

## 5 Pillars Of Islam - Swalaat

### **Requirements for Swalaat / Describe how Muslims perform the ritual of preparing for prayer**

The second pillar of Islam is Swalaat. Also known as prayer or namaz, swalaat is obligatory on all Muslims throughout their life time. There is no place or instance where swalaat can be abandoned. We have been gifted by Allah with five daily swalaat such as Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha. Moreover, they are divided into Fard, Wajib, Sunnah and Nafil. However, to perform swalaat there are many conditions that must be considered.

**At the outset**, for someone to perform swalaat and for swalaat to be fard on him, he must be a Muslim who has already attained the age of puberty.<sup>1</sup> Those among the women who have reached the age of puberty and those in seclusion can attend the 'Id swalaat.<sup>2</sup> A non-Muslim is not allowed to enter the mosque and it is not a sin for someone who has not attained the age of puberty to miss swalaat. However, once we reach the age of puberty, we must perform Swalaat

**Moreover**, the place to perform the swalaat must be clean and tidy. Cleanliness is an essential part of faith (Iman). It is said that the Prophet ordered the construction of Masaajid in all places (everywhere) and that they be kept clean and scented<sup>3</sup>. It is also said that a man or a woman used to clean the mosque during the time of the prophet (s)<sup>4</sup>. As such it is very important to keep our places of ibaadah clean and perfumed. It is said that the most virtuous prayer of yours is in your homes, except for the obligatory swalaat.<sup>5</sup>

**Thirdly**, the clothes used by the Muslims must be clean and not covered or imprinted with any impurity as Allah addresses to the children of Adam (as) in the Qur'an to look to our adornment at every place of worship. We must be appropriately dressed and our private parts must be well covered. It is said in the Qur'an 'O children of Adam, take your adornment / best cloth at every masjid'<sup>6</sup>. It is said that a muslim must put on his best clothes and apply a touch of perfume if has any before performing swalaat.<sup>7</sup> It is said to 'offer some of your prayers (Nawafil) at home, and do not take your houses as graves'.<sup>8</sup>

**Furthermore**, in order to perform swalaat a Muslim must perform his ablution washing his hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, head and feet. It is said that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed ablution for each prayer and we offered (many) prayers with the same ablution<sup>9</sup> and the Prophet performed Wudu three times (for each limb)<sup>10</sup>. It is also said that the prayer of a person who does not perform ablution is not valid, and the ablution of a person who does not mention the name of Allah (in the beginning) is not valid.<sup>11</sup> However, in the absence of water, the symbolic washing known as tayyammum must be done. It is said that the Prophet (ﷺ) stroked the earth with his hands and then passed them over his face and the backs of his hands (till elbows)<sup>12</sup> while demonstrating Tayammum).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An Nasa'i Book 14 Hadith 7

<sup>2</sup> An Nasa'i Vol 1 Book 5 Hadith 1308

<sup>3</sup> Tirmidhi 594

<sup>4</sup> Bukhariy 460

<sup>5</sup> Tirmidhi 450

<sup>6</sup> Qur'an 7: 31

<sup>7</sup> Abu Dawood 343

<sup>8</sup> Swahih Bukhariy 432

<sup>9</sup> Abu Dawood 171

<sup>10</sup> Tirmidhi 44

<sup>11</sup> Abu Dawood 101

<sup>12</sup> Al Muwatta Book 2 Hadith 92

<sup>13</sup> Bukhariy 343

**Fifthly**, the Muslim must face the Qiblah which is the direction towards the Ka'bah. It is said in the Qur'an that 'We see the turning of thy face (for guidance to the heavens: now Shall We turn thee to a Qiblah that shall please thee. Turn then Thy face in the direction of the sacred Mosque: Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction.'<sup>14</sup> It is said that the Messenger of Allah came out of the House and prayed two Rakah in front of the Ka'bah, then he said: 'This is the Qiblah.'<sup>15</sup> If another direction is taken voluntarily then the swalaat will not be accepted.

