

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Salaat: Rituals and Meanings

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Session 2: Wednesday: 02 – 05 – 1429 H.Q.; 18 – 02 – 1387 H. S.; 07 – 05 – 2008

I. Rituals and Etiquettes of Salaat vs. Secrets of Salaat

1- Rituals and Etiquettes of Salaat

Some think that merely performing rituals of salaat (آداب الصلوة) such as *tahaarat* (ceremonious cleaning) and recitation are enough by themselves to understand the secrets of salaat. However, the quality of these rituals also depends on one's faith and relation with Allah (s.w.t.). For example, it has been narrated that Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "Any Muslim who recites this prayer at the time of his *wudhu* (ablution):

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ، اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

his deed will be written on paper and kept at God's throne till the Resurrection Day."

A simple physical act and recitation is not qualified to survive at the throne of God unless it is from a higher realm.

2- Some Secrets of *Tahaarat* (Ceremonious Cleaning)

Tahaarat is a condition for any worship. As Shaikh ibn Arabi says, its secret is *Tanzih* (purity and transcendence). It is spiritual and physical, related to heart and bodily organs.

Wudhu is with water and symbolizes knowledge; the purest water is rain, then water of springs and rivers. Revelation is the purest form of knowledge, but knowledge acquired by our intellect is not pure. Thus, cleaning one's soul with revelation is the best form of purification. Thus Allah (s.w.t.) says:

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ (29:45 العنكبوت)

(Recite what has been sent down to you of the book, and establish the prayer. Prayer forbids indecency and dishonor, and the remembrance of Allah is greater, and Allah knows what you do.)

3- *Salaat* as Realization of the Revelation in One's Being

Let us consider some meanings of the above verse as explained by Abdor-Razzaq Qasani:

"Recite what has been sent down to you of the book, and establish the prayer" means elaborate and realize what has been bestowed in you in compact form from the Quranic Book through revelation and the descent of the Forqanic Knowledge, and establish salaat of the Absolute according to details of your reading and knowledge. That is to say, collect together both the perfection of Knowledge and the Absolute Deed because, for you, in relation to each knowledge, there is a salaat...

Salaat of Body: Certain actions

Salaat of *Nafs*: Humbleness and remaining between hope and fear

Salaat of Heart: Presence and observance (المراقبة)

Salaat of *Sirr* (سر): Whisper and conversation (مناجات و مكالمة)

Salaat of *Ruh* (روح): Witnessing and seeing

Salaat of Khifa (خفاء): Love and Passion

And there is no *Salaat* in the seventh plain (مقام) because it is annihilation and pure love annihilated in unity; this is the end of the outward *salaat*, and its termination is with death, which is the sign of *yaqin* (certainty), as it has been understood from God's saying:

وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ (15:99 الحجر)

(Worship your Lord till the certainty (death) comes to you)

In the same way, the end of true *salaat* is complete annihilation, which is *Haqqul Yaqin*.

However, coming to being after annihilation (مقام البقاء بعد الفناء) all six forms of *salaat* will be resumed in addition to the seventh, which is the *salaat of Haqq* with love and singularity.

II. *Salaat as Miraj* (ascension)

"الصلاة معراج المؤمن"

Miraji Journey:

In the *dunia* (lower world), human beings are under the cover of the name "Ar-Rahman", and in the *akherah* (next world), under the cover the name, "Ar-Rahim". This is why the scholars of Irfan say that with "بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم" the universe comes into existence.

Hijab Insaniya as the seventh Earth

The perfect human being having:

Two Stations – *Maqaams* (مقام): 1- The Seen (شهادة) with *Rahmania* (رحمانية), and 2- The Unseen (غيب) with *Rahimiya* (رحيمية). And He is the full circle of the Being.

And in another classification, three *Maqaams*: 1- Mulek (ملك) and Dunya (دنيا), 2- Barzakh (برزخ), 3- Aql (عقل) and Akherah (آخرة)

And in a third classification, Four *Maqaams*: 1- Mulek (ملك), 2- Malkut (ملكوت), 3- Jabarut (جبروت), 4- Lahut (لاهورت)

And in a forth classification, Five *Maqaams*

And in a fifth classification, seven *Maqaams*: Seven cities of love

And in a differentiated classification, 100 or 1000 *Maqaams*

All of these *Maqaamaat* (مقامات) are present in *Salaat* one by one, which among worships (عبادات), has the status of comprehensiveness and being the pole (عمود).

- The goal of *salaat* is true *miraj* (معراج), i.e. essential annihilation in Allah (فناء ذاتي في الله), which in act, is reached in the second prostration, which is the annihilation from annihilation (فناء عن الفناء), and in recitation, is reached with *إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ* (You alone we worship) which directly addresses Allah; i.e. a sign of presence.
- The same way, in acts, raising of the head from prostration for saying *salaam* is also sign of meeting of those present, and sign of the return from the journey but with *salaamat* (recovery)

from veils of diversity and otherness, while being with God (بقاء بالحق), and in recitations, اهدنا الصراط المستقيم, refers to coming into existence (صحو) after not existing (محو).

- Salaat finishes with the *raka't* which is the essence of salaat.
- We should know that the essence and the truth of salaat is one *raka't*, other *raka'ts* of salaats that are *wajib* (obligatory) and *Mustahab* (voluntary) are to complete that one *raka't*, as stated in Hadith from Imam Reza (a.s.)

On the Presence of Heart and its Degrees

- Worship (عبادة) without attention of the heart will not be accepted.
- All worships are praises of glory of God. And the quality of the praise is always related to the manifestation of God's names and attributes.
- First, the intention must be to pray and worship as it was intended by Allah (s.w.t.) and His Holy Prophet (s.a.).
- Then, one must be paying attention, by his/her heart, to all the details of the prayer, and what is meant by them. This is not possible for anyone except for the perfect believers through God's inspiring them.
- In general, worshipers are several in rank:
 - 1- Those who only know the form of the prayers and that attention of the heart for them is only thinking of the meanings of the concepts in conventional sense.
 - 2- Those who understand them in intellectual terms.
 - 3- Those who understand those meanings with their hearts too.
 - 4- Those who witness them, in addition to being certain about what their hearts believe in, as a result of their self-discipline (رياضت). For, all the seven veils are removed as they say the opening *takbir*. And with the finishing *takbirs*, God's manifestations of glory and beauty come to them according to the state of their hearts.
 - 5- Another status in the presence of the heart is to be with the Divine. ...

How to Achieve Presence of the Heart (حضور القلب)

- First, it is necessary to treat and cure one's *nafs* (نفس) and its ills.
- The source of the presence of the heart in every worship is to perceive it as great and turn to it with one's outmost attention. Had we perceived our prayer to God as conversion with our Lord whose grace and blessing is the source of our happiness, we would have been able to achieve the presence of the heart long before. And Allah (s.w.t.) says:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ (23 : 1-2 المومنون)

(Saved are the believers those who humble themselves in their prayers)

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ (107 : 4-5 الماعون)

(So woe to the praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers)