

***Ṣalāh***  
**according to Al-Qur'ān**

Compiled by  
Ahmed Yousuf Moosa

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## **Ṣalāh according to Al-Qur'ān**

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**A note on the use of Qur’anic pronouns  
in reference to Allāh:**

Western critics of the Qur’ān frequently point to the allegedly “incoherent” references to Allāh – often in one and the same phrase – as “He”, “Allāh”, “We” or “I”, with the corresponding changes of the pronoun from “His” to “Ours” or “My”, or from “Him” to “Us” or “Me”. These critics seem to be unaware that these changes are not accidental, and not even what one might describe as poetic licence, but are obviously deliberate, a linguistic device meant to stress the idea that Allāh is not a person and cannot, therefore, be really circumscribed by the pronouns applicable to finite beings.

**A note on the Arabic term *āyāt*:**

The term *āyāt* (singular *āyah*), mentioned often in Al-Qur’ān, has many meanings, including the following: proofs, evidence, signs, lessons, revelations and verses.

# Introduction

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This book presents what Al-Qur’ān itself says about *ṣalāh*. The Qur’anic verses explain the reasons for *ṣalāh*, *ṣalāh* times, postures and number of circuits (*raka`āt*), ablution before *ṣalāh*, being attentive and humble in *ṣalāh*, what and how to recite Al-Qur’ān during *ṣalāh*, and much more.

## Understanding Qur’anic verses

When studying Qur’anic verses, we are aware that it is Allāh Himself who will provide the best *tafsīr* of His verses, through His verses themselves. We use *taṣrīf*, and the Law of Interpretation (within verse 3:7), as used and explained in Al-Qur’ān. This safeguards us from making false conclusions or conclusions based on our own opinions. Instead, our understandings of the verses are guided and regulated by Al-Qur’ān itself.

### ***Tafsīr*: Explanation and interpretation of Al-Qur’ān**

*Tafsīr* means best explanation, expounding and interpretation. The word *tafsīr* appears only once in the entire Qur’ān, where we are told that it is Allāh who will explain the Qur’ān:

[25:33]

And no question do they bring to thee (*i.e.* Muḥammad<sup>1</sup>) but **We (*i.e.* Allāh) reveal to thee (*i.e.* Muḥammad) the Truth and the best explanation (*aḥsan al-tafsīr*) (thereof).**

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<sup>1</sup> [37:181] “And peace on all the Messengers!”

Allāh has already placed peace on all His messengers – there is no distinction among His messengers, as stated in [2:136], [3:84], [2:285] and [4:150–152].

The Qur'anic Arabic words *aḥsan al-tafsīr* at the end of the above verse are *al-ḥaqq* (the Absolute Truth). If one accepts and uses books other than the Qur'anic verses as *tafsīr*, it is a clear violation of the revelation of the above verse.<sup>2</sup>

### **Taṣrīf**

Allāh provides His *tafsīr* through the method of *taṣrīf*, i.e. by repeating the same point in various ways and in different verses:

[17:41]

**We (Allāh) have explained (things) in various (ways) (ṣarrafnā) in this Qur'ān**, in order that they may receive admonition, but it only increases their flight (from the Truth)!

[18:54]

**We (Allāh) have explained in detail (ṣarrafnā) in this Qur'ān** for the benefit of mankind, every kind of similitude: but man is, more than anything, contentious.

[11:1]

*Alīf. Lām. Rā.* (This is) a Book (Qur'ān), with verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning), **further explained in detail**, – **from One Who is Wise (Allāh)** and well-acquainted (with all things):

The term *ṣarrafnā*, used in the verses above, is derived from the same root word as *taṣrīf*.

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<sup>2</sup> See note on the Qur'anic meaning of *ḥadīth* and *sunnah* on p. 9.

## Law of Interpretation of Al-Qur'ān

The following verse contains the Law that guides Qur'anic interpretation:

[3:7]

He (i.e. Allāh) it is Who has revealed the Book (i.e. Al-Qur'ān) to you, some of its verses are ***muḥkamāt*** (absolutely clear and lucid, decisive); they are ***umm al-Kitāb*** (the core of the original foundation of all revelation; the Essence of Allāh's Will and Law; the basis of the Book and also its protector, hence the "mother of the Book"); and others are ***mutashābihāt*** (allegorical). Then those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead and seeking to give it (their own) interpretation (i.e. one is not searching for its hidden meanings). And ***mā ya'lamu*** (none can exhaust its) ***ta'wīlahu*** (the discovering, detecting, revealing, developing or disclosing, or the explaining, expounding or interpreting of which a thing is or may be deduced, or that which it may come to be, within the framework of the Qur'anic teachings) save Allāh. And those firmly rooted in knowledge, they say – "we believe in IT (i.e. Al-Qur'ān), it is all from our *Rabb*." And none will grasp the message except people of understanding.

The verse states that there are two types of verses in the Qur'ān, decisive and allegorical. The former is expressed in clear and unambiguous language. It is the foundation of the Book. It is also called the Mother of the Book, protecting it, like a mother protects a child, against erroneous translation. The decisive verses contain information with established truths

that are consistent with the laws of creation, for example that no human being is exempt from death,<sup>3</sup> the spherical shape of the Earth,<sup>4</sup> the expanding universe,<sup>5</sup> and so on.

The allegorical verses are ambiguous and susceptible to different interpretations, but must be evaluated and understood subject to the decisive passages as dictated by the rule of interpretation. Allegorical verses are those that cannot be explained in a tangible manner. For example, descriptions of Allāh as all-seeing and all-hearing have nothing to do with physical hearing and sight, but convey the idea of Allāh's eternal presence and awareness of all.<sup>6</sup> Since the Qur'ān is meant for all time, it will contain truths or concepts that will gradually unfold themselves to humanity.<sup>7</sup> While undiscovered, it would be difficult to interpret such information. These would also be defined as allegorical. It follows that what may be regarded as allegorical today will become decisive tomorrow

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<sup>3</sup> For example: [21:34–35] “We (Allāh) granted not to any man before thee permanent life (here): if then thou shouldst die, would they live permanently? Every *nāfs* (soul) shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial. To Us (Allāh) must ye return.”

<sup>4</sup> For example: [39:5] “He (Allāh) created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night: He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law): Each one follows a course for a time appointed. Is not He the Exalted in Power – He Who forgives again and again?”

<sup>5</sup> For example: [51:47] “With power and skill did We (Allāh) construct the Firmament: for it is We Who create the vastness of space.”

<sup>6</sup> [6:103] “No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He (Allāh) is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things.” (Cf. [21:4], [2:284], [6:59], [34:3] and [10:61], not quoted.)

<sup>7</sup> [38:88] “And ye shall certainly know the truth of it (all) after a while.”



as knowledge improves and new discoveries are made.<sup>8</sup> The rule laid down in [3:7] is a safeguard against attaching irrational meanings to such verses.

Another important point to keep in mind at all times is that all the verses pertaining to the Hereafter are *mutashābihāt* (allegorical verses). They will become *muḥkamāt* (decisive) only in the Hereafter.

The Law of Interpretation of the Arabic Glorious Qur’ān, as explained above, outlines a system of using only decisive facts as a guideline for interpreting allegorical verses. Such a