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Essay

Salah is very important in Islam because it is the first of the five pillars of Islam which stresses its importance. To emphasize the importance of salah Allah (swt) mentions salah in many places in the Quran. "Guard strictly the Salah, especially the middle Salah. And stand before Allah with obedience." (Qur'an 2:238)

Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance. (Qur'an 20:14)

And establish prayer and give zakat and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience]. (Qur'an 2:43)

How salah came to be

Many scholars believe that Salah was instructed upon Muslims after Al-Isra wa Al-Miraj. When the Prophet was there he led all the prophets in prayer. Then Prophet (saws) went to the first heaven where he met Adam, then to the second where he met Esah(as), the third he met Yousef(as), in the fourth he met Idris(as), in the fifth he met Haroon(as), in the sixth he met Mosa(as), in the seventh he met Ibrahim (as). 'Welcome,' they all said to him, 'O pious Prophet and pious brother!' (Bukhari). (Adam (as) and Ibrahim (as), however, welcomed him as a 'pious son').

The Prophet then went to the highest level of the heaven where Allah told him to tell his ummah to pray 50 times in a day. The Prophet (saws) didn't protest but when he went down to Mosa he told him to go ask Allah for less because your people will not be able to do handle the burden of 50 salahs a day so the Prophet went and got it decreased to 45. This kept going until it got decreased to 5 when Mosa told the Prophet to go back and ask for less but then The Prophet said he was too embarrassed to go back and ask Allah for less again.

Components and pillars of salah

The most essential part of Salah is having intention and Wudu. Wudu is done by washing the hands, mouth, nose, hair, arms, ears and feet 3 times. You also wash your face once.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said in this regard:

"The prayer of one without purification is void...." (Tirmidhi)

Intention is also a key part of Salah, when you are praying you must remember that you are speaking with Allah, you must try your best to be concentrated on your Salah.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

"Verily all actions are only by intentions." (Bukhari)

The Tabi'i, Abu Mijlaz (ra) says: 'It was the practice of the Sahabah (ra) that to avoid foreign thoughts in salah, they would offer short salats without compromising any of the postures.'

(Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah, hadith: 4707. Also see Fathul Bari, hadith: 706)

Similar to Islam and Iman, Salah has pillars. The pillars of salah are:

1. Standing Position (Unless physically unable to, one must always be standing)
2. Opening Takbeerat Al-Ihram (the first Allaahu akbar)
3. Recitation of suratul Fatiha

4. Bowing Position (Ruku')
5. Rising up from the bowing position
6. Sujud with the 7 placements of your body on the floor:
 1. forehead and nose
 - 2 & 3: both palms of your hands
 - 4 & 5: both knees
 - 6 & 7: both feet – all must touch the floor during prostration
7. Coming up from the Sujood
8. Sitting between the two Sujoods
9. Calmness and tranquility during salah
10. The pillars should be done repetitively in order
11. The last tashahhud
12. Sitting during the last tashahhud
13. Sending the salaam and salaam upon the Prophet (saying 'Allaahumma salli 'ala Muhammad wa ala aly Muhammad kama salayt ala ibraheem wa aly Ibrahim ...')in the last tashahhud
14. The two tasleems (saying assalamu 'alaikum wa rahmatu Allah to the right and then to the left

Salah can only be offered by and is obligatory on:

1. Those who are Muslim so non-Muslims or kufaar can't perform Salah
2. Those who are sane, mentally impaired people don't have to pray
3. Those who are pure, impure Muslims can't pray.
4. Those with the right intention, if your Salah is not performed for Allah but instead for those around then it will not be counted.

How to perform Salah:

Niyat: Stand in respect and attention

Bring hands to ears, palms forward, thumbs behind earlobes.

Allahu Akbar

God is the most great.

Qiyam: Place right hand over left, men below navel, women at chest level;

look at the ground in front of you.

Opening Supplication (optional):

Subhaanaka alahumma wa bihamdik

wa tabaaraka smuka wa ta'aalaa jadduka

wa laa ilaaha ghairuk

Glory to You, O Allah, and Yours is the praise.

And blessed is Your Name, and exalted is Your Majesty.

And there is no deity to be worshipped but You.

A'uudhu billaahi minash shaitaan ar-Rajeem

I seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the accursed.

Fatiha: Recite aloud the Fatiha, the first surah of the Qur'an.

Bismillaah ar-Rahman ar-Raheem

Al hamdu lillaahi rabbil 'alameen

Ar-Rahman ar-Raheem Maaliki yaumid Deen

Iyyaaka na'abudu wa iyyaaka nasta'een
Ihdinas siraatal mustaqeem
Siraatal ladheena an 'amta' alaihim
Ghairil maghduubi' alaihim waladaaleen
Aameen

For the first two rakats at any time of prayer, recite an additional short selection from the Qur'an.

