

## [QnA Snapshots: Get to know your Salaah](#)

### **Where does the name *Salaah* come from and why do we call our prayer *Salaah*?**

In the Arabic language we find the word *Assalaah* which comes from the word *Assila – Silatur Rahim* is the joining of family ties, between siblings and parents etc therefore *Salaah* is the link, the connection, the nexus between the servant, the slave and Almighty Allah SWT. Never can a Muslim be a true Muslim without *Salaah* because he will have no connection with Almighty Allah SWT.

### **When did *Salaah* become compulsory as a pillar of our Deen?**

The five times a day *Salaah* became compulsory on the miraculous, nocturnal journey and this was during the year of grief and sadness when Nabi Muhammad's SAW wife Khadiha RA passed away and his uncle Abu Talib passed away. Nabi Muhammad SAW was approximately 50 or 51 years old. The beginning of the 15th Chapter of the Quraan Allah SWT makes reference to Nabi Muhammad's SAW journey from Makkah Mukarramah to Masjidul Aqsa, Jerusalem at night. The Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah believe this journey was a physical journey and in a state of being awake and not a dream or a vision. Nabi Muhammad SAW performed the imaamat at fajr for the Ambiyah AS, and thereafter the miraculous nocturnal journey – Mehraj – took place. After Rasulullah SAW was ascended to the heavens a dialogue between Rasulullah SAW and Almighty Allah SWT took place. The authentic hadith in Sahih Muslim, three gifts were given to Rasulullah SAW. The first, the gift of five *salaah*, the second gift was the last two verses of Surah Baqarah and the third gift was to give glad tidings to those who do not commit kufr and shirk, for them there will be glad tidings and Jannah. The five times a day *salaah* became compulsory on this miraculous journey of Mehraj. One lesson we can glean from this is that everything which became compulsory, that is zakaah, fasting and Hajj, on the land and sand but *salaah* became compulsory in the heavens. To show us the importance and the significance of *salaah* Almighty Allah SWT

invited Rasulullah SAW personally and it shows how attached we should be to *salaah*.

### **Where do the different number of rakaats that make up the five times *salaah* come from?**

In Islam everything is based on wahi – revelation. Therefore we say when there is a conflict between reason and revelation we have to give revelation preference. The main reason is because Almighty Allah SWT commanded us to emulate Nabi Muhammad SAW. This is the revelation However from a logical perspective we say: a person embracing Islam and they are new in Islam, at the time of *salaah* When a person reads two rakaats *salaah* at fajr, we thank Allah SWT for the sense of touching – a sign of gratitude to Allah SWT for blessing us with the sense of touch. At Zuhr we perform four rakaats, we thank Almighty Allah for the sense of hearing – from all four directions, North, East, South and West. This is to thank Almighty Allah SWT for the sense of hearing. Again at Asr we perform four rakaats and this is to thank Almighty Allah for our sense of smell. With it we are able to smell things from all four directions. At Maghrib we perform three rakaats as gratitude to Allah SWT for the sense of sight. Every normal human being can see in three directions, the front, right side and left side. To thank Almighty Allah SWT for all that we consume, the solid and liquid, that is for the sense of taste, we perform four rakaats at Esha. In this way we are thanking Almighty Allah daily for these five faculties that Allah SWT has blessed us with. People without a particular sense are not exempt from performing their *salaah*, this is the logical explanation of how the *salaah* was divided into its specific number of rakaats. This is the manifestation of the Mercy of Almighty Allah SWT. Allah SWT is our Master and we are His servants and to show our servitude and our gratitude, we perform the *salaah* with this number of rakaats.

### **Why are the particular times of *salaah* set out as such?**

When we look at how the times of *salaah* has been dictated we see the beauty of Islam and *salaah*. At Fajr there is darkness. After 45 minutes to an hour, the sun rises. We are often taught as children

“*early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise*”. From the sayings of Nabi Muhammad SAW we learn that he (SAW) has taught us: “*Oh Allah you give baraqah to this Ummah in the early part of the morning*” – Tirmidhi. In Bukhari Sharif it is narrated that a person who does not read fajr on time, the shaytaan is urinating in that person’s ears. When the sun reaches its zenith and it begins its descent, we perform the zuhr *salaah*, this is to teach us a lesson also, that human beings can reach the highest pinnacle that a human can imagine but the day will come when decline will take place. During the late afternoon there is a change in the atmosphere, the heat is no longer as intense, we perform Asr *salaah* and thereafter maghrib *salaah* at the alternating of the day and the night, when the sun has set. We then read Esha before we retire, there is darkness. Whenever there is a difference during the day, that is the atmosphere and the creation undergoes a change, we have an appointment to speak with Allah SWT.

