

In the name of Allah the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and all it contains and may His blessings be upon the Final Messenger Mohammad (saw).

Honourable brothers and sisters

Islam has given the Salah a great importance. it's the second pillar of Islam. So after you testify to the fact of Al-Islam then the next pillar is the Salah.

The Messenger (saw) said

“Islam has been built on five [pillars]: testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship except for Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing the prayers, paying the Zakah, making the pilgrimage to the House, and fasting in Ramadan.”

Bukhari and Muslim.

The Salah is the first thing that Allah will question the slave on, on the day of Judgement.

The Messenger (saw) said

“The first of man's deeds for which he will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection will be Salat. If it's found to be perfect, he will be safe and successful; but if it is incomplete, he will be unfortunate and a loser.”

At-Tirmidhi

The Salah is the greatest barrier between the slave and committing sin

As Allah High and Mighty states

“Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing,”

Translation of Al-Ankabut 45

The Salah holds such a great importance that it was one of the reminders that the Nabi Mohammad (saw) was reminding us of in his death bed.

It was reported from Ali ibnu Abi Talib (RA) that the last words which the Messenger (saw) spoke were:

“Salah, Salah, fear Allah about those whom your right hands possess.”

Sunan Abi-Dawud,

The Salah is also a way of ridding oneself from the burdens of sin as Allah the Oft forgiving States,

“And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember.”

Translation of Hud 114

And the honoured Messenger (saw) said in a Hadith reported by Abu Hurraira (RA)

"Do you think that if there was a river by the door of any one of you, and he bathed in it five times each day, would there be any trace of dirt left on him?" They said: "No trace of dirt would be left on him." He said: "That is the likeness of the five daily prayers. By means of them Allah erases sins."

An-Nisa'i

The Salah is a light for the one with true faith.

Abu Malik Al-Ash'ari (may Allah be pleased with him) reported:

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Purity is half of iman (faith). ‘Al-hamdu lillah (all praise and gratitude belong to Allah)’ fills the scales, and ‘Subhan-Allah (how far is Allah from every imperfection) and ‘Al-hamdulillah (all praise and gratitude belong to Allah)’ fill that which is between heaven and earth.”

Sahih Muslim

The believer who has true faith, with his performing of the Salah, fasting and paying of the zakat will attain the rank of the martyrs and the truthful.

Talha ibn 'Ubaydallah (radhiallahu `anhu) reported that two men came to the Prophet (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) who had accepted Islam at the same time. One of them used to partake in Jihad more-so than the other, and so (one day) he fought in a battle and was martyred. The other remained behind him for another year, and then he passed away.

Talha said, 'I saw in my dream that I was at the door of Paradise when behold, I was with both of them (the two men). Someone came out of Paradise and allowed the man who passed away later to enter first. Then he came out again and allowed the martyred one to enter. Then he returned and said to me, 'Go back, for your time has not come yet.'

Talha woke up and began to inform others about this and they were all surprised. This reached the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) and when they informed him of it, he said:

'What are you surprised about?' They said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Out of them both, this one strove harder (in Jihad) then he was martyred but this other one was entered into Paradise before him.' The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, 'Did he not remain behind him for one year?' They said, 'Yes (he did).' He said, 'Did he not reach Ramadan, fast and pray with such and such number of prostrations in the year?' They said, 'Yes.' The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, 'So the difference between them is greater than what is between the heavens and the earth.'

Sahih narration from Ibn Majah (2/345, 346) and al-Albani's 'al-Silsilah al-Sahihah'

Rabi'a b. Ka'b said:

I was with Allah's Messenger (saw) one night. and I brought him water and what he required. He said to me: Ask (anything you like). I said: I ask your company in Paradise. He (the Messenger saw) said: Or anything else besides it. I said: That is all (what I require). He said: Then help me to achieve this for you by devoting yourself often to prostration.

Sahih Muslim

Because of the importance of the Salah, the Scholars are all in agreement that whoever does not offer the Salah and denies its importance then that person would become a kaafir (desbeliever).

A question arises here on the state of the one who believes that it's compulsory to offer the Salah but does not offer it out of laziness, what is his state?

Imam Abu Hanifa (R) said that, this person is not a kaafir but he has to be imprisoned until he starts to offer it again.

Imam Malik and Imam Shafi'I are of the belief that he is not a kaafir but he should be killed as a muslim because of neglecting the salah all together.

Imam Ahmed is on the belief that the person still becomes a murtadd (apostate) and that he should be killed.

These are the evidences.

Allah High and Mighty states

“But if they repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, then they are your brothers in religion; and We detail the verses for a people who know.”

At-Tawba 11

So the Salah is the defining difference between a Muslim and a kaafir and not offering the Salah because of laziness is a sign of nifaq (hypocrisy) and a munafiq is a kaafir.

Allah All Knowing States

“Indeed, the hypocrites [think to] deceive Allah, but He is deceiving them. And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allah except a little,”

Translation of An-Nisa 142

The Messenger (saw) said

“Between man and polytheism (shirk) and disbelief (kufr) is the abandonment of the Salah”

Sahih Muslim

He (saw) also said

“The covenant that stands between us and them is the Salah (them being the disbelievers) so whoever abandons it he has committed disbelief”

Sunan An-Nisa'i

It was reported that Abdullah Shaqiq said

The companions of the Messenger (saw) were of the belief that the abandonment of no other deed was kufr except for the Salah.

Honourable guests, you have heard all the evidences on how important this pillar of Islam is. Know that there is no excuse of laziness or any other excuse for that matter on not offering the Salah.

Honourable guests, the month of Ramadan is the month of forgiveness and the month of returning to seek the Face and Pleasure of Allah. It's the month wherein the burdens and shackles of sin are shed and broken. Let us all take advantage of this great opportunity and use it to return to Allah and His forgiveness and pleasure. Then we can have hope that Allah Jalla Wa'ala will turn our hearts to His deen and establish us upon it, Beithnillahi Ta'ala.

And Allah ultimately knows best.