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History of Salah

Where Did Salah Come From?

Have you ever wondered where salah came from? What's the story behind Salah? We all have so many questions about the history of different things in Islam. Well, the story about where Salah came from is so fascinating to listen to.

Before we start with the actual story, we should talk about WHY we pray. Since Allah is the great and doesn't need us, but we need him, he doesn't need our prayer. He wrote for us to pray and worship to see if we care and listen to the prophet and Allah himself. Anyways, let's get to the story itself. It all started with prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismaiel and his wife Hajjar. When Allah told Ibrahim to put his family in the barren desert, he did it because he had to obey Allah and he knew it was a test. He also did it in fulfilment of Allah's command to establish regular prayer. We know that the prophet came from the side of Ismaiel, and all the other prophets were from the side of Ishaq. However, Hajjar started running back and forth between two hills seven times to see if there's anyone out in the vast desert with water for Ismaiel. When she went to Ismaiel, she found that baby Ismaeil had kicked the ground hard and deep enough for water to come out. To this day this water is still running, and it's called zamzam. When travelers came to the area where Hajjar and Ismaiel were staying, they asked for her permission to drink. She then told them, "Of course you can!" Hajar said. "This well is a gift from God. It's a super special kind of water, too. It makes people happy and healthy! There's nothing like it!" And that's when a new civilization started and that's Mecca.

When the prophet Muhammed (PBUH), was raised at the holy place of Jerusalem, he was taken with Jibreel. They reached the first gate and asked permission to enter and the Angels let them after discovering it was the Prophet (PBUH). Prophet Muhammad tells us that he saw his father Adam, the father of all of mankind. He greeted him with the greeting of all Muslims, - *Assalamu alaikum* (may peace be upon you). Adam returned the greeting and showed his faith in Muhammad's prophethood. He called him his pure son, the pure prophet. Imagine the feeling that this meeting must have given to both men. After thousands of years, Adam was able to see his son Muhammad, the greatest of his descendents. Muhammad was able to look into the eyes of the father of mankind. The greatness of the heavens now however was only just beginning. Jibreel and Prophet Muhammad then ascended to the second heaven. At the gate, Angel Gabriel again asked permission to enter. When the Angles learned Prophet Muhammad had been given his mission and was trying to enter, they welcomed him and opened the gate. There Prophet Muhammad saw the two cousins, Prophet Yahya and the Messenger of God, Isaa; Prophet Muhammad exchanged greetings with them.

Prophet Muhammad and Jibreel ascended once more to the gates of the third heaven. At each gate, the same exchange took place. When the Angels had discovered that it was Jibreel in the company of Prophet Muhammad, who had indeed been given his mission, they gave permission to enter. Here, in the third heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Yusef and described him as someone with half of all beauty. As Prophet Muhammad met the Prophets in each heaven, he exchanged greetings with them, and this was always *Assalamu alaikum*, the greeting of peace used by all the muslims to the One Allah. In the fourth heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Idris, whom Allah described in the Quranic ayah (19:57) as being elevated to a very high level. In the fifth heaven, he met prophet Haruun, the brother of Musa. At each meeting, the Prophets showed their faith in Muhammad's prophethood. In the sixth heaven, Prophet Muhammad met Musa. Whenever Prophet Musa is mentioned in the Quran or in the narrations of Prophet Muhammad, we know that something important is about to be described. After the two Prophets had exchanged greetings and Prophet Musa had expressed his faith in Muhammad's prophethood, Musa started to weep. When he was asked why, he replied: "A young man has come after me, and more of his followers will enter paradise than my followers". Until the religion of Islam, Prophet Musa had had the largest following of any Prophet. Musa cried, and from this, we can understand that there was a type of rivalry between the Prophets, but it was not a competition filled with jealousy.. Rather, it was filled with compassion. As we move further into the journey, we will see the love and compassion Prophet Musa had for Muhammad and his followers. Prophet Muhammad and Jibreel then ascended into the seventh heaven. They went up and were greeted by Prophet Ibrahim. While all the prophets greeted Muhammed with *Assalamu alaikum*, Ibrahim greeted Muhammed with what Adam said, "He called him his pure son, the pure prophet." When the Prophet ascended up to the Throne of Allah, he was given his mission details. Allah told Muhammed to give his people 50 prayers to pray in one day. He obeyed and started going down. When he got to Musa, Musa asked him what his mission was. The prophet said he was given 50 salah to have his people pray a day. Musa told him it was too much. So the Prophet returned and asked Allah to reduce and so he did. Again Musa said it was too much and

