

Salaat
Purity (taharah): an essential condition

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Abstract: *the present article is the second part of Salaat, its prerequisites and how tos. In the article of this issue, a couple of important parts of salaat which can be considered as prerequisites are introduced which are: Purity, Azaan, Takbiratul ehraam and invocation for attention.*

¹ Also known as Namaz or the 'daily prayers

². translator: Jalil Dorrani

Purity

As *Salaat* means to stand before the Almighty, seeking closeness by the pious servants towards their Lord and the ascension of the believers, there are some essential conditions in it, which should not be ignored or overlooked by the praying one.

One of these conditions, when the slave is being honored by being in the presence of His Master, is that he should purify himself from all sorts of filth and presents himself before His Lord with clean clothes and pure body. More importantly, he should perform either of the ritual cleanliness, viz. *Wuzu* or *Ghusl*. If neither of them is possible, then he must do *Tayammum*. In addition, as there have been special orders from divinity for these three forms of purity, it is obligatory that we perform them by keeping all their essentialities into consideration and apart from the divine orders; we must not include anything from our will in their performance.

The Holy Prophet (*as*) says,

“There are two things for which I do not like to include anybody in their performance. Wuzu for it is from my prayers and my charity.”¹

Ameerul Momineen (*as*) while performing *wuzu*, did not permit anybody to pour water for him. Somebody questioned him regarding this, he (*as*) replied, “I do not like to include anybody in my worship (of Allah). Allah the Almighty says,

“Then whosoever desires to meet his Lord, then he must act righteously and not include anybody in the worship of his Lord.”²

Imam Reza (*as*) says,

¹ Khesaal, p. 33

² Kahf: 110/Wasaaelush Shia, vol. 1, p. 477

“Here, I am performing wuzu for salaah. And it is worship which I do not like to share with anybody.”¹

We shall talk about worship and sincerity later. Here, we shall suffice to state that by itself, *wuzu* is not obligatory. Therefore, if somebody performs *wuzu* with the intention of its being obligatory, without keeping in mind any of the desired acts to be performed with it, then such a *wuzu* is void and an innovation. But because *wuzu* is recommended and an act loved by Allah, therefore, if somebody performs it for gaining nearness to Allah (without the intention of any action), then such a *wuzu* is correct. Consequently, he can perform *salaah* and all other actions of worship for which *wuzu* is a must.

Azaan And Eqaamah

Both *Azaan* and *Eqaamah* are considered to be highly recommended and emphasized acts in *salaah*. Numerous traditions have underlined their significance and importance. *Azaan* and *Eqaamah*, with their profound meanings and concepts, prepare a worshipper to acquire proximity to the Almighty in the way of worship and ascend to great heights. The Holy Prophet (*peace be upon him and his progeny*) advised Abuzar (Allah be satisfied with him) thus:

“Allah always takes pride and boasts about three individuals to his angels: (Among them is the) One who gets up in the desert without food and water but says his Azaan and Eqaamah and only then performs his salaah. Your Lord says to the angels, “Look at My slave how he is worshipping Me when he cannot see anybody other than Me.”

Thereafter, seventy thousand angels come forward and perform salaah behind him and seek forgiveness for him till tomorrow. O’ Abuzar! When a person is hungry and thirsty on the earth, and does wuzu or tayammum and performs salaah after reading the

¹ Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 21

Azaan and Eqaamah, Allah orders the angels to pray behind him in rows in such a way that he cannot be spotted. They bow when he bows and prostrate when he prostrates and say 'Aameen' when he invokes.

*O' Abuzar! If somebody says only the Eqaamah but forsakes the Azaan, only two angels perform the salaah with him."*¹

Imam Husain (as) narrates,

"We were sitting in the mosque when the caller for prayers (moazzin) went on the minaret and cried, 'Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar.'" On hearing this call, Ameerul Momineen (as) wept profusely due to which even we began weeping. When the moazzin completed his Azaan, Ali (as) said, "Do you know what did the moazzin say?" We said, "Allah, His Messenger and his successor know the best."

He said,

"If you knew what he said, certainly you would have laughed less and cried more. The call of Allahu Akbar bears a few meanings:

One meaning of Allahu Akbar denotes the eternity, everlastingness, knowledge, power, strength, benevolence, endowment, greatness and honor of Allah the Almighty. By saying Allahu Akbar, the moazzin implies, 'Allah is He to whom belong the creation and the command. He brings everything into creation by His Will. All that the creation possesses is due to Him. Also, its return is unto Him. He is the First, before everything, from eternity. He is the Last, after everything, and is Everlasting. He is Evident, more than anything else, but cannot be comprehended. He is the Hidden, more than anything else, but is sans limits. (In other words, His being apparent is more evident than the

¹ Wasaaleush Shia, vol.5, p. 383

manifestation of anything else and His concealment is more hidden than anything else).

The second meaning of Allahu Akbar is:

He is the All Knowing and All Aware. That is, He knows what has occurred and what will occur before its occurrence.

