

Importance of Salat: 40 Ahadith

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For the introduction for the 40 ahadith on prayers, we could not think of anything that could be more complete, interesting and profound than what appears in the beginning of the chapter on prayers in the Tawdhihul Masail of Ayatullah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hence we have selected it with the hope that all those who love the AhlulBayt (peace be upon them) and that great gnostic may derive abundant benefits from their invaluable words and statements.

"The prayers are the most important of the religious acts such that if they are accepted by Allah, all the other acts of worship shall also be accepted. However if the prayers are not accepted, then the other acts too shall not find acceptance."

And just as a person who washes himself five times a day has no dirt and uncleanness remaining on his body, similarly the five daily prayers cleanse a person from his sins. It is befitting that the prayers are offered as soon as their time sets in, and one who considers the prayers to be trivial is like one who does not offer his prayers. The Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: "One, who does not attach importance to (his) prayers and considers them to be inconsequential, deserves the chastisement of the hereafter."

One day, while the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) was present in the mosque, a person entered it and engaged himself in prayers. However, the manner in which he offered them was such that he neither performed his ruku (bowing) correctly, nor his sujood (prostration). Observing this, the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) remarked: "If this person happens to die and his prayers are like this, he would not have died upon my religion!"

Hence, a person must exhibit care that he does not offer his prayers in haste. Whilst offering his prayers, he should remember Allah (s.w.t), possess a dignified, humble and submissive demeanor, should know with Whom he is conversing, and consider himself absolutely trivial and minor before the greatness and exaltedness of the Lord of the Worlds.

If the person were to focus on these aspects in their entirety, he would become oblivious of himself. He would be just like Amirul Mo'minin (peace be upon him) who was oblivious to the removal of the arrow which was taken from his foot whilst he was engrossed in his prayers. A person who prays should also repent (for his past misdeeds), and refrain from sins that hinder the acceptance of prayers such as jealousy, pride, backbiting, consuming haram food

and wealth, drinking intoxicants, withholding zakat and khums, etc... Rather, he should refrain from all sins!

It is also befitting that he should desist from committing acts that reduce the rewards of prayers such as offering prayers in a state of drowsiness, or while withholding one's urine, or looking up at the sky while offering prayers. At the same time he should perform acts that increase the rewards of prayers such as wearing an agate (Aqiq) ring, wearing clean clothes, brushing the teeth, combing the hair and applying perfume.”[1]

We conclude this introduction by narrating a beautiful[2] tradition from the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny). He has said:

“My Ummah consists of four groups:

1. One group offers the prayers, however yet are unmindful of their prayers, and they shall be placed in ‘Wayl’. ‘Wayl’ is the name of one of the bottom-most levels of hell. Allah has said:

“So woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers.”[3]

2. One group is such that it occasionally offers the prayers, and so, ‘Ghayy’ is the abode for the people of this group. ‘Ghayy’ is the name of another of the bottom-most levels of hell. Allah has said:

“But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and followed the sensual desires, so they will meet perdition.” [4]

3. The third group consists of those, who never offer their prayers, and for them is ‘Saqr’, which is also the name of another of the low levels of hell and about which Allah has said: “(The inmates of paradise shall ask the inmates of hell) What has brought you into hell? They shall say: We were not of those who prayed.”[5]

4. The fourth group consists of those, who offer their prayers regularly and are humble in them. Allah has said: “Successful indeed are the believers, Who are humble in their prayers.”[6] and [7]

We pray to Allah (Glory and Greatness to Him) that He decrees all of us to be of the fourth .group

Prayers In The Noble Qur’an

“And keep up prayer; surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil. And the remembrance of Allah is the greatest.” Noble Qur’an, Suratul `Ankabut, Verse 45

The Rank of Prayers in Islam

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "The first thing that Allah made obligatory upon my Ummah was the five prayers; and the first thing from their acts of worship that shall be taken up will be the five prayers; and the first thing that they will be questioned about will be the five prayers."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 18859

The Pillar of Religion - 2

Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said: "Islam has been founded and established on five things: Prayers, Zakat, Hajj, Sawm (Fasting) and Wilayah."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 234

The Parable of Prayers - 3

Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said: "The prayer is the pillar of religion and its parable is that of the prop of a tent – when the prop remains upright, the pegs and ropes remain straight and upright, but when the prop bends or breaks neither the pegs nor ropes remain straight."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 218

A Means of Salvation - 4

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "One who adheres to the five (daily) prayers diligently, they shall be a means of illumination and salvation for him on the Day of Judgment."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 18862

Illumination of the Heart - 5

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: "The prayer of a person is (in reality) a light in his heart, so whoever desires, can illuminate his heart (by means of prayers)."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 18973

A Measure of Acceptance of Deeds - 6

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: "The first thing for which a person shall be subjected to reckoning is prayers. If they are accepted, all his other deeds shall (also) be accepted. But if rejected, all his other deeds shall (also) be rejected."

Wasa'ilush Shi'a, Volume 3, Page 22

The Conduct of the Prophets - 7

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "The prayer is one of the (primary) dictates of religion, in it lies the pleasure of the Lord, the Mighty and the Glorious, and it is the conduct of the Prophets."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 231

The Standard of Islam - 8

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "The prayer is the standard of Islam. Whosoever loves prayers, and observes their limits, timings and methods, is a true believer."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 18870

The Benefits of Prayers - 9

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: "Surely the Angel of Death repels Satan from the proximity of one who had adhered to and guarded his prayers, and makes him speak out the testimony of 'There is no God except Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah' during that terrifying and frightening state (of death)."

Wasa'ilush Shi'a, Volume 3, Page 19

Prayers and Children - 10

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) advised: "We command our children to offer prayers when they are five years old, so you too order your children to offer prayers (but only) when they are seven years of age."

Wasa'ilush Shi'a, Volume 3, Page 12

Importance and Virtues of Prayers

Value of Prayers - 11

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: "One obligatory prayer is better than performing Hajj twenty times, and the performance of one Hajj is better than giving away a house full of gold."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 227

The Face of Religion - 12

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "For every thing there is a face and the face of your religion is prayers. So see to it that none from amongst you damages and disfigures the face of his religion."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 209

Importance of Prayers - 13

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "Whenever the time of each prayer arrives, an Angel announces to the people: (O' People Stand up and extinguish, with prayers, the fire which you have set alight for yourselves."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 209

The Blessings of Prayers - 14

Imam `Ali (peace be upon him) has said: "Surely, when a person engages in prayers, his body, his clothes and everything around him glorify Allah."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 213

The Rank of Prayers - 15

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "The position of prayers with respect to religion is similar to that of the head with respect to the body."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 18972

Purification of the Soul - 16

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "The example of the five (daily) prayers is like that of a clear-water river flowing in front of your houses in which a person washes himself five times a day – cleansing him from all dirt."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 18931

The Covenant of Allah - 17

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) states that Allah, The Exalted has said: "I have made the five prayers obligatory upon your Ummah and have made a covenant with Myself that one who maintains his prayers with respect to their timings, I shall place him in Paradise. As for the one, who does not maintain the timings, I have no covenant (with him)."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 18872

Remembrance of Allah - 18

Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said: "Allah's remembrance of 'people who pray' is greater and superior to their remembrance of Him. Do you not observe that He has said (in the

Noble Qur'an): {Remember Me and I shall remember you.}"[8]

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 199

The Mercy of Allah - 19

Imam `Ali (peace be upon him) said: "When a person stands up for prayers, Iblis approaches him and looks at him with envy and jealousy, as he sees the Mercy of Allah encompassing the person."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 207

Refraining from Sins - 20

It has been reported that a youth from the Ansar, who used to offer his prayers with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny), used to indulge in sinful and corrupt deeds. When this was brought to the notice of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny), he said: "A day shall come when his prayers shall refrain him from committing sins. Before long, the youth repented."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 198

Importance of Prayer-Times

How and When? 21

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: "When you offer an obligatory prayer, offer it at its stipulated time in a manner as if it is your last prayer and you fear you shall never get a chance to offer any prayer again."

Al-Mahajjatul Baidha, Volume 1, Page 350

Importance of the Times of Prayers - 22

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) has reported that Allah, the Mighty, the Glorious has said: "I have a covenant with My servant that if he offers his prayers at their stipulated times, I shall not chastise him and shall place him in Paradise without any reckoning."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 19036

The Noble Prophet and Prayers - 23

`Aishah narrates: "We would be engaged in conversation with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny), but with the arrival of the time of prayers it would appear as if he neither knew us nor we knew him."

Al-Mahajjatul Baidha, Volume 1, Page 350

Prayers at their Times - 24

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: "When a person maintains his prayer and offers it at its stipulated time, it ascends in the form of a pure white light and calls out to him: "You

have guarded me, may Allah protect you.” But if he does not maintain his prayer and does not offer it at its decreed time, it ascends as a dark and gloomy form and says to him: You have destroyed me, may Allah destroy you.”

Al-Mahajjatul Baidha, Volume 1, Page 340

A Beloved Entity - 25

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: “The most beloved of deeds in the eyes of Allah are: offering prayers at the stipulated times; (then) goodness and kindness towards parents; (and then) Jihad in the way of Allah.”

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 18897

Negligence & Carelessness towards the Prayers

Regarding the Prayers as Insignificant - 26

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: “One who considers the prayers to be insignificant and trivial is not from me. By Allah! He shall never come close to me at the pool of Kauthar.”

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 224

Debasement of Prayers - 27

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said: “Our intercession shall never reach one who considers his prayers to be inconsequential and unimportant.”

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 227

Destroying Prayers - 28

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: “Do not destroy your prayers for verily one who destroys his prayers shall be resurrected in the company of Qarun, Haman and Fir`awn.”

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 202

The Incorrect Prayers - 29

Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) narrates: One day the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) was seated in the mosque when a person entered and began praying, but in a manner such that neither did he perform his ruku' (bowing), nor his sujood (prostration) in a correct manner. Observing this, the Messenger of Allah commented: “(This person) pecks as a crow pecks. Should he die and the state of his prayers be as they are now, he shall surely not die upon my religion.”

Carelessness Towards Prayers - 30

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: "Prayer is the pillar of your religion and one who intentionally forsakes his prayer has destroyed his religion. And one who does not guard the times of the prayers, shall be made to enter 'Wayl', which is a valley in Hell, as Allah, the Exalted, has said: "So woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayers."^[9]

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 202

The Consequence of Abandoning Prayers - 31

The Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: "Do not abandon your prayers intentionally for surely the obligations of Allah and His Messenger cease to cover one who forsakes his prayers intentionally."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 19096

A Death of Disbelief - 32

The Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: "If a person abandons his prayer such that he neither desires its rewards nor fears its chastisement, for such a person I do not care if he dies a Jew, a Christian or a Magian."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 202

Chastisement - 33

The Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: "The good deeds of one who, without any appropriate excuse does not offer his prayer until its time passes away, are annulled." He then said: "The divide between a believer and disbelief is the abandonment of prayers."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 202

Door of Hell - 34

The Noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) has said: "The name of one who forsakes his prayer intentionally is written upon The door of Hell from which he shall (eventually) enter."

Kanzul `Ummal, Volume 7, Tradition 19090

Etiquette of Prayer And Conditions for its Acceptance

Conditions for Acceptance of Prayers - 35

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said that Allah, the Exalted has said: "I shall accept the prayers of one who: exhibits humility before My Greatness; restrains himself from his base and carnal desires for My sake; passes his day in My remembrance; does not seek to show his greatness over My creation; feeds the hungry ones; clothes the bare ones; acts with kindness and mercy to those in misery and trouble; provides shelter to those who are strangers (in his city) and away from their homes."

Wasa'ilush Shi'a, Volume 15, Page 210

Prayers Accepted? In What Measure? - 36

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: "One who desires to know whether his prayers have been accepted or not should observe if his prayers have restrained him from evil and sinful acts. (If yes,) then the measure in which they have restrained him is the measure of his prayers that have been accepted."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 82, Page 198

Prayers and the Wilayah of the Ahlul Bayt - 37

Once a person asked Imam Zainul `Abidin (peace be upon him): "What is the criterion for the acceptance of prayers?" The Imam (peace be upon him) replied: "Acknowledging our Wilayah and dissociating oneself from our enemies."

Biharul Anwar, Volume 84, Page 245

Obligatory and Recommended Prayers - 38

Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has said: "The prayer that is offered by a person, sometimes half of it ascends upwards, while at other times it is only one-third, or one-fourth or one-fifth that ascends. Only that portion of the prayer which the person has offered with concentration and mindfulness of the heart is made to ascend. (And so) the people have been ordered to offer the recommended prayers so that they can make up for what has been left incomplete of their obligatory prayers."

Al-Haqa'iq, Page 219

Prayers with Adhan & Iqamah - 39

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: "One who offers his prayers along with Adhan and Iqamah, two rows of angels pray behind him, while one who offers his prayers with only

the Iqamah and without the Adhan, one row of angels pray behind him.” The Imam (peace be upon him) was asked: “And how long is each row?” The Imam (peace be upon him) replied: “At the very minimum, its length is the distance between East and West, while at the maximum, its length is the distance between the earth and the heavens.”

Wasa'ilush Shi'a, Volume 4, Page 620

Prayers and Supplications - 40

Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) has said: “Verily, Allah has made obligatory upon you the five prayers at timings that are the best of times, so it is important that you supplicate to Him at the end of these prayers.”

Al-Khisal, Volume 1, Page 278

Notes:

[1] Tawdhihul Masa'il of Ayatullah Khomeini, pg. 84 (before issue Number 727).

[2] The beauty of this tradition is in the fact that the Noble Prophet has derived this classification from the Noble Qur'an and has also mentioned the verses related to each group.

[3] Noble Qur'an, Suratul Ma'un, Verses 4 & 5

[4] Noble Qur'an, Surah Maryam, Verse 59

[5] Noble Qur'an, Suratul Muddathir, vs. 42, 43

[6] Noble Qur'an, Suratul Mu'minun, Verses 1 & 2

[7] Al-Mawaidhul `Adadiyyah, Chapter 4, Page 122

[8] The Noble Qur'an, Suratul Baqarah, Verse 152

[9] The Noble Qur'an, Suratul Ma'un, Verse 4 and 5