

## THE CONDITIONS OF SALAT

There are certain conditions for proper performance of salat without fulfilling which salat will remain unperformed. They are:

1. The commencement of the time earmarked for a specific *salat*. The Quran says:

﴿إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا﴾ النساء: ١٠٣

“Verily, salat is a time-bound obligation upon the believers” (*Al-Nisa*: 103).

2. Purification. This means one should have undertaken *wadhu* [ablution], should not be in the need of full wash. In case of a woman, she must be clean of menstrual flow and lochia. Likewise, it is essential that the dress of the person be also clean. Similarly, the floor and the mat meant for prayer should be clean. The Prophet, (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) observed that no salat is acceptable to Allah without cleanliness.
3. The person should wear a dress properly covering his *satr*. Salat represents one's being in audience with Allah. Propriety demands that at least his *satr* should be covered. The *satr* for males is the part of his body from the navel to his knees. For females the whole of their body, except the face and the palms, constitutes the *satr*.
4. Orientation in the direction of the Ka'ba. Allah ordains:

﴿وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ﴾

البقرة: ١٥٠

(Translation of meaning) Wherever you pass through turn your faces towards the inviolable House of Prayers. And wherever you may be turn your faces towards it.” (*Al-Baqarah*: 150). The condition of facing qibla applies when one is able to do so and is in the state of security. If somebody finds himself in a place where he cannot determine the *qiblah* or direction to Makkah himself nor there is anybody else to guide him then he should act at his own discretion. This is enough. If, however, during the course of the salat he comes to know of the true direction of Makkah or some other person turns him towards it, he should change the direction and complete the rest of his prayers. The obligation will be discharged. Even if the true direction is discovered after the completion of prayers, he need not repeat his salat and his salat will be deemed to

have been performed correctly. Nevertheless, there are two exceptions when the requirement of being in the direction of Makkah is waived. **First**, if somebody riding on an animal or vehicle is performing *nafl* *salat* he ought to be in the direction of Makkah while reciting *takbir-i-tahreema* but the rest of *salat* he can perform on the animal (or running vehicle) regardless of where it turns its face. *Hazrat Ja'bir*, *RadhiAllahu Anhu* has narrated that the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to perform *nafl* prayers in the riding position irrespective of whether it was in the direction of *qiblah*. But he used to come down to perform the *fardh* *salat*. If, however, the journey was long or there was the probability of losing the time of *salat* if alighted and during emergency he would perform his prayers in disregard of the *qiblah*. The same rule will apply to persons who are under duress or in a state of fear or suffering from some infirmity which prevents them from facing the *qiblah*. The condition of *qiblah* shall be waived in their case.

5. Being a Muslim.
6. Being sane. That is, the insane persons and youngsters are exempted.
7. Being awake and in full senses. This means, one should not be sleepy or intoxicated or unconscious.
8. Not being engaged in an activity which could detract him from the performance of *salat*. In this case one should complete his activity first.

## The Pillars of Salat [Arkaan]

Once a person came to offer *salat* in the Mosque of the Prophet and afterwards he saluted the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and sat down. Returning his salutation, he asked him to go and pray again. Twice he did so. But the third time requested the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to teach him how to offer *salat*. The Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) explained: When you intend to offer *salat*, first perform ablution properly, then say your *takbeer*, then recite something from the Quran, then kneel yourself and keep poise in your kneeling; then stand erect in poise; then prostrate and remain in poise in your prostration; then raise your head and sit, and remain in poise, and then prostrate again in poise; then stand up erect again and complete the rest of your prayer calmly quietly (*Narrated by most of narrators*).

There are a total of 11 pillars of the *salat*. If any one of them is skipped the *salat* remains incomplete. They are:

**1. Intention:** Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: «إِنَّمَا» الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ “Verily actions are judged by intentions” (*Al-Bukhari*). For a Muslim it is enough to intend the performance of *salat* in his mind. He need not articulate it loudly by his mouth. Nothing in the Quran or Hadith makes it compulsory. Nevertheless, some jurists see no qualms if the intention is uttered by tongue also so that there remains no doubt or misgiving. When intending, one should also keep in his mind what *salat* he wants to perform, whether *fajr* or *zohr*, whether *fardh* or *watr* or *nafl*, etc.

**2. Takbeer-i-tahreema:** *Takbeer* means that one should begin his *salat* with the chanting of “Allah-o-Akbar”. Allah's Messenger, (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«مِفْتَاحُ الصَّلَاةِ الطُّهُورُ، وَتَحْرِيمُهَا التَّكْبِيرُ، وَتَحْلِيلُهَا التَّسْلِيمُ»

Ablution is the key of *salat*; its *tahreem* [veneration] is recital of “Allah-o-Akbar”; its *tahleel* [conclusion] is the recital of “Assalam-o-alaikum wa Rahmatullah” (*Abu Dawood, Ibn Maja, Tirmizi, Ahmad*).

