

Khushoo in Prayer "Salat"

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَعَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِينَ

All Praise is due to Allah, we praise Him and we seek help from Him. We ask forgiveness from Him. We repent to Him; and we seek refuge in Him from our own evils and our own bad deeds. Anyone who is guided by Allah, he is indeed guided; and anyone who has been left astray, will find no one to guide him. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, the Only One without any partner; and I bear witness that Muhammad, peace and blessings on him, is His servant, and His messenger.

Dear Brothers and Sisters ...

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Allah divided prayer between Him and His servant. For his servant praises Him then seeks His assistance and guidance. And Allah accepts his praise and rewards him for it and grants his request and guides him to the straight path. His Prophet ﷺ magnified the matter of prayer and had many sayings in this regard. He concluded his life and was instructing to it.

So be conscious of Allah and obey Him. And make amends and seek His forgiveness. And remember His favor upon you and praise and thank Him. And contemplate His decrees upon His servants and magnify and glorify Him. And rely upon Him. For He is the Grand, the Exalted, and All Mighty, Owner of retribution.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ
اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٥﴾

Al Baqarah (2) 165: Still there are some who take others as Allah's equal—they love them as they should love Allah—but the 'true' believers love Allah even more. If only the wrongdoers could see the 'horrible' punishment 'awaiting them', they would certainly realize that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is indeed severe in punishment.

Worships and acts of obedience are differentiated by Allah based on what is in the heart of faith, sincerity, love, fear, reverence, and repentance.

And the genuine worshipper is the one who offers it as required and stays away from its breaches in all the forms. He combines sincerity, love, fear and worships in the best manner.

For the sake of clarifying this differentiation and realizing this distinction, let us pause with the greatest obligations of Islam after the two testimonies: the prayer, the pillar of religion.

Allah Almighty describes the attributes of the successful believers starting with the prayer and concluding with those safeguarding their prayers as the ones deserving to inherit the gardens of bliss:

Successful indeed are the believers:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۝
الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُونَ ۝

those who humble themselves in prayer;

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ۝

those who avoid idle talk;

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُونَ ۝

those who pay alms-tax;¹

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِغُرُوبِهِمْ حٰفِظُونَ ۝

those who guard their chastity¹

إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ۝

except with their wives or those 'bondwomen' in their possession,¹ for then they are free from blame,

فَمَن ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذٰلِكَ فَأُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُونَ ۝

but whoever seeks beyond that are the transgressors;

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُونَ ۝

'the believers are also' those who are true to their trusts and covenants.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلٰوةِهِمْ يُحٰفِظُونَ ۝

and those who are 'properly' observant of their prayers.

أُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْوٰرِثُونَ ۝

And in another place in the Book of Allah, the description of the honoured people of Paradise starts with regular performance of prayers and concludes with safeguarding prayers.

And Allah said:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعاً * إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعاً * وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعاً * إِلَّا
الْمُصَلِّينَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ

Al Ma'arej (70) 19-22: (19) Indeed, mankind was created anxious: (20) When evil touches him, impatient, (21) And when good touches him, withholding [of it], (21) Except the observers of prayer – (22) Those who are constant in their prayer

And Allah said:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ * أُولَئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ

Al Ma'arej (70) 34-35: (34) And those who [carefully] maintain their prayer: (35) They will be in gardens, honored.

This praise of those praying is the ultimate praise and the biggest incentive. But the described prayer is a special prayer with special characteristics. A perfect and complete prayer, a prayer of enduring humility and focus, and with comprehensive safeguarding. There are some elements of prayer that if they have a deficiency, then a person's prayer has deficiency equal to that deficiency. Then hope for reward could turn into punishment. Allah Almighty said:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَن صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ-الماعون:4-5

Al Ma'oon 4-5: (4) So woe to those who pray (5) [But] who are heedless of their prayer

And Allah said regarding the hypocrites:

وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا-النساء:142

An Nisa (4) 142: And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little,

And Allah said of the hypocrites:

وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَسَالَى-التوبة:54

At Tawbah (9) 54: And that they come not to prayer except while they are lazy

Khushoo (focus and humility) is a state in the heart that stems from the depths of veneration and reverence of Allah. And humility and subservience within the soul. And softness of the heart. And tenderness that bears submission and passion. And if the heart has Khushoo (focus and humility) then the hearing and sight will also have Khushoo (focus and humility). As well as the face and forehead. And the rest of the limbs and senses. If the heart is tranquil and has Khushoo (focus and humility) the limbs and movements and voice will have Khushoo (focus and humility).

