.

Prayer straightens all ways and opens all doors. God hears our recitals and supplications, and angels gather around us when we prostrate with sincerity. No one can claim that such things do not happen—rather, the sayings of Prophet Muhammad confirm that they do. This is why the most accepted pattern of worship is the one prescribed by God.

When we buy something, do we make up our own instructions concerning how to use it, or do we use the instructions provided by the manufacturer? As the Creator knows what will cause us to prosper in this world and the next, we should follow what He has revealed and how His Messenger practiced it in his daily life. It is we who need to worship God; not God who needs to be worshipped—He is free of all need.

byFethullahGülen on 13 September 2001.

1. Surah al-Anam, Quran: Authorized English Version by Dr. RashadKhalifa [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Surah Mu'minoon, Quran: Authorized English Version by Dr. RashadKhalifa [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Surah Al-A'raf, The Qur'an: A Guide and Mercy by Yusuf Ali [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Surah Tawba, Quran: Authorized English Version by Dr. RashadKhalifa [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. (Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1, Book [10](http://www.searchtruth.com/book_display.php?book=10&translator=1&start=0&number=506), Hadith [#506](http://www.searchtruth.com/book_display.php?book=10&translator=1&start=0&number=506#506)) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. (Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1, Book 11, Hadith # 631) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. (Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 1, Book 11, Hadith # 688) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)