**Added to the above**, the person performing swalaat must be sane of mind and not lunatic. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: There are three (persons) whose actions are not recorded: a sleeper till he awakes, a boy till he reaches puberty, and a lunatic till he comes to reason.<sup>16</sup> He must be able to concentrate on whatever he is saying and doing through swalaat. The prophet (s) said that if any one performs ablution and performs the ablution perfectly and then offers two rak'ahs of prayers concentrating on them with his heart and face but paradise will necessarily fall to his lot (he will obtain Jannah).<sup>17</sup>

**Seventhly**, swalaat can't be performed in advance. We must wait for the appropriate time and for the prayer call that is the adhan. It is said in the Qur'an that indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.<sup>18</sup> It is also not allowed to delay swalaat as Allah says 'men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allah and performance of prayer and giving of zakah'.<sup>19</sup> Ibn Mas'ud said " I never saw the Apostle of Allaah(ﷺ) observe a prayer out of its proper time except(two prayers) at Al Muzdalifah (exceptionally for Hajj) ..."<sup>20</sup>

**Besides**, when is iqamah that is the announcement for the swalaat to be done in jama'ah that is congregation, the Muslim must be ready in a standing position, in a straightened line and standing close by the side of his brother in Islam. It is said that when the iqamah is pronounced for prayer, no prayer is valid except the obligatory prayer.<sup>21</sup> It is said that the Mu'adh-dhin of Allah's Messenger would wait and he would not call the Iqamah until he saw the Allah's Messenger had come out, he would call the Iqamah when he saw him<sup>22</sup>, meaning the swahaba would be ready in wait for the prophet (s).

**Ninthly**, the Muslim must be ready physically and mentally to follow the Imam that is the leader of the prayer at any cost. He will not be allowed to start the prayer before the Imam or to do any action before the Imam in course of the swalaat or to end the prayer before the Imam. He must be prepared to follow the Imam. It is said that The one who raises his head and lowers it before the imam - his forelock is in the hand of a shaytan.<sup>23</sup> It is said that it is not part of the prophet's way to pray before the imam.<sup>24</sup>

**Last but not least**, when standing in swalaat the Muslim must know and declare the intention to pray and to perform such and such swalaat. Niyyat that is intention is important. It is said that Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your heart and to your deeds,<sup>25</sup> meaning that Allah will look at your intention (niyyah) and the actions based on the intention. It is also said that the reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Qur'an 2: 144

<sup>15</sup> An Nasa'i 2916

<sup>16</sup> Abu Dawood 4403

<sup>17</sup> Abu Dawood 906

<sup>18</sup> Qur'an 4: 103

<sup>19</sup> Qur'an 24: 37

<sup>20</sup> Abu Dawood 1934

<sup>21</sup> Abu Dawood 1266

<sup>22</sup> Tirmidhi 202

<sup>23</sup> Al Muwatta Book 3 Hadith 61

<sup>24</sup> An Nasa'i 1561

<sup>25</sup> Swahih Muslim 2564

<sup>26</sup> Swahih Bukhariy 1

## Performance of daily prayers (swalaat)

Write 3 short paragraphs on the requirements of Swalaat (as per above notes):

1. Paragraph 1 on Tahaarat (wudhu / ghusl) and Cloth
2. Paragraph 2 on Time and Qibla
3. Paragraph 3 on Niyyat and Iqaamah

Then add the following.

**Furthermore**, the Muslim must pronounce the Takbir by saying Allahou Akbar at the beginning of the prayer. For men, both hands will be lifted till both thumbs touch the lobes of the ears. For women the hands will be elevated till the shoulders. It is said that The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) raised his hands apposite his ears at the time of reciting the Takbir.<sup>27</sup> There is also another hadith that when the prophet stood up for prayer, he used to raise his hands apposite the shoulders and then recited takbir (Allahou Akbar).<sup>28</sup>