Ruk'u: Hands drop to sides; bend from waist, palms on knees, back parallel to ground; look at feet.

(While bending:) Allahu Akbar

(While bent:) Subhanna rabbiyal 'Azeem (3x)

God is the most great.

Holy is my Lord, the Magnificent.

Qauma: Rise from bending to standing, arms at sides.

(While rising:) Sami' allaahu liman hamidah

(Response from congregation:) Rabbanaa wa lakal hamd

Allah listens to him who praises Him.

Our Lord, to You is due all praise.

(Standing straight, pause:) Allahu Akbar

God is the most great.

Sudjood: Prostrate — hands on knees, lower slowly to kneeling position;

touch forehead, nose and palms to ground (but not elbows);

bend toes so tops of feet face the Qibla.

Subhaana rabbiyal 'Alaa (3x)

Glory to my Lord, the Most High.

(Pause:) Allahu Akbar

God is the most great.

Qu'ud: Rise to sitting position, looking at lap. Men turn up heel of right foot, right toes bent; women keep both feet, soles up, under body.

(Pause:) Allahu Akbar

God is the most great.

Sudjood: Prostrate again.

Subhaana rabbiyal 'Alaa (3x)

Glory to my Lord, the Most High.

(Pause:) Allahu Akbar

God is the most great.

Qu'ud: Rise to sitting position; pause.

To proceed to the second and fourth rakats:

Return to standing position (Qiyam)

(While rising:) Allahu Akbar

God is the most great.

Recite the Fatiha, (if this is the second rakat of any time of prayer, recite another short portion of the Qur'an); continue the second or fourth rakat with Ruk

To complete every second rakat and the last rakat:

Remain seated and recite At-Tashahhud:1

At Tahiyyaatu lilaahi was Salawaatu wat tayibaatu

As Salaamu 'alaika ayyuhan nabiyyu wa rahmatul laahi wa barakaatuh

As Salaamu 'alainaa wa 'alaa 'ebaadillaahis saaliheen,

(Hands on knees, raise right forefinger:) Ash hadu allaa ilaah ilallaah

Wa ash hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhuu wa rasuuluh

All greetings, blessings and good acts are from You, my Lord.

Greetings to you, O Prophet, and the mercy and blessings of Allah.

Peace be unto us, and unto the righteous servants of Allah.

I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah.

And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

To proceed to the third rakat:

Return to standing position (Qiyam).

(While rising:) Allahu Akbar

God is the most great.

Recite the Fatiha and continue third rakat with Ruk'u....

At the end of any time of prayer (when all rakats have been completed):

Remain seated, recite At-Tashahhud, and then recite the Salawat:

Allaahumma salli 'alaa Muhammadin wa 'alaa ali Muhammadin

Kamaa sallaita 'alaa Ibraaheema wa 'alaa ali Ibraaheema

Innaka hameedun Majeed

Alaahumma baarik 'ala Muhammadin wa 'alaa ali Muhammadin

Kamaa baarakta 'alaa Ibraaheema wa 'alaa ali Ibraaheema

Innaka hameedun Majeed

O Allah, bless our Muhammad and the people of Muhammad,

as you have blessed Abraham and the people of Abraham.

Surely you are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.

O Allah, be gracious unto Muhammad and the people of Muhammad,

as you were gracious unto Abraham and the people of Abraham.

Surely you are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.

Look over right shoulder (toward the angel recording your good deeds),

then the left (toward the angel recording your wrongful deeds);

say each time:

As Salaamu 'alaikum wa rahmatulaah

Peace and blessings of God be upon you.

In my opinion there are many things we as Muslims can do to have a successful and meaningful Salah is by imagining that you are alone if you're not and that an unimaginable divine power is watching you. You can also imagine the kabah and on the left side imagine a hell , fiery and scary, and on the right imagine a paradise with everything you ever wanted in this dunia then imagine that your prayer is on the path to Paradise. Although many will not be able to reach the same level of khushu and sincerity as the Prophet(saws) and all the prophets and messengers before him we will still be able to be somewhat sincere and as the Prophet (saws) said : "indeed the actions are judged based on the intention". If your intention while you are

praying is to show others that you are a good Muslim then you are not sincere and your Salah is not meaningful, and if it is done just to make you parents stop nagging you to pray then you are not praying for Allah. And indeed Allah has his own judgement and decisions and he is All-knowing and All-Wise.