

ALI 332: Islam 101 for Reverts – Session 4

Let us never miss our prayers: In the Holy Quran we read: *In the Gardens they will ask one another * About the Sinners: * “What led you into Hell Fire?” * They will say: “We were not of those who prayed.”* (Q 74: 40 – 43) And in a Hadith we have been advised: Three kinds of people, even if they were Muslims, would not be greeted, given daughters in marriage and taken as partners in business. These are: *tāriku salāt*, *shāribul khamr* (those who consume alcohol) and *lā’ibul qimār* (those who gamble). The Holy Prophet (s) said: *between faith and disbelief lies the abandoning of prayers.*

Ensure that we take our prayers seriously. The Holy Prophet (s) said: *He is not from me he who takes his prayer lightly, he would not return to me at the Hawdh (i.e. spring in Paradise), no by God he would not.* Examples of taking salāt lightly: i) Not concerned about the prerequisites (najāsāt, wudhū, clothes) ii) Delaying prayers from its specified time. When planning your meetings, work schedules, travel, sports & other activities salāt should not be overlooked. The Holy Prophet (s) said: *the best deed with Allah is to say prayers on time.* One of the wives of the Prophet narrates: The Messenger of God like to be with his family, socialize and talk with them. But once the time Salāt arrived he would be as if he is no longer with us. (Therefore, put off your mobile phone, keep your children and other chores aside and give quality time to communicate with God). (iii) Praying with limbs and not with heart & mind. Presence of heart and mind at the time of prayers is a must to achieve spiritual benefits and to worship the Almighty effectively.

How to Concentrate in Salāt? Here are a few points: (i) learn the meanings of recitation and bring these to mind when saying your prayers. (ii) Get to your prayer mat early and sit to recite Holy Quran or reflect on how best to do divine worship. (iii) Do not haste when saying prayers, as if you would like it get over the burden. Rather, prayers is a time to be intimate with the Creator and achieve nearness to His Kindness, Mercy & Grace. So give your quality time; (iv) Say prayers as an act of obedience to Allah (swt) and to offer your servitude. Otherwise, it would be a simple routine that people perform. The Prophet (s) has said: *Waste not your prayers for, surely he who wastes them will be raised with Qarūn & Hamān. Thus it is appropriate for God to put him with the hypocrites;* (v) Say your salāt as if it is the last prayer of your life. This is what we have been advised in Hadith; (vi) After Sūratul Hamd, assign specific sūras for each rak‘ah (unit) – e.g. al-Ikhlās in the first unit, al-Qadr in the second unit. Also, recite different dhikr in rukū‘ and sajdah.

Useful Resources on improving the quality of our salāt:

- 1) *Seeking Light - A short treatise on the secrets of Wudhū* by Sh Muhammad Khalfan
- 2) *Soaring unto the Lord* by Sh Muhammad Khalfan
- 3) *Adaab and Du’ās for Daily Routine* by Tayyiba Publishers
- 4) *101 Ways to Concentrate in Prayers* by Dr Ali al-Hilli
- 5) *Concentration in Prayers - 25 Strategies* by Dr Jameel Kermalli