**Fifthly**, there is the position of the Qiyam where the prophet started the swalaat with Thana<sup>29</sup>, surah Faatiha<sup>30</sup> and other verses are recited. For men the right hand must be tied over the left hand supporting it below the navel. For women, both hands are tied on the breast. Ali said that it is said that it is a sunnah to place one hand on the other in prayer below the navel.<sup>31</sup> There is also mention of that the right hand should be on the wrist above the navel.<sup>32</sup> It is also said that the prophet used to place his right hand on his left hand, then he folded them strictly on his chest in prayer.<sup>33</sup>

**Added to the above**, there is the rukuh where we praise Allah. For men, they must bend till the back makes a 90 degree with the leg. However, for women, as soon as their hands are placed on their knees, they stopped bending. The Apostle of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Complete the bowing and prostration well. By Allah, I see you behind my back as to how you bow and prostrate or when you bow and prostrate'.<sup>34</sup> The prophet said: 'When one of you bows then says while he is bowing: Subhaana Rabbiyal 'Azim'.<sup>35</sup> When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Sami` allaahu liman hamidah" none of us bent his back (for prostration) till the Prophet (ﷺ) prostrated and then we would prostrate after him.<sup>36</sup>

**Seventh**, there is the sajdah where the toes, knees, the hands, the nose and the forehead touch the ground. For men the elbows are spread apart and their hips (mid-section) are upraised.<sup>37</sup> However, for women, the elbows are squeezed to the sides of their bodies and the hips are levelled to the thighs. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Be straight in the prostrations and none of you should put his forearms on the ground (in the prostration) like a dog."<sup>38</sup> The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "We have been ordered to prostrates on seven bones and not to tuck up the clothes or hair."<sup>39</sup> The phrase "Soubhaana Rabbiyal 'Ala"<sup>40</sup> must be recited.

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<sup>27</sup> Swahih Muslim 391

<sup>28</sup> Swahih Muslim 390

<sup>29</sup> Tirmidhi 243

<sup>30</sup> An Nasa'i 2963

<sup>31</sup> Abu Dawood 756

<sup>32</sup> Abu Dawood 757

<sup>33</sup> Abu Dawood 759

<sup>34</sup> Swahih Muslim 425, Bukhariy 742

<sup>35</sup> Tirmidhi 261

<sup>36</sup> Bukhariy 690

<sup>37</sup> Tirmidhi 304

<sup>38</sup> Swahih Bukhariy 822

<sup>39</sup> Swahih Bukhariy 810

<sup>40</sup> An Nasa'i 1046

**Besides**, there is the Jalsa and the Qa'dah where verses from hadith are recited. For men, the right foot is elevated on the toes and the left foot is turned to the right side. But for women both feet are turned to the right. It is said that when the prophet (s) sat (for Jalsa) he rested on his left thigh.<sup>41</sup> He bend his left foot and sat on it.<sup>42</sup> In the Jalsa (between 2 sajdah), the prophet would recite 'Rabbighfirli, Rabbighfirli'.<sup>43</sup> In the position of Qa'dah, the prophet (s) would recite At-Tahiyyaatou<sup>44</sup> while he spread his left foot, and placed his left hand - meaning on his left thigh - and held his right foot erect<sup>45</sup> and (the toes) facing the Qiblah,<sup>46</sup> raising his index finger of right hand<sup>47</sup> and then reciting darood Ibrahim.<sup>48</sup>

**Ninthly**, there is the salaam which is composed of turning the head to the right and then to the left to complete the swalaat. Both men and women act likewise. It is said that the swahaba used to finish their prayer alongside with the prophet with Tasleem.<sup>49</sup> The prophet said that The key to prayer is purification; its beginning is takbir and its end is taslim,<sup>50</sup> turning the head to the right and to the left.<sup>51</sup> However, if someone has doubt in his swalaat, he must prostrate twice again after the Taslim<sup>52</sup> and then complete his swalaat with Attahiyyatou, Darood and Tasleem.