returned to Allah to reduce it. After a couple more times, the amount went down to 5. Musa said to go back again, but the prophet said he was too shy. He had khushoo. That's why we pray 5 times a day. Since that time till now, it has never changed and it never will.

The Components and Pillars of Salah

Salah is obligatory on every Muslim after they hit puberty. Parents should start teaching children how to pray and teach them the components of prayer at the age of seven. Let's start with how to pray and what you're supposed to say during salah. We all know that before we actually start praying, we need to make wudu. Here are the steps for performing Wudu.

1. Make the niyyah (intention) to cleanse yourself from impurities
2. Wash your hands three times
3. Rinse your mouth three times
4. Snuffle water into your nose three times
5. Wash your face three times (from hairline down to chin and from ear to ear)
6. Wash your arms (from fingertips all the way to the elbow)
7. Wipe your head with your hands once (from the hairline to the back)
8. Wipe your ears with your fingertips
9. Wash your feet (from the toes to the ankles)

Now after you've actually made Wudu, it's time to pray. To pray you have to be facing the qiblah (facing towards the kaaba). Here are the steps for performing salah,

1. Face kiblah (mentioned above)
2. Say takbeerat Al Ihram (make sure your hands go all the way back to your ears)
3. Start reciting surat Al Fatihah then recite any surah afterwards (try to recite a small surah)
4. Say "Allahu Akbar" and bend down for Rukuu. You have to say "Subhana Rabbi Al Adheem" three times.
5. Say, "sami allahu liman hamidah" then Go back up for a couple seconds
6. Say "Allahu Akbar" then go down for sujood. You have to say "Subhana Rabbi Al Alaa" three times.
7. Then say "Allahu Akbar" and go back up.
8. For the second rakka, after sujood when you sit up, you have to say tahiyat. Same thing for the last rakka. First and third rakkas you don't say tahiyat.
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10. When you sit up on the last rakka in sujood, as mentioned above, you say tahyiray then say, "Assalamualaikum wa rahmatullah" on both sides of your shoulder. So you say on the right side first, then turn your head and say it again.

Those were the components of salah, now let's move on to the pillars. There are 14 pillars in total and we're going to go over them now. They are somewhat like the steps but more different.

1. "intention (setting the right intention for praying each prayer)
2. The opening takbeer (saying 'Allahu Akbar' at the beginning of prayer)
3. The qiyam (standing upright if one has the ability to do so)
4. Reciting Surat Al-Fatihah (Opening Chapter of the Quran) in each unit of prayer
5. Bowing
6. Rising from the bowing position
7. Prostrating
8. Sitting between the two prostrations
9. Sitting while ahhud (reciting the reciting the last tashahhud
10. The final testimony of faith)
11. As-Salatu Ibrahimiyah after tashahhud (sending peace upon the Prophet)
12. The tasleem (saying 'Asalamu Alaikum' at the end of the prayer)
13. Being calm and feeling at ease while fulfilling each movement is essential to give it its due right; making certain that each body part assumes the appropriate position before one moves from one position to another.
14. Following the right order for each pillar as mentioned above."

Suggestions I would Give to Perform a Meaningful salah

When it comes to salah, I have to clear my head to be able to focus on it and not think about anything else. I would not move around a lot and turn my head in opposing directions when hearing any sound. After salah, I would not get up right away, but rather sit down and say Dhikr and make duaa for a couple of minutes.

Summarizing this paper, I have talked about the story of how salah became obligatory upon muslims. I explained how to perform salah as well as what the steps and pillars for it are. There are great things to learn about and from salah and how to spiritually feel good by being in between the hands of Allah.

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