The third meaning of Allahu Akbar is:

He is the All Powerful and commands authority over everything. His dominion extends over whatever He wishes. He is Strong means that He has power over His creation and rules them. His Strength is His Own and His Power is dominant and established over all things. When He desires to bring something into existence, He just commands 'Be' and it is.

The fourth meaning of Allahu Akbar connotes His Forbearance and Honor. He is so Forbearing as if He does not know (our mistakes) at all. His is so Forgiving as if He has not seen (our sins) at all. He conceals our transgression as if there had been no obedience.

He does not hasten to punish or reprimand because of the aforementioned attributes.

Another meaning of Allahu Akbar is:

He is Generous and Munificent. His endowments are plenty and His actions honorable.

The fifth meaning of Allahu Akbar is:

He can neither be described nor does He possess any how-ness (kaifiyyah). When somebody says Allahu Akbar it is as if he is confessing that Allah is too Great than to be comprehended by the attributes ascribed unto Him by the describers. These so-called describers of attributes do so according to their own whims and imaginations and not in correspondence with His

Greatness. Allah is much Higher than that the describers comprehend His attributes.

Yet another connotation of Allahu Akbar is that Allah is the Greatest and Highest. He is Needless and can dispense with the actions (or existence) of His creatures.

The statement ‘I witness that there is no god but Allah’ is an announcement that testimony without recognition from the heart is impossible. The announcer confesses:

I know that there is no god but Allah and every deity besides Him is false. I hereby make a verbal admission and acknowledge from the depth of my heart that there is no god except Him. I also witness that no other god can provide refuge but Him and there is no asylum from evils, mischief and corruption except in His Holy Being.

And the testimony, ‘I witness that there is no god but Allah’ for the second time suggests:

I testify that there is no guide except Allah and none can acquire guidance in religion except through Him. I take Allah as Witness that there is no deity but Him. I take the inhabitants of the skies and the earth and everything in between them, among the angels, mankind, mountains, trees, wild animals, reptiles, in short, all existents of the world of creation, as witnesses, that I bear testimony that there is no creator except Allah. Also, there is no sustainer, no deity, none who can harm, none who can benefit, none who can straiten things, none who can grant salvation, no bestower, no restrainer, no adviser, none who can cure, none who can advance matters or postpone them, except Allah the Almighty. Creation and command is only in His authority. All the goodness is only in His hands. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

And the announcement, ‘I witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) is the messenger of Allah’, means:

I bear witness that certainly there is no god but Allah, Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) is His slave, His messenger and His chosen one. He has sent him (peace be upon him and his progeny) for the guidance of the entire mankind and conveyed him the true religion. He will make his religion dominate all ideologies even if the polytheists detest it. And I take all the messengers and prophets (peace be upon them) as witnesses, so also the angels and the entire mankind, residing in the heavens and the earth, that Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) is the master of the first and the last.

And the announcement, 'I witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) is the messenger of Allah', for the second time implies: I testify that everybody needs Allah, the One, the Subduer, and the Needless from His servants, creatures and entire mankind. I witness that Allah the Almighty sent Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) as a giver of glad tidings, a Warner, to invite them towards Allah with His permission and be a shining lamp for them. So, whoever denies or refutes him or does not believe in him (peace be upon him and his progeny), Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) will throw him in hell fire, which shall be his eternal abode as he will never get respite from it.

The call, 'Hasten for prayers', indicates:

Hurry for your best deed, to the invitation of your Lord, towards forgiveness and pardon of your God, to extinguish the fire that you have kindled and to free your neck from the shackles that you have cast around it. So that Allah may erase your evil deeds, forgive your sins, convert your misdeeds to good actions, for He is the Master, the Honorable, Possessor of the great obligation. And indeed He has permitted us, the Muslim society, to enter in His service and to be in His presence.

And the call, 'Hasten for prayers' for the second time, implies:

Stand up to invoke Allah, your Lord. Present your needs to your Lord, seek from Him through His words, and ask for His intercession through them. Increase your remembrance (dhikr), your qunoot (the supplication in the second unit of prayers), your bowing, your prostration, your humility, your submissiveness; raise your hands to ask Him, for certainly, He has permitted us for all these.

And the call ‘Hasten to success’, connotes:

Perform and hasten to the act that will last forever and will never be destroyed, a safety that will never be annihilated, a life whose clue can never be found by death, a bounty that will never end, a kingdom that will never finish, a happiness that will never turn to grief, an acquaintance that will never be a stranger, a light that will never see darkness, a salvation that knows no bounds, a ceaseless splendor, self-sufficiency that will never see want, a health that will never know disease, a honor that will never witness disgrace, a strength that will never turn into weakness, a glory that will remain unsurpassed, and hasten to the joys of both this world as well as the hereafter.