**3. Standing:** All *fardh* prayers ought to be performed in the standing position. Allah says:

﴿وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ﴾ البقرة: ٢٣٨

“And stand up to Allah obediently” (*al-Baqarah: 238*). However, if for some reason it is inconvenient for somebody to pray in the standing mode then he can pray either in the sitting mode or reclining on support or whatever else is convenient according to his condition. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«صَلِّ قَائِمًا فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَقَاعِدًا، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَى جَنْبٍ»

“Pray standing. If it is not possible, pray sitting or on sides” (*Al-Bukhari*).

**4. Recitation of Surah al-Fatiha:** Recitation of Surah Fatiha is compulsory in each *rak'ah* (cycle) of every prayer. The Prophet, (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: «لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ» He

who does not recite Surah al-Fatiha, his *salat* is not performed (*most narrators*). Recitation of this surah is compulsory in each rak'ah (cycle) of obligatory and supererogatory *salat*. If somebody has not memorized this surah, he may recite any other aayah of the Holy Quran. If ever this is not possible for a person, he shall remember Allah in his heart and say Allah, Allah.

5. **Kneeling [*Ruku'*]:** *Ruku'* means kneeling in such a way that hands are placed on the knees and the back is kept straight and the head is parallel with the back. The head should be neither raised up nor bowed down. Not only in *Ruku'* but in all other parts of the *salat* it is essential to maintain equipoise. According to a narration, the Prophet, (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«إِنَّ أَسْوَأَ النَّاسِ سَرَقَةً الَّذِي يَسْرِقُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ» قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَكَيْفَ يَسْرِقُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ؟ قَالَ: «لَا يُتِمُّ رُكُوعَهَا وَلَا سُجُودَهَا»

the worst thief is one who commits theft in his *salat*. The Companions asked how a theft can be committed in a *salat*? He, (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied: A thief of *salat* is one who neither goes in *ruku'* properly nor goes in *sajdah* [prostration] properly (*Ahmad, Tibrani, and Bihaqui*).

6. **After *ruku'* to stand again in poise.** The Mother of the Believers Sayyidah Ayesha narrated that when the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) raised his head from *ruku'*, he did not go for *sajdah* before he stood again straight in poise (*Muslim*).

7. ***Sajdah* [prostration]:** prostration involves the following parts of the body: the face, both palms, both knees, both feet. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَسْجُدَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَعْظُمٍ عَلَى الْجَبْهَةِ، وَأَشَارَ بِيَدِهِ عَلَى أَنْفِهِ وَالْيَدَيْنِ وَالرُّكْبَتَيْنِ، وَأَطْرَافِ الْقَدَمَيْنِ»

I have been ordered to prostrate on seven bones: the face (and he pointed towards his nose), both hands, both knees and fingers of both feet (*Al- Bukhari and Muslim*).

8. **Rising from *sujud*** [prostration].
9. **To sit** in poise between the two *sajdahs*.

10. **Qa'dah** [sitting in poise] and *tashahhud* [recitation of testimony]: In the second sitting after the second *sajdah* the worshipper recites the *tashahhud* as follows:

التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ ،  
السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ،  
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

*“Attahiyyaat-o-lillah-i-wassalawaat-o-wattayyibaat. Assalaam-o-alaika Ayyuhan Nabi wa Rahmatullah-i-wa-Barqakaatuh. Assalaam-o-alaina wa-ala’ Ibadillahissaliheen. Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah Wahdahu la shareeka lah. Wa Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Abduhu wa Rasooluh”.*

[Greetings for Allah and prayers and good praises. Peace be upon you O Vicegerent of Allah and Allah’s mercy and His blessings. Peace be upon us and on all righteous slaves of Allah. I testify that there is no ilah but Allah. He is alone having no co-partner. And I testify that Muhammad (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) is His slave and messenger] (*Al- Bukhari and Muslim*).

11. **Salaam:** According to the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), cleanliness is the key of *salat* and its *tahreem* is to recite *allah-O-Akbar* and its *tahleel* is to recite *assalaam-o-alaikum* (*Abu Dawood, Tirmizi, Ibn Maja*). It is not valid to recite *salaamun alaikum* or *alaikum assalaam*. Saying *Assalamo Alaikum* once is a *rukhn* (pillar) of *salat* and saying it once again is a *sunna*.
12. **Poise and moderation:** It is obligatory to perform *salat* in solitude and with due moderation. The Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had objected to those who pray hurriedly and had advised solitude and moderation.
13. **The order of the parts of salat:** It is obligatory to perform *salat* in the same order as the Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) did and taught to his followers. This means first standing straight, then *ruku'*, then *sajdah*. If this order is not followed, *salat* will be void.

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