

## Who are the Ibaad ur Rahman?

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا

**2<sup>nd</sup> Quality: Furqan 25:64.** *And those who spend the night before their Rabb, in Sajda and Qiyam*

This is the most reliable sign of those who love Allah ﷻ. We like to spend time in the company of those we love. The same applies with respect to our love for Allah ﷻ. Those who love Allah ﷻ look for opportunities to spend time in His presence. What better time to do that than when He has made Nuzool on the first heaven and the caller has called, 'Who is there who needs anything from His Rabb?' This is the reason why Rasoolullah ﷺ used to call Salah 'Qurratul Ayn' – the coolness of the eyes. Salah is the time when we connect with Allah ﷻ, we talk to Him, we tell Him our stories, we ask for His help and He answers. He knows our circumstances, our difficulties, our challenges and there is nobody who shows appreciation more than Him. For them He promised His support and a great reward. What more can we ask?

Salah is the proof that one has entered Islam. It is the physical manifestation by action of the faith that a Muslim declares that he worships nobody except Allah ﷻ. Once he has that faith, he demonstrates it by actually worshipping Allah ﷻ in the way that Allah ﷻ prescribed and taught His Messenger ﷺ. If one says that nobody is worthy of worship except Allah ﷻ (La ilaaha ill-Allah) but then does not actually worship Allah ﷻ, then how can he say that he has faith? Salah is the action which distinguishes and sets apart the Believer from the non-Believer. The Believer worships Allah ﷻ. The non-believer doesn't. It is that simple.

The Salah is the means for the Muslim to connect to his Rabb (Sustainer, Maintainer, Protector, fulfiller of all needs). It is the highest and most powerful of means; the most potent tool that a Believer has to invoke for anything that he needs in life. It is his 'charge' of energy which gives him a special light and power all through his days in this life and a light in his grave and deliverance in Al-Aakhira. Allah ﷻ ordered His Messenger ﷺ to rise and pray and draw the energy for his work from Salah.

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Salah is to inculcate in us the habit of asking only from Allahﷻ and bowing only to Him. It is to inculcate in them the discipline of cleansing themselves from impurity and sin, repenting their sins, returning to Allahﷻ, planning their lives, having a timetable, following a leader, standing shoulder to shoulder with their brothers and collectively demonstrating their brotherhood of faith. It is important to understand the benefits of Salah and to realize what a big honor it is so that we gladly and eagerly fulfill its responsibility and benefit from its power.

Rasoolullahﷺ said that Salah is the first thing that we will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. It is the differentiation between Imaan and Kufr. Leaving it deliberately is to commit Kufr and renders us out of Islam. It is the key to Jannah and the Me'raj of the Mu'min. The Salah is the means of connecting with Allahﷻ and the way to solve all our problems. The one who goes to the masjid for Salah, Allahﷻ forgives one sin, writes one good deed and raises his status by one level in Jannah for every step that he takes. May Allahﷻ give us the Tawfeeq to please Him.

Allahﷻ used Salah as the means of joining Muslims as brothers with worshipping Him as the criterion. He said:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ

**Anbiya 21:92.** Truly! This, your Ummah [Islamic brotherhood] is one Ummah, and I am your Rabb, therefore worship Me (Alone).

That is why when Rasoolullahﷺ was asked who a Muslim is, he replied, 'Anyone who believes in La Ilaha Ill-Allahu Muhammadar Rasoolullahi, prays towards our Qibla and eats what we slaughter.' Notice please that he didn't add any of the conditions that we consider necessary today before we are willing to consider another Muslim our brother. Salah is the action which creates and keeps the Ummah together. The one who doesn't pray with us is not from us. Salah makes us Muslim and it makes us an Ummati of Rasoolullahﷺ. Our Salah is unique in that it is the only form of worship of any religion which is constant in the main. Apart from the minor differences of the different Madhaahib which are Alhamdulillah all correct, the Salah in its form, both

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internal and external is the same for anyone who is Muslim, no matter where he or she lives.

There are three levels of Salah. There is one which incurs the anger of Allahﷻ.

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ  
الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ  
الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآؤُونَ

**Ma'oon 107: 4.** So woe unto those performers of Salat (prayers) (hypocrites), **5.** Who delay their Salat (prayer) from their stated fixed times, **6.** Those who do good deeds only to be seen (of men)

May Allahﷻ protect us from all forms of Shirk, Ar-Riya (showing off) is Shirk. That is why Al-Ikhlaas un Niyyah (sincerity of intention) is so critical. That is why Rasoolullahﷺ said, 'Innamal A'amaalu bin Niyyaat'. And Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim both took this Hadith as the first in their Shaheehayn and this is one of the Ahadith which is called 1/3 of the Deen. Add to this the Hadith of the Thalaas (the Three), which speaks of the A'alim (scholar), the Mujahid and the Saqi (generous) who did their deeds to show off and were thrown into the Fire; and we can understand the importance of Ikhlaas (sincerity). So, this is the kind of Salah which we must avoid at all costs.

