



Principal Vocabulary of Salah

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• **Al-Fatihah or Fatihat-ul-Kitab:**

The Opening or Opener of the Book; the first chapter in the Noble Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) declared it to be the greatest in the entire Book of Allah, saying: “[**The chapter commencing with] *Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil `Alamin* (Praise be to Allah, the Lord of existence...) is the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses and it is the Glorious Qur'an that I have been given.**” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

Despite its brevity, it encompasses the basic meaning of the Glorious Qur'an and outlines its primary aims. The Glorious Qur'an calls on humanity to believe in Allah Almighty and to worship only Him (have no other gods) and then guides humans to the correct way of living; these are the same elements of the seven-verse opening chapter of the Qur'an. Al-Fatihah is so named because it is the chapter with which the Qur'an begins. It is also named *Al-Sab`-ul-Mathany* (Seven Oft-recited Verses) because it is recited in each *Rak`ah* (unit) of every *Salah*; no *Salah* is valid without its recitation.

• **Al-Salat-ul-Ibrahimiyyah:**

The Abrahamic Supplication; the best and most authentic formula for sending peace and blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). It is recited in the sitting position in the **last *Tashahhud*** (testification of faith) of every prayer that contains two ***Tashahhuds***. Its formula reads: “O Allah, exalt the mention of Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad as You have exalted Ibrahim (Abraham) and the Family of Ibrahim. You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad as You have blessed Ibrahim and the Family of Ibrahim. You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory.”

• **Al-Salawat Al-Khams:**

The Five Obligatory Daily Prayers. *Salah* is the second pillar of Islam and the fundamental cornerstone of a person's religion. It is the first deed that a servant of Allah shall be asked about on Judgment Day. The pillar of *Salah* consists of five prayers per day and night (each 24-hour period), which a

These Five Obligatory Daily Prayers are:

1-Fajr or Subh Prayer: Dawn or Morning Prayer; the first of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of two *Rak`ahs* (units). The time for this prayer starts at the break of true dawn and ends at sunrise. It is a ***Jahri Salah*** (prayer with audible recitation).

2-Zuhr Prayer: Noon Prayer; the second of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of four *Rak`ahs*. The time for this prayer starts when the sun passes its zenith (midday) and ends when the shadow of an object is equal to its length. It is a ***Sirri Salah*** (prayer with inaudible recitation).

3-`Asr Prayer: Afternoon Prayer; the third of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of four *Rak`ahs*. The time for this prayer starts when the shadow of an object is equal to its length and ends at sunset. It is a ***Sirri Salah*** (prayer with inaudible recitation).

4-Maghrib Prayer: Sunset Prayer; the fourth of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of three *Rak`ahs*. The time for this prayer starts at sunset and ends with the disappearance of red twilight. It is a ***Jahri Salah*** (prayer with audible recitation).

5-`Isha' Prayer: Night Prayer; the fifth and the last of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of four *Rak`ahs*. The time for this prayer starts when the red twilight disappears and ends at midnight. It is a ***Jahri Salah*** (prayer with audible recitation).

- **Azan:**

Call to alert Muslims of prayer start time, prompting them to disengage from their preoccupations and prepare to meet Allah, the Exalted. This call occurs five times a day before each of the prescribed daily prayers. The person who makes the call to prayer is called a **Muezzin**. As for ***Iqamah***, it is the call uttered immediately before the beginning of the obligatory prayer offered in congregation, signaling to the assembled worshipers that it is time to start performing the prayer. The words of *Iqamah* are the same as those of *Azan* except for the words “*Qad qamat-al-Salah*” (Prayer has begun), which are added in *Iqamah* after “*Haiya`alal-falah*” (Come to Success). The first Muezzin in Islam was the honorable Companion **Bilal ibn Rabah** (may Allah be pleased with him), chosen by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) himself.

- **Basmalah:**

Mentioning Allah’s Name; saying, “*Bismillahi r-Rahmani r-Rahim*” [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful].

- **Bulugh:**

Maturity, attainment of puberty; end of the childhood stage and entry into the stage of obligation to adhere to the Islamic rulings (such as *Salah*, *Sawm* [fasting], and *Zakah* [obligatory charity]) and the beginning of individual accountability for one's actions and behavior. The principal sign of physical maturity is experiencing nocturnal seminal emission in males and discharge of menstrual blood in females; or it is marked by reaching fifteen years of age for both sexes.

- **Du`a' Al-Istiftah:**

Opening supplication in prayer; the invocation with which an obligatory or supererogatory prayer is commenced. It is recited only in the first *Rak`ah*, after the first utterance of **Takbir** (i.e., *Takbirat-ul-Ihram*) and before reciting Al-Fatihah. It is not an obligatory part of prayer; rather, it is **Sunnah** (supererogatory act of worship following the manner of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him). It has several formulas, one of which reads: “**O Allah, separate my sins and me as You have separated the east and the west. O Allah, purify me from my sins as a white garment is purified from dirt. O Allah, wash away my sins with water, snow, and hail.**”

- **Iftirash:**

Sitting posture during prayer; sitting on the left thigh with the right foot kept upright and its toes pointed towards the **Qiblah**. It is recommended as an act of **Sunnah** (supererogatory act of worship following the manner of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) to sit in this posture in three positions during prayer: 1-Between the two prostrations. 2-During the **Tashahhud** recited in two-*Rak`ah* prayers. 3-During the **first Tashahhud** recited in four-*Rak`ah* and three-*Rak`ah* prayers. *Iftirash* sitting is one of the **Sunnah** acts of prayer and not an obligatory part of it.

