

THE PRAYER OF THE FORENOON

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said; A charity becomes due upon each son of Adam for each one of his bones and the joints. Saluting everybody whom he meets is a charity; to call for a good deed is a charity; to prevent from evil deeds is a charity; to remove obstacles from the path is a charity; to feed one's life-partner is a charity. To perform two rak'ats of salat in the forenoon compensates for all this charity (Abu Dawood). The time for forenoon optional prayer commences ten minutes after the rise of the sun and lasts till the adhan of Zohr. The minimum number of rak'ats is two and the maximum is eight. One is free either to perform four or six dividing them in units of two rak'ats each.

The Prayer of Istikharah

Istikharah means seeking divine guidance in making of a good choice. When a believer gets confounded about which one of two valid alternatives to choose he invokes the guidance of Allah Almighty. Thus he seeks this guidance by performing two rak'ats of *salat-i-istikharah*. This is a Sunnah of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). There is no fixed timing for it. After the completion of *salat*, the person recites the supplication as taught by the Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). It has been narrated by Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah RadhiAllahu Anhu that Allah's Messenger, (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) used to teach us the practice of *istikharah* in our affairs just as he used to teach Quran to us. He said that if any one of you intends to do something he should pray two rak'ats of *nafl* salat and then recite this supplication:

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ، وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ، وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي - أَوْ قَالَ عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ - فَأَقْدِرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي، ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي - أَوْ قَالَ فِي عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ - فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ، وَاقْدِرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ، ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي»

“O my God I seek from Thee the best alternative with the aid of thy knowledge; and seek my empowerment with the aid of thy power; and I beg of you Thy great bounty; Verily Thou determines and I don't determine and Thou knows and I don't know and Thou are the knower of all unknown things. O my God if Thou knows that matter [here one should mention his need] is good for me in my religion and livelihood and my destiny determine it and facilitate it for me

and then bless me in it; and if Thou knows that this matter [here one should mention his need] is bad for me in my religion and my livelihood and my destiny then divert it from me and divert me from it and determine me the good wherever it be and then make me contented with it (Al-Bukhari).

Salatul Hajah: The Prayer in Distress

It is narrated by Hazrat Abdullah bin Abi Aufa *RadhiAllahu Anhu* that once Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) passed by us and said: If any one you has a need to be fulfilled by Allah or by a man then he ought to take ablution properly and perform two rak'ats of *salat*. Then after praising Allah and sending *salat* and *salam* upon his Messenger he should recite this supplication:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ أَسْأَلُكَ مَوْجِبَاتِ رَحْمَتِكَ
وَعَزَائِمِ مَغْفِرَتِكَ وَالْعِصْمَةِ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَالْغَنِيمَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ بَرٍّ وَالسَّلَامَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ إِثْمٍ لَا تَدْعُ لَنَا ذَنْبًا إِلَّا غَفَرْتَهُ
وَلَا أَعْمَالًا إِلَّا فَرَجْتَهُ وَلَا حَاجَةً هِيَ لَكَ رِضًا إِلَّا قَضَيْتَهَا يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

(Translation) "There is no ilah but Allah the forbearer and munificent. Praise be to Allah the owner of the Great Seat. Praise be to Allah the Creator of all the universe. I beseech you for the causation of your mercy and the determination of your forgiveness and immunity from all sin and the bounty of all goodness and protection from all wrong. Leave not for us any sin which Thou hast not forgiven and any worry which Thou hast not cleared and the need which is here before Thee Which Thou hast not fulfilled O the most merciful of all the beneficent" (Tirmizi, Nasai, Ibn Maja).

Prayer of Tawbah (Repentance)

Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

«مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يُذْنِبُ ذَنْبًا، فَيُحْسِنُ الطُّهُورَ، ثُمَّ يَقُومُ فَيُصَلِّي رَكَعَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ، إِلَّا غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ»

"If a person commits a sin, he should take ablution properly and perform two rak'ats of *salat*. Then ask Allah's forgiveness for his sin. Allah will forgive him (Ahmad, Compilers of Sunan and Ibn- Hibban).