Allah said:

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا

Taha (20) 108: On that Day all will follow the caller 'for assembly', 'and' none will dare to deviate And [all] voices will be humbled before the Most Merciful, so you will not hear except a whisper [of footsteps].

And the Prophet ﷺ mentioned during his ruku' (bowing):

وَإِذَا رَكَعَ قَالَ " اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ رَكَعْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ وَلَكَ أَسْلَمْتُ خَشَعْتُ لَكَ سَمْعِي وَبَصَرِي وَمُخِّي وَعَظْمِي وَعَصْبِي .

Before You my hearing is humbled, and my sight, and my mind and my bones and my nerves.

Sahih Muslim 771a <https://sunnah.com/muslim:771a>

If the heart of the one praying has Khushoo (focus and humility), then he senses that he is standing before the hands of His creator. And he feels the magnitude of his supplication to his Lord. And the one devoted to prayers and having Khushoo (focus and humility) is the one who estimates the matter with its true estimate.

Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"...whoever performs ablution as I have done, then stands and prays two units of prayer without letting his thoughts wander, his previous sins will be forgiven." [Bukhari 1934]

<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1934>

So be conscious of Allah and safeguard your prayers and maintain them with care. And seek refuge in Allah from a heart that does not humble. For it was authenticated that one of the supplications of the Prophet ﷺ was:

O Allah, I seek refuge with You from knowledge that is of no benefit, a heart that is not humble, a supplication that is not heard and a soul that is not satisfied, and from a supplication that is not answered. Sunan an-Nasa'i 5535 <https://sunnah.com/nasai:5535>

The scholars have mentioned several aspects enabling presence of the heart and realizing the state of khushoo and the reality of worshipping.

From these aspects is diligence in repelling stray thoughts and distancing oneself from occupying distractions. And the scholars have mentioned that they are two types of distractions. The first kind are outwardly distractions that occupy the hearing and sight. And this addressed by staying close to the sutrah (barrier placed in front of one praying) and focusing one's gaze on the place of prostration. And staying away from decorated and adorned places.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once prayed wearing a garment having a pattern. When he concluded the prayer, he said:

Take this garment of mine to AbuJahm, for it turned my attention just now in my prayer and bring a simple garment without patterns. [Bukhari 5817, Muslim 556b].

The other kind of distractions are internal such as scattered thoughts and preoccupation of the mind. This is addressed by focused thinking and reflection during recitation, remembrance, and supplications.

And another type of distraction that should be pointed out is racing the Imam (prayer leader). There came severe warning against this. The Imam is to be followed and should not be preceded. The Prophet ﷺ said concerning it:

Does not the one who raises his head before the Imam fear that Allah may transform his head into a donkey's head? [Bukhari 691, Muslim 427].

And consider the condition of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) with their Prophet and Imam Muhammad ﷺ. Al Baraa bin Azeb was behind the Prophet ﷺ when he went down for prostration from standing. He said:

None of us would bent his back until the Messenger of Allah put his forehead on the ground and said Allahu Akbar. And when he ﷺ stood up, all were still in prostration.

So be conscious of Allah and perfect your prayer and perform the bowing and prostration correctly. And take care of the remembrances and supplications within it. May Allah grant us all understanding of the religion and righteous deeds. Indeed, Allah is All Hearing, Answering.

I conclude with this and send prayers of blessings and peace upon our Prophet as your Lord commanded:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

Allahumma Sallai Al'a Muahmmad'n wa'aila Muhammad

أَقُولُ مَا تَسْمَعُونَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