- **Imam:**

The person who leads a group of worshipers in a congregational prayer. **Ma'mum(s)**: Followers of the Imam in prayer; the people who range themselves behind the Imam and follow him in the actions of prayer, such as standing, reciting, bowing, and prostrating.

- **Isti`adhah:**

Seeking protection and fortification with Almighty Allah from the whisperings of Satan by saying: “**A`udhu-Billahi mina Al-Shaytan-ir-Rajim**” [I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan].

- **Jahri and Sirri Salah:**

Prayers in which the Qur'an is recited audibly. These prayers are **Fajr**, **Maghrib**, **`Isha'**, **Jumu`ah**, and the **Two Eid Prayers**. **Sirri Salah:** Prayers in which the Qur'an is recited inaudibly. These prayers are **Zuhr** and **`Asr** Prayers, and the third *Rak`ah* of **Maghrib** Prayer, and the third and fourth *Rak`ahs* of **`Isha'** Prayer.

- **Jam`:**

Combining two obligatory prayers; this can be done either during the time of the earlier or the later of the two prayers with a legal Islamic excuse, such as traveling, sickness, feeling threatened, or rainfall. There are two types of prayer combining. The first is called **Jam`u Taqdim** (early combination), which means to offer **`Asr** at the time of **Zuhr** and **`Isha** at the time of **Maghrib**, in which case the later prayer is moved forward to the time of the earlier prayer. The second is called **Jam`u Ta`khir** (late combination), which means to offer **Zuhr** at the time of **`Asr** and **Maghrib** at the time of **`Isha**, in which case the earlier prayer is delayed to the time of the later prayer.

- **Jumu`ah Prayer:**

Friday Prayer; this is a weekly congregational prayer that is held in mosques at noon each Friday. It suffices in place of **Zuhr** Prayer for those who attend it. It consists of two *Rak`ahs* preceded by a sermon delivered by a Muslim scholar, in which he exhorts the people to goodness and enlightens them about Islam. It is an obligatory duty for every sane, mature, resident (non-traveling), male Muslim.

- **Masjid:**

Mosque; linguistically, this means the place of prostration. Islamically, it means any place built or prepared for Muslims to offer the five prayers in congregation. A Muslim place of worship is also called **Jami`** (gathering place), especially if it is a large mosque where Friday Prayers are held. In other words, every **Jami`** is definitely a **Masjid**, but not every **Masjid** is a **Jami`**. The word **Musalla** refers to any place dedicated for prayer and worship. The five daily prayers are announced in the mosques by the **Azan**.

- **Niyyah:**

Intention and will; Islamically, this means the intention to carry out an act of obedience or worship for the sake of drawing close to Allah, the Glorious and Exalted. The place of the intention is the heart, not the tongue. There is no need to articulate the intention.

- **Qada':**

Making up prayers; this is to compensate for a missed obligatory prayer, regardless of whether it has been left out due to a legal excuse, such as sleep or forgetfulness, or without an excuse. In all situations, if a prayer is missed, the Muslim must make up for it as soon as it is remembered. This is based on the saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him): **“Whoever forgets a prayer or sleeps and misses it, its expiation is to make it up as soon as they remember it.”** (Narrated by Muslim) It is essential to make up missed prayers in the proper order; that is, the missed prayer first then the current prayer, on condition that there is enough time left to perform the prayer that is currently due. If time is limited and following the correct sequence would lead to delaying the currently due prayer, then the due prayer should be offered first and then the missed prayer.

- **Qasr:**

Shortening four-*Rak`ah* prayers (namely, **Zuhr**, **`Asr**, and **`Isha'** Prayers) to two *Rak`ahs* when undertaking a journey of approximately 80 kilometers or longer. Shortening prayers is a special license for travelers and is not allowed for residents.

- **Qiblah:**

Ka`bah-direction faced in prayer; this is the direction towards which Muslims all over the world face when they offer *Salah* and some other acts of worship. The Honorable Ka`bah lies at the center of the Sacred Mosque in Mecca. In the early stage of Islam, **Al-Aqsa Mosque** (literally, the Farthest Mosque) located in Jerusalem, was the first *Qiblah* that Muslims faced before it was changed to Mecca. The change of *Qiblah* from Jerusalem to Mecca occurred in the second year after Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) emigration to Medina, on the Command of Almighty Allah to pray facing the direction of the Ka`bah – the First House built for the worship of Allah on earth.