The Prayer of Solar Eclipse

Hazrat Ayesha *RadhiAllahu Anha* narrated that during the life-time of the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) once there occurred a solar eclipse. Then

he went to the mosque and recited the *takbeer*. People formed rows behind him. He recited from the Quran for a long time, then raised *takbeer* and went into *ruku'*. His *ruku'* was as long as the *qira'at*. Then he raised his head and recited “*smiallah leman hamidah, Rabbana wa lakal hamd*” and kept standing and recited from Quran for a long time then raised *takbeer* then went into *ruku'* and said “*smiallah leman hamidah, Rabbana wa lakal hamd*” then went into *sajdah*. He offered the second *rak'at* in the same way. Thus in two *rak'ats* he had four *qiyam* (standings), four *ruku'* and four *sajdahs* (*Prostration*). The eclipse was over before the completion of the *salat*. Thereafter he delivered a sermon in which he said the Sun and Moon are but two symbols of Allah. They don't eclipse because of the death or birth of anybody. When you see them in this condition fear Allah and hasten to *salat*.

This *salat* is a *Sunnah muakkadah*. It is performed on both solar and lunar eclipse. Each *rak'at* has two standings and two *ruku's*. It should be performed with *jama'at* in the mosque. It should commence at the beginning of eclipse and end with the end of the eclipse.

The Prayer for Rains

This prayer is also a *Sunnah muakkadah*. It is performed for invoking rains. Once people complained to Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) about the acute drought. The Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) then ascended the pulpit and after *takbeer* and praise of Allah said you people have complained of the drought. Allah has ordered that you pray to Him for rains. He will listen to your prayers. Then he recited the prayer:

الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم مالك يوم الدين لا اله الا الله يفعل ما يريد اللهم لا اله الا انت، انت الغنى ونحن الفقراء انزل علينا الغيث واجعل ما انزلت علينا قوة وبلاغاً الى حين

(Translation) “Praise be to Allah the Creator of the universe, the most beneficent and the most merciful, the Lord of the day of Judgment. There is no ilah but Allah He does what he wills. O our God there is no god except you. You are the affluent and we are the paupers. Send to us your rains and make what you send upon us a source of strength and access for us for some time”. Then he raised both his hands in supplication, then he turned his back towards the people and turned his sheet left-right and up-down, then he turned to the people and descended from the pulpit and then led the people to perform two *rak'ats* of *salat*. No sooner was the *salat* over than dark clouds came and rains

poured in with thunder and lightning. By the time people came out of the mosque all paths were flooded with water. When the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) saw the people running toward their homes to escape from rain, he laughed till his teeth were clearly seen. He said I testify that Allah is capable of doing anything and that I am His slave and messenger” (Abu Dawood, Ha’kim).

This salat *consists* of two rak’ats and has takbeerat like the salats of both Eids and qira’at is loud. This prayer is performed outside the settlement in the open field. In place of pulpit the imam addresses the congregation on the ground and delivers his sermon for reminding the people to do good deeds and avoid sins, stop quarrelling among themselves, and pay their dues to the people. He tells them that drought and famine are imposed in punishment of our wrong-doings and disobedience to Allah. He should exhort them to live in amity and engage in giving out charity and worship of Allah.

People should proceed to this salat on foot along with their wives, children, old men and women and even the animals. They should pray for rains beseeching and weeping. Men folk ought to turn their sheets up-down. Only men should do that, not women.

Other Nawafil

In addition to the above, there are certain other *nawafil* attributed to Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), namely:

1. Tahiyyatul Masjid
2. Two rak’ats after ablution
3. Two rak’ats before proceeding on journey.
4. Two rak'ats after returning from journey.

In-House Nafl Prayers

In Islam utmost emphasis has been given to performance of *salats* with jama’at in the mosque. But at the same time it is ordained that homes should also be illuminated with prayers. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said that:

«إِذَا قَضَى أَحَدُكُمْ الصَّلَاةَ فِي مَسْجِدِهِ، فَلْيَجْعَلْ لِنَبِيِّهِ نَصِيبًا مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ جَاعِلٌ فِي بَيْتِهِ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ خَيْرًا»

When any one of you prays in the mosque he should not forget to keep a portion for his home also. It is through prayers that Allah bestows well-being and bounty upon homes. (Muslim, Ahmad). In another hadith, he said:

«اجْعَلُوا مِنْ صَلَاتِكُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوهَا قُبُورًا»

Make some of your prayers in your houses and do not make them graves (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

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