**Last but not least**, there is the du'a (personal invocation) which can be said by the Muslims. According to the prophet (s.a.w) the du'a after the swalaat is accepted by Allah. It is said that The Prophet (ﷺ) used to face the Swahabah when he finished the prayer.<sup>53</sup> It is found that in the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ) it was the custom to celebrate Allah's praises (dhikr) aloud after the compulsory congregational prayers and Ibn `Abbas further said, "When I heard the Dhikr, I would learn that the compulsory congregational prayer had ended."<sup>54</sup> When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) finished his prayer, he would say 'Astaghfar' 3 times and 'Allaahoumma antas salam wa minkas salam tabaarakta dhal jalaali wal ikram'.<sup>55</sup> The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) uttered 'La ilaaha illallaah' at the end of every prayer.<sup>56</sup>

### **Why prayer (swalaat) is considered the foundation of religion? What is its importance / significance?**

**At the outset**, being the second pillar of Islam, Muslims believe firmly that they will be questioned about this on the Day of Judgement. The prophet said that the first thing about which the people will be called to account out of their actions on the Day of Judgment is prayer.<sup>57</sup> Both the quality and sincerity of ibaadah will be asked. In Akhirah it will be the first test and no one want to fail at this level.

**Moreover**, it is an institution which gives a structure to the day enabling Muslims to remember Allah. It marks the whole day with spiritual stamp and blessings from Allah. It is said in the Qur'an to perform swalaat in order to remember Allah.<sup>58</sup> While performing swalaat, it is a way to remember Allah through the verses of the Qur'an and all invocations from Takbir to Taslim.

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<sup>41</sup> Swahih Muslim 497

<sup>42</sup> Tirmidhi 304

<sup>43</sup> An Nasa'i 1145

<sup>44</sup> Tirmidhi 289

<sup>45</sup> Tirmidhi 292

<sup>46</sup> Tirmidhi 293

<sup>47</sup> Swahih Muslim 579

<sup>48</sup> Ibn Majah Vol. 1, Book 5, Hadith 903

<sup>49</sup> Bukhariy 838

<sup>50</sup> Abu Dawood 61

<sup>51</sup> An Nasa'i 1316

<sup>52</sup> An Nasa'i 1248

<sup>53</sup> Bukhariy 845

<sup>54</sup> Bukhariy 841

<sup>55</sup> Muslim 591

<sup>56</sup> Muslim 594

<sup>57</sup> Abu Dawood 864

<sup>58</sup> Qur'an 20: 14

**Thirdly**, it is important to Muslims as the prophet (s.a.w) said that Prayer is the key to Paradise. It aims at encouraging the Muslims to strive harder. It is said that Allah's Messenger said: "The key to Paradise is Swalaat, and the key to Swalaat is Wudu'.<sup>59</sup> The more swalaat we perform, the more rewarded we will be in Akhirah. We adhere by the rules and regulations of Allah on earth and we will be successful.

**Furthermore**, it is an occasion given by Allah to Mankind to thank Allah for all His blessings and favours as it provides inner peace and comfort to the soul. Allah says 'Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me'<sup>60</sup> The more we perform swalaat, the more peaceful our hearts and minds will be.

**Fifthly**, it strengthens our belief and relationship with Allah as it is direct communication with Him purifying the heart and gives spiritual strength to become a better person. Allah says 'And [tell them that] I have not created the Jinn and Mankind other than that they may [know and] worship Me'.<sup>61</sup> It is known that we are nearer to Allah in Sajdah / prostration than our own jugular vein is to us.

**Added to the above**, the congregational prayers strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity among Muslims and leading to helping the less fortunate Muslims. Allah says 'and who respond to their Sustainer and are constant in swalaat; and whose rule is consultation among themselves; and who spend on others out of what We provide for them as sustenance.'<sup>62</sup>

**Seventhly**, Allah reminds Muslims to do more and to strive harder in order to cultivate true piety in the love of Allah through Swalaat. It is said that the Qur'an was sent as 'a guidance for those who have Taqwa: who believe in the unseen, and who establish Salah'<sup>63</sup>. Swalaat leads to piety and fear of Allah. When we stand in the presence of Allah, we must remind ourselves of His unlimited superiority over us.

**Besides**, swalaat is a way to protect ourselves from shaitaan and evil deeds. It is said that 'Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?'<sup>64</sup> The more we perform swalaat, the more difficult it will be for shaitaan to influence us. It is a shield against shaitaan.

**More**, Swalaat helps us to remain far from all kinds of immoralities and prevention from lewdness (vulgarity). It is said that 'Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.'<sup>65</sup> In this way, we cultivate moral values based on Qur'an and Hadith / Sunnah. Swalaat helps us to reach purification of heart and mind.

**Last but not least**, when we perform swalaat we approach Allah to such an extent that we obtain the beauty of the Swalih (the pious) and the Swabir (the patient). Allah will love us and we will be blessed in this world, Qabr and Akhirah. Allah says 'Oh you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer, for God is with those who patiently persevere'<sup>66</sup>. As such we become more pious and patient.

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<sup>59</sup> Tirmidhi 4

<sup>60</sup> Qur'an 2: 152

<sup>61</sup> Qur'an 51: 56

<sup>62</sup> Qur'an 42: 38

<sup>63</sup> Qur'an 2: 2,3

<sup>64</sup> Qur'an 5: 91

<sup>65</sup> Qur'an 29: 45

<sup>66</sup> Qur'an 2: 153

## **Mosque (Masjid) as a focal point in the lives of Muslim / Importance of Mosque for the Community**

In Islam the mosque is the symbol of Islamic architecture. It is not a mere building but it is a focal point in the lives of Muslims through different ways.

**At the outset**, it is a space provided for Swalaat / Namaz, the congregational Friday (jum'ah) prayers and individual prayer which can be offered at any time. The mosque is vital for both men and women, though predominantly men, to perform the five daily swalaat in congregation. The mosque is also used twice a year for both 'id that is 'id-ul-fitr and 'id-ul-adha. The mosque through its loudspeaker and its minaret is a means to notify Muslims concerning the various daily times for prayer. The mosque is used especially for tarawih prayers in the evening where both men and women can attend.

**Added to the above**, the mosque is used as a place for teaching and learning. It is a centre for education. Since the start of Islam and the sending of revelation, the injunction of education and seeking of religious knowledge was made important through the first verse and order of the Qur'an, 'Read' (Iqra'). Usually a Madrasah or library is attached to the mosque to teach Qur'an, Hadith and many other fields. It is used by Muslims to read the Qur'an, Hadith, books of Fiqh and any available documents there. It can be seen that small groups of students under the supervision of a teacher (Ustadh) are created in the mosque.

**Moreover**, the mosque is vital for those who use it as a place of retreat for I'tikaaf during the month of Ramadan. It is within the Sunnah of the prophet (s) to retreat in the mosque in search of the Lailatul Qadr. It is also used as a place to rest or to take a short nap. During the time of the prophet (s), there were the poor Swahabah who would stay in the mosque and would sleep therein. Also it can be seen in Macca and Madina where families group with small children to relax and take advantage of the sweetness there. Muslims can make dhikr of Allah, ponder upon their deeds and thank Allah for His favours.

**Furthermore**, the mosque can also be used as a centre for the community whenever there is any topic of discussion or sharing of ideas or organising of any religious or civil programmes. The mosque can be used for both Nikah and Janaza prayers. Lectures or conferences can be organised in order to bring awareness of the community on sensible and serious topics like drugs, moral values, degradation of the society among others. Majlis Shura can be held by committee members of the mosque for its smooth running and development. It can be used also to gather the youngsters and organise sport or fun days.

**Last but not least**, the mosque can take up the economic function. This can be done through the collection of religious taxes from the rich, such as Zakat and Sadaqah and giving it out to the poor. The mosque also serves as a centre for sharing wills (Wasiyah) and endowments (Waqf). In addition, there are mosques which have 'shops' within their premises or even attached to the mosque. This is not done within the prayer section but within a space attached with the mosque where religious books or accessories can be bought and sold. There are mosques where provisions are made for the poor on monthly basis.