- **Qiyam:**

Standing position in prayer; standing up is an integral act of obligatory prayers for those who are able to pray standing up. A worshiper is required to perform prescribed prayers, from beginning to end, in a standing position if they have the ability to stand up. As for supererogatory prayers, they can be performed while seated.

• Ruku`:

Bowing; lowering the head along with inclining the back in reverence and glorification of Almighty Allah during prayer. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“As for bowing, glorify the Lord in it.”** (Narrated by Muslim) Bowing is a posture that indicates veneration and honor from the one bowing to the one being bowed to. While bowing, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) taught that the person praying should say three times: **“Subhana Rabbiyal `Azim”** (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great). Thus, the one praying expresses exaltation of the Lord in both words and action; the act of bowing itself represents the physical exaltation of Allah, and saying **“Subhana Rabbiyal `Azim”** represents the verbal exaltation. There remains the emotional exaltation, which can be realized only by the heart being humbly focused on prayer.

• Sujud:

Prostrating; placing the forehead on the ground in humility and servitude to Allah, the Sovereign, during prayer. This is the most honorable part of prayer, because it is the humblest posture for showing submission and reverence to Allah. It involves having the forehead, the nose, both palms, both knees, and all toes touching the ground together. Prostration puts the humans and their highest and noblest part (i.e., the face) down with the earth and dust in obedience and resignation to Allah, the Majestic. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) taught that while prostrating, the person praying should say three times: **“Subhana Rabbiyal A`la”** (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High).

In prostration, worshipers are the lowest they can be, so it is most suitable in this position to extol Allah’s Sublimity and Transcendence and to remind the soul of the One Who is Higher than it and everything else. For nothing is comparable to Allah. Indeed, He is the Most High in all meanings of the word. Prostration brings the person praying the closest they can be to Allah and His Mercy, as Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: **“The closest a person can be to their Lord is when they are prostrating, so supplicate much in it.”** (Narrated by Muslim) Prostration is also the most opportune place during prayer for making requests of Allah and having them granted; therefore, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) exhorted his followers to supplicate to Allah a lot, saying, **“...and as for prostration, exert yourself in making supplication, because then it is more deserving of response.”** (Narrated by Muslim)

- **Takbir:**

Declaration of Allah’s Greatness or magnification of Allah; saying “**Allahu Akbar**” (Allah is Greater) as a way of expressing awe at Allah’s Grandeur, Sublimity, and Powerful Majesty. *Takbir* means there is nothing that transcends Almighty Allah. It is said that, in Arabic, there is no higher expression of exaltation and glorification of Allah than the phrase “*Allahu Akbar.*”

- **Takbirat-ul-Ihram:**

Initial **Takbir** for commencing prayer; saying aloud “*Allahu Akbar*” to declare entry into prayer. *Takbir* at the beginning of the prayer forms an integral part of it, without which the prayer is invalid. It is requisite for entering the state of prayer.

- **Tashahhud:**

Testimony of Faith, also known as **Attahiyat** (Salutations); it is recited in the sitting position in the second/last unit of prayer. *Tashahhud* forms an integral part of the prayer, without which the prayer is invalid. Its formula can be translated as follows: “All salutations (reverence), all prayers, all good things are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His Blessings. Peace be upon us and all the righteous servants of Allah. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.”

- **Taslim:**

Salutation of peace ending the prayer; concluding the prayer by saying: “**As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah**” (May Allah’s Peace and Mercy be upon you) twice, once while turning the face to the right side, and once while turning it to the left side.

- **Tasmî` :**

It is saying: “**Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah**” (Allah listens to those who praise Him) while straightening up from bowing.

- **Tawarruk:**

Sitting posture during prayer; placing the left foot under the right leg with the right foot held upright, while resting the buttocks on the ground. The *Tawarruk* posture is taken in the last ***Tashahhud*** of the four-*Rak`ah* and three-*Rak`ah* prayers. It is an act of **Sunnah** (supererogatory act of worship following the manner of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) and not an obligatory part of prayer.

- **Two Eid Prayers:**

The Prayer of ***Eid-ul-Fitr*** (the Festival of Breaking the Fast) held after completing the Fast of Ramadan, and the Prayer of ***Eid-ul-Adha*** (the Festival of the Sacrifice) held after the annual holy pilgrimage to Mecca, on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah. The Two Eid Prayers consist of two *Rak`ahs*. Muslims offer them to express gratitude to Allah (Blessed be He) upon the completion of these two major acts of worship – fasting during Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca, the two festival occasions of Islam.

Part of the etiquette of attending Eid Prayers is taking a bath, putting on perfume (for males), wearing the best clothes, eating some dates before going out to pray, performing the prayer in the open rather than inside mosques, and saying a lot of ***Dhikr*** (remembrance of Allah in the form of glorification, exaltation, praise, and thanksgiving) and *Takbir*.

- **Wudu':**

Ablution; it derives from the word *Wada'ah* (cleanliness, brightness, and beauty). Islamically, it means the process of using water in a specific manner and in ordered steps to wash certain parts of the body with the intention of becoming purified and prepared for prayer.