

TAHSEEN SOLAT (IMPROVING PRAYERS)
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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَىٰ الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَىٰ
سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنْقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

Let us all increase our devotion towards Allah the Almighty by performing all that He has decreed and abstaining from all that He has prohibited. Hopefully, we will be forgiven in this world and in the Hereafter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On this glorious Friday, let us reflect on a very important matter in our lives as Muslims, which is *tahseen solat* (improving prayers). *Tahseen solat* means fixing, perfecting and improving the quality of prayer so that it is performed impeccably, in a *khushu'* (complete devotion) state that fulfills all the pillars and conditions that have been set by the *Sharia* (Islamic law). It includes aspects of recitation, movement, intention, as well as the presence of the heart.

Why is *tahseen solat* so important? Because *solat* (obligatory prayer) is the pillar of Islamic religion and worship that will be counted first on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (peace be upon him [PBUH]) said in a *hadith* narrated by Imam At-Tirmizi:

أَوَّلُ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ الصَّلَاةُ، فَإِنْ صَلَّحَتْ، صَلَّحَ سَائِرُ عَمَلِهِ، وَإِنْ فَسَدَتْ، فَسَدَ سَائِرُ عَمَلِهِ

Which means: “*The first of his actions for which a servant of Allah will be held accountable on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayers. If they are in order, then he will have prospered and succeeded: and if they are wanting, then he will have failed and lost.*”

This *hadith* tells us that only perfect *solat* will be accepted and save us in the afterlife. On the other hand, if our *solat* is not done properly or is of poor quality, then all our other practices are affected and become useless. So, the condition to be successful in the afterlife is to perform the *solat* perfectly by performing it on time, making sure the recitation is correct and the movement is in accordance with the Prophet’s (PBUH) teaching and performed with *khushu’* (complete devotion).

Allah the Almighty says in the Quran in Chapter 2 (*Surah Al-Baqarah*) verse (*ayat*) 238:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
حُفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوَسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ۚ ۲۳۸

Which means: “*Take care to do your prayers, praying in the best way, and stand before Allah in devotion.*”

Khushu’ (complete devotion) in *solat* is crucial. *Khushu’* means presence of heart and full focus on Allah the Almighty when we perform *solat*. He says in the Quran in Chapter 23 (*Surah Al-Mu’minun*) verses (*ayat*) 1 to 2:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۱ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ۲

Which means: “[How] prosperous are the believers! Those who pray humbly,”

Khushu’ in *solat* is not easily achieved without effort and practice. We need to empty our hearts from worldly things, and present a sense of fear and love for Allah in every movement and recitation of *solat*.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A good and perfect *solat* starts before the *solat* is performed. The ablution we take must be valid. Then we must perfect our intention before prayer by ensuring that it is done solely for the sake of Allah the Almighty and avoid *riya*’ (showing off) or the desire to be praised by others. Allah the Almighty says in the Quran in Chapter 107 (*Surah Al-Ma’un*) verses (*ayat*) 4 to 6:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ۣ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ۝ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ۥ

Which means: “So woe to those who pray but are heedless of their prayer; those who are all show”

In *solat*, there are 13 pillars in total including the *qalbi* pillars which involve the heart, the *qauli* pillars which include recitation and pronunciation, and the *fi'li* pillars which are related to movement or action. If any of the pillars are missing or performed incorrectly, then our *solat* is invalid. For this reason, we must have deep knowledge and understanding about the intricacies of *solat* that conforms to the Islamic *Sharia* according to Imam Shafie's School of Thought.

Many people may overlook some common mistakes that make their *solat* invalid. For example, not vocalizing "Allahu Akbar" when performing *takbiratul ihram*. The vocalization of *takbiratul ihram*, "Allahu Akbar" should be heard by one's own ears; it is not enough only in the heart. Similarly, many people do not care to correct the recitation of *Surah Al-Fatihah* (the Opening Chapter of the Quran). Some read it so fast that the *makhraj* and *tajweed* are not accurate. There are also those who do not recite the *tahiyyat* correctly or give *salam* by simply turning their heads to the right and left, but the *salam* is not vocalized.

In terms of movement, various mistakes are often made such as not standing properly, swinging arms during *solat*, not bowing and prostrating properly and not pausing between one movement to the next (*tuma'ninah*). This is described by the Prophet (PBUH) as stealing in prayer. In a *hadith* narrated by Imam Ahmad, he said:

Which means: "The one who commits the worst theft is he who steals from his prayer." When asked how one could steal from his prayer he replied, "By not performing his bowing and his prostration perfectly."

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Performing a perfect *solat* requires knowledge. So, we must learn the *Fiqh* of *Solat* to improve our *solat* so that it is accepted by Allah the Almighty and as a result, our *solat* becomes a fortress that prevents us from committing heinous and evil deeds.

To conclude today's sermon, we should understand that:

First, ensure that the 13 pillars of *solat* including the *qalbi* pillars, the *qauli* pillars and the *fi'li* pillars are implemented perfectly.

Second, follow the *sunnah* and stay away from practices that are *makruh* (not encouraged) and can nullify the *solat*.

Third, only the perfect *solat* will be accepted by Allah the Almighty and that *solat* will protect us from committing evil deeds.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
أَتْلُ مَا أُوْحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمُ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ
يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ٤٥

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْفُرْءَانِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي
وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.