

# Prayers – Advanced (part 1 of 2)

**Description:** The lesson will teach the “essential components” of the daily ritual prayer (*salah*) and acts that invalidate the prayer.

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## Objectives

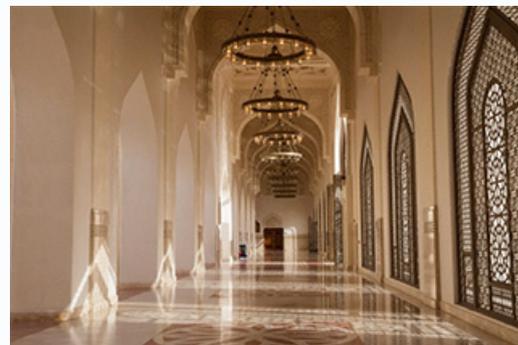
- To learn the *arkan* of *salah*.
- To learn five acts that invalidate the *salah*.

## Arabic Terms

- *Salah* - the Arabic word to denote a direct connection between the believer and Allah. More specifically, in Islam it refers to the formal five daily prayers and is the most important form of worship.
- *Rukn* - (plural: *arkan*) essential component; a pillar without which something cannot stand.
- *Qiblah*: The direction one faces during the formal prayers.
- *Surah* - chapter of the Quran.
- *Hadith* - (plural - *ahadith*) is a piece of information or a story. In Islam it is a narrative record of the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad and his companions.
- *Tashahhud* - the saying “*At-tahiy-yatu lil-lahi.... Muhammadan ‘abduhu wa rasuluh.*” in the sitting position of the prayer.
- *Wudoo* - ablution.
- *Wajib* - (plural: *wajibaat*) obligatory.

The scholars categorize different actions and sayings of the prayer into essential components (*arkan*), obligatory acts (*wajibaat*), and recommendations.

The difference between a *rukun* (essential component) and a *wajib* (obligatory act) is that a *rukun* cannot be waived, whether one omits it deliberately or by mistake, rather it must be done. A *wajib* (obligatory act) is waived if one forgets, and it can be compensated for by doing the “prostration of forgetfulness” (will be discussed later).



In this lesson we will first learn the *arkan* (essential components).

## Essential Components (*Arkan*) of *Salah*

### 1. Saying '*Allahu Akbar*' at the beginning

The Prophet said to a person who prayed incorrectly, “then face the *qiblah* and say *Allahu Akbar*.”[\[1\]](#)

### 2. Reciting *Surah al-Fatihah*

The Prophet said, “There is no prayer for someone who does not recite the Opening of the Book (*Surah al-Fatihah*).”[\[2\]](#)

### 3. Standing during obligatory prayers if one is able to do so

Based on the verse, “**and stand for Allah with devotion.**” (Quran 2:238)

Also, the Prophet said, “Pray standing; if you are not able to; pray sitting, if you are not able to; pray (while lying) on your side.”[\[3\]](#)

### 4. Bowing

This is based on the Prophet’s saying to the person who prayed incorrectly, “then be at ease until you are at ease in bowing.”[\[4\]](#)

And remaining in that position until you attain “calmness.”

Speaking about the importance of this matter, he said, “The worst people are the thieves who steal part of the prayer.” He was asked how this was done, and he replied, “He does not complete his bowings and prostrations,” or he said, “He does not straighten his back during his bowings and prostrations.”[\[5\]](#)

“The prayer of one who does not straighten his back in his bowings and prostrations is not accomplished.”[\[6\]](#)

### 5. Rising up from bowing

This is based on the *hadith*, “then rise till you are standing straight.” (Bukhari, Muslim)

### 6. Prostration

This is based on the *hadith*, “then prostrate till you are at ease in prostration.”

## **7. Sitting between the two prostrations**

This is based on the *hadith*, “then rise up till you are at ease sitting.”

## **8. Attaining calmness**

A person prayed too fast without attaining calmness. The Prophet disapproved his speed and said, “you did not pray.”

Attaining calmness means that each body part assumes the appropriate position before one moves from one position to another.

## **9. Reciting the final *tashahhud***

This will be done in the final sitting of the prayer. The words of the *tashahhud* were taught by Prophet himself. Ibn Mas’ud said, a companion of the Prophet, said, “Before it was made obligatory to say the *tashahhud*, we used to say, ‘Peace be upon Allah, and peace be upon Gabriel and Michael.’ Then the Messenger of Allah said, ‘Do not say that but say, ‘All compliments are for Allah...’”[\[7\]](#).

## **10. Sitting to recite the final *tashahhud***

This will be the final sitting of the prayer.

## **11. Sending blessings on the Prophet after the final *tashahhud***

This is to be done after reciting the final *tashahhud*.

## **12. Saying ‘*As-Salamu ‘Alaikum wa-Rahmatullah*’ to conclude the prayer**

In an obligatory prayer it has to be said twice, however in the funeral prayer it is sufficient to say it once.

## **13. Order**

All the “essential components” of salah need to be performed in the correct order.

# **Acts That Invalidate the Prayer**

There are certain acts that if done, would invalidate the prayer. What that means is that a person has to start over the prayer from the beginning.

## **1. Being certain that you broke the *wudoo***

A man complained to the Messenger of Allah about feeling something (in his abdomen) in the prayer. The Prophet said, “Do not turn away (from *salah*) unless you hear a sound or notice a smell.”[\[8\]](#)

This does not mean you only turn away from *salah* when you hear a sound or notice a

smell. As long as you are *sure* you broke wind and passed gas, your *wudoo* is broken and you must make it again and start the prayer from the beginning.

## **2. Intentionally not performing a *ruk'n* or prerequisite of prayer without a valid excuse**

This is based on the Prophet saying to the man who did not pray properly, "Go back and pray for you have not prayed."[\[9\]](#)

Similarly, the Prophet told a person who had not washed a portion of the top of his feet to repeat *wudoo* and the prayer.[\[10\]](#)

## **3. Intentionally eating or drinking during prayer**

Muslim scholars agree that a person who eats or drinks intentionally during a prayer must repeat it.

## **4. Intentionally speaking during the prayer**

The Companions Zaid ibn al-Arqam said, "We used to speak during the prayer. A person would speak to the person on his side during the prayer. This was until, 'Stand before Allah with obedience.'(2:238) was revealed. We were then ordered to remain silent and forbidden to speak."[\[11\]](#)

## **5. Laughing during the prayer.**

Muslim scholars agree that laughing invalidates the prayer.

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Endnotes:

[\[1\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[\[2\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[\[3\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[\[4\]](#) *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[\[5\]](#) *Hakim*

[\[6\]](#) *Ibn Khuzaimah, Ibn Hibban, Tabarani, Baihaqi*

[\[7\]](#) *Nasai*

[8] Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud

[9] Bukhari, Muslim

[10] Abu Daud

[11] Bukhari, Muslim

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