Then there is the Salah about which Allahﷻ said:

اٰتِلْ مَا اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰةَ اِنَّ الصَّلٰةَ تَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ  
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَاذْكُرِ اللّٰهَ اَكْبَرُ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُوْنَ

**Ankabut 29: 45.** Recite (O Muhammadﷺ) what has been revealed to you of the Book (the Qur'an), and establish As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat). Verily, As-Salat prevents from Al-Fahsha (great sins of every kind) and Al-Munkar (disbelief, polytheism) and

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*the remembering (the praising) of (you by) Allahﷻ (before the angels) is greater indeed [than your remembering (praising) Allahﷻ]. And Allah knows what you do.*

There are two important things in this Ayah that I want to remind myself and you about: Allahﷻ is ordering Rasoolullahﷺ to recite the Qur'an and to establish Salah and tells him that the Salah is protection against sin. This also tells us that our life is an indicator, a meter, of the quality of our Salah. A good Salah protects us from sin. So, if I am praying, but still indulging in things that displease Allahﷻ, then I must look at the quality of my Salah. Do I really stand before Allahﷻ with the clear understanding that Allahﷻ is watching me? If so, then what happens to this understanding when I speak, do, participate in, go to or indulge in anything that I know, displeases Allahﷻ? After all, I know that Allahﷻ is Sameeun Baseer – Always. Not only when I am standing before Him in Salah. Why then am I not ashamed and terrified of disobeying Him? What does that tell me about my Taqwa and Khashiyyat? What does that tell me about my faith in dying and meeting Allahﷻ? This is the second level of Salah, that it saves us from sin and makes us conscious of Allahﷻ' s presence in our life.

The second thing in this Ayah is that Allahﷻ told us that He praises those who worship Him and said that His praise is more honorable, blessed and powerful than our praise of Him. That hardly needs emphasis but think of the value of Salah, that it is rewarded by the highest of rewards, i.e. Allahﷻ' s praise of his slave. Do we want that for ourselves? Then pray with this consciousness that Allahﷻ is watching and listening to you and is praising your action.

Then there is a third level of Salah. May Allahﷻ grant that we get there. But remember that we can't get to that level until we pass through the level of Innas salaata tanha anil fahshae wal munkar. We can't get there while our lives are full of Fahushaat and Munkaraat. That level is where Allahﷻ said:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

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**Baqara 2: 152.** *Therefore, remember Me, I will remember you, and be grateful to Me and never be ungrateful to Me. 153. O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salat (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with As-Sabirin (the patient ones).*

Allahﷻ told us about the direct relationship between Him and His slaves – you remember me and I will remember you. Let us reflect on that for a bit. Go home and do this homework. Pray two Raka'at Tahajjud and while you are in Salah, reflect on the fact that as you are reciting Qur'an and praying, Allahﷻ is watching you, listening to you and praising you by name before those Malaika who surround His Throne. In a way, you are more fortunate than those angels because even though they surround the Throne of Allahﷻ, it is you that He is praising, not them. Become the one about whom the angels are jealous. So, Allahﷻ said, فَادْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ

Then Allahﷻ told us to do two things:

1. Be grateful and never be ungrateful
2. Seek the help of Allahﷻ through Sabr (effort) and Salah

And He promised the highest of reward and level of comfort and said:

*O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salat (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with As-Sabirin (the patient ones).*

If Allahﷻ is with us, who or what else do we need? And Allahﷻ is with those who remember Him and are grateful to Him and who seek His help through Sabr wa Salah.

For those who are in the midst of difficulty Shaytaan may put the doubt in their hearts, "What do I have to be grateful for? Look at my condition." The answer is, "Be grateful for the fact that you know who to ask for help. What if you didn't know and like those who don't know, you run around seeking help from those who have no power or even existence? Not only would you never get help but you would also be ruining your Aakhira while your Dunya is in shambles anyway." So, let us thank Allahﷻ always, in

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every situation. We ask Allah ﷻ to save us from all tests. This is Salah, my brothers and sisters. Let us appreciate it, value it, cherish it, look forward to it and use it.

It is because Muslims today don't understand the value of Salah that they neglect it and don't realize that their problems and fears are a result of this neglect. Many Muslims who pray, do it as if discharging a burden instead of recognizing it as a huge gift, benefit and their source of power. They don't look forward to it. They perform it as quickly as they can eager to get out of the Mercy and Grace of Allah ﷻ. Sounds strange when I put it like this, but what else would you call our unseemly haste in finishing our Salah and leaving the masjid – if we indeed pray in the masjid in the first place.

Muslims today don't realize that Salah is the answer to their problems in this life and a means of their deliverance from the Hellfire. If they paid attention to Salah and worked to improve its quality then it would become the means of eradicating all fear, anxiety and worry from their lives and the means of invoking the help of Allah ﷻ for them. That is what the Salah is for. That is why Salah is so important in Islam that if anyone denies it by word or action (deliberately not praying), then he is in effect denying his own Imaan and so he exits Islam.

The purpose of Salah is to inculcate this basic realization that we worship a living god who sees, hears and is aware of all that we say and do whether it is visible to people or not. It is to remind us five times a day that Allah ﷻ is aware of our intentions, speech and actions and that to Him is our return. It is to remind us that the only one we need to fear and obey is Allah ﷻ. Only He will question us and only to Him we answer.

For others? Well there two kinds of people in the world: Those who look for ways to succeed and those who tell you why they couldn't succeed. We choose our own destiny.