And the call, ‘Hasten to success’, for the second time indicates:

Hasten to all the aforementioned bounties i.e. a great honor, a huge obligation, a lofty bounty, an enormous deliverance, an eternal munificence in the neighborhood of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) in the abode of truth and righteousness near the All Powerful King¹.

Again, the announcement, Allahu Akbar, suggests:

¹Shaykh Sadooq after narrating this tradition says, ‘The narrator of this tradition has not mentioned the virtues of the statement, ‘Hasten to the best of deeds’, on account of dissimulation (taqaiyyah).

Allah the Almighty is Greater and Higher than that anyone among His creatures can understand the bounties available with Him for His obedient servant. A servant who possessed the following traits- obeyed His commands, worshipped Him, heeded His warnings, was engrossed in His remembrance, loved Him, was contented and satisfied with Him, relied on Him, feared Him, pinned his hopes on Him, and fully submitted and surrendered completely to His decree and destiny.

The announcement, Allahu Akbar for the second time indicates:

Allah is Greater, Higher and Majestic than that anybody can fathom the extent of His honor towards His servants. Or understand His chastisement for His enemies, the level of His pardon, forgiveness and bounties to the one who answers His call and that of His messenger (peace be upon him and his progeny), and the level of His punishment, wrath and reprimand for those who deny and refute Him.

Then the call ‘There is no god except Allah’ means:

For Allah is the clear proof against the people through His messenger (peace be upon him and his progeny), His message, His explanation and His call. And He is Majestic than for anybody to possess any argument against Him. So whoever answers Him, for him is light and honor. And one who denies Him, then indeed Allah is Needless of the universe and He is the quickest in accounting.

And the call, ‘Indeed the prayer has been established’, in the Eqaamah, suggests:

The time for visitation, whispering, fulfillment of needs, reaching the desire, uniting with Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) and His

honor, forgiveness, satisfaction and forgiveness, has indeed arrived.”¹

If one pays a little attention to the above tradition and deliberates over its various aspects, he will understand the importance and significance of *salaat*, to a considerable extent, the pillar of religion. Whoever utters the sentences of the *Azaan* and *Eqaamah* in the light of their aforementioned interpretation, will find his heart full of divine grace and honour and Allah’s manifestation in his heart will intensify with every passing moment. Saying the *Azaan* and *Eqaamah* is in fact the remembrance of Allah. And we have already stated that Allah the Almighty assures, “You remember Me, I will remember You.” It is evident that when the Almighty remembers His servant, His Power, Greatness and Kingdom encompass him. Consequently, all his thoughts are focused only on Him, and for the sake of his heart’s contentment, he prepares himself for *salaat*, quiet conversation with his Lord, and the fulfillment of his needs.

“Know! Only with the remembrance of Allah do the hearts gain contentment.” (The holy Quran, 13: 28)

Takbiratul Ehraam & The Invocation Of Attention

When the worshipper finishes with his purification, *Azaan* and *Eqaamah* and prepares himself for the adoration of his Lord, by saying “*Allahu Akbar*”- an element of *salaat*, he imposes on himself its prohibitions. That is, till he does not terminate his prayers with the *salaam*, he prohibits certain things for himself, among them being turning away his attention from Allah the Almighty. And as *Takbeeratul Ehraam* marks the commencement of prayers, the worshipper while reciting it, should at least intend that whatever he will do during the

¹ Maanil Akhbaar, p. 38-41

performance of this action, will be only and only for the obedience of Allah.

Insofar as he continues with this intention in his prayers and does not divert his concentration from it, he will find the reality of prayers and realize the worship of Allah the Almighty in himself. In fact, this only is the spirit and substance of prayers. Before uttering the *Takbeeratul Ehraam*, it is worthy that he recites the invocation of attention (*doa-e-tawajjoh*) which, in the narration of Abdullah Ibn Jafar Himyari (received in the *tawqee'* of Imam-e-Zamana (*as*) is as follows:

“I turn my face towards the One Who has created the heavens and the earth, being upright and submissive, on the nation of Ibrahim and the nation of Muhammad and the guidance of Ameerul Momineen. And I am not of the polytheists. Surely, my prayers, my sacrifice, my life and my death are (only) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. There is no partner unto Him. And thus have I been commanded. And I am from those who submit. O Allah! Make me from those who submit.”¹

How great it is if somebody utters these words, synchronizes his heart with his tongue, and gives his words a practical shape in its truest sense, really turns his heart towards Allah, and removes all other thoughts from his mind. Yes! How good indeed is the servant who, at any given moment of his life, does not do anything or commit any deed against the wishes of his Master and Lord and even goes to the extent of dying in His cause. If at all he does commit some sin or transgression, he immediately begs Him for forgiveness and seeks His refuge. May Allah make us, and all the friends of the Ahle Bayt (*as*), from those who submit to His wishes and may He not turn His attention away from us even for a moment.

¹ Al-Ehtejaaj, vol. 2, p.7; Wasaaelush Shia, vol. 6, p.25