### **What are the benefits of *salaah*?**

Almighty Allah SWT has mentioned the benefits of *salaah* in the Quran. “When a person reads *salaah*”, when we read and perform it the way we ought to perform it and not rushing through it, “it will save you from all obscenities and all forms of injustice and sins”. Almighty Allah SWT wants us to be a nation and a people who have shame, modesty and hayah. This is one of the unique features of Islam. “Every religion has its salient features, the salient feature and characteristic of Islam is shame, modesty and hayah.” *Salaah* teaches us that we stand for truth and that we stand for justice. Allah says: “Remember me,” and we remember Allah SWT by reading *salaah*. We are not doing Allah SWT a favour by reading *salaah*, we are doing ourselves a favour. By not performing our *salaah* we do not harm Allah SWT at all, but ourselves. Today the world is worried about the economy and worldly matters. When addressing Nabi Muhammad SAW, Almighty Allah SWT told Rasulullah SWT to command his family, wives, children and grandchildren about *salaah* and to remain steadfast on it. Allah says, “We do not ask you for sustenance or anything, We provide the sustenance,” but the shame and disgrace of the Ummah is that many say they have no time for

*salaah*. Perform *salaah* and Allah will increase your rizq. This is what Quraan teaches us.

### **What are the warnings to one who does not perform *salaah*?**

Almighty Allah SWT warns us in various places in the Quraan. “*Those in paradise will ask the criminals what has landed you all in Saqar? They will say: “We were not of those who used to pray, and we didn’t feed the poor, and we used to talk vainly with those who talked vain talk; and we used to deny the Day of Recompense until death came to us and we saw the reality of all that we denied”*” (Mudathir:40-47)

A person who does not read *salaah* is a kaafir, he is out of the fold of Islam and this is the verdict of the majority of the sahaabah RA. This is also the verdict of Imam Ahmed Hanbal RA. Imam Abu Hanifah RA, Imam Shafi RA and Imam Malik RA, say he dies a Muslim but Imam Shafi RA and Imam Malik RA have said that this person must be killed. Imam Abu Hanifah RA has said this person must be imprisoned.

Munafiqeen – Hypocrites – people who claim to be Muslim but are not. When they stand for *salaah*, it is done for show. Last one to arrive at the masjid and first to leave – in the light of the Quraan they are munafiqeen. To those who read *salaah* haphazardly and for show, Allah SWT says destruction to them or a valley in Jahannam. Nabi Muhammad SAW has said, “A person who leaves out their *salaah* deliberately is a kaafir and out of the fold of Islam.” There are many translations.

Nabi Muhammad SAW has said, “The most difficult *salaah* for the hypocrite is fajr and esha *salaah*.” Our masaajids at fajr are empty. May Allah SWT grant us the tawfeeq to perform our *salaah* daily and on time whether we are at home or on a journey.

### **At what age should children begin performing *salaah*?**

Almighty Allah SWT commanded Nabi Muhamamd SAW to command his family to perform their *salaah*. Nabi Muhammad SAW

has said, “Teach your children about *salaah* at the age of seven,” it is not compulsory for them to read *salaah* but they should be trained and taught by this age, “At the age of ten they must be disciplined,” Hadith Tirmidhi. We have undermined the importance of *salaah* and take lightly impressing the importance of *salaah* and its practice to our children.

### **Upon whom is *salaah* compulsory?**

Salaah is compulsory upon every Muslim who is sane and mature, whether male or female – five times a day. Salaah is not compulsory on a non-Muslim. Salaah is not compulsory on people who are insane. Whether we are on the land or in the sky they must perform their salaah.

### **Is there any exemption from *salaah* for any particular reason?**

A minor, that is a child who has not reached puberty, but a child must be taught and be disciplined to begin reading *salaah* by seven years old. One who is mad or insane, a woman in her menses, after the completion of her menses she is obligated to make *ghusl* but does not have to perform the *qadha* of the missed *salaah*. Similarly a woman in *nifaas*, post natal, for those 20 to 40 days, *salaah* is not compulsory. Once the compulsory *ghusl* is performed at the completion of this period, *qadha* is not necessary but *salaah* as usual must be performed. The *salaah* missed during the life of a non-Muslim does not have to be repeated (*qadha* is not compulsory).

### **What was Nabi Muhammad SAW farewell advice to the Ummah?**

We understand from this the importance and significance of *salaah*. Nabi Muhammad’s SAW advice during a fatal illness was “As *salaah*” – The *salaah*. Regarding the rights of Allah SWT, guard your *salaah*. Regarding human beings who have authority fulfil it with justice and in a manner that tomorrow one in this position is not taken to task about it in the court of Allah. In Tirmidhi it is narrated that the first thing that Allah SWT will question the Muslims about is *salaah*.

Surah Ebrahim, verse 40, “Oh Allah make me from those who read salaah and make others read salaah, and from my progeny. Oh Allah you accept our dua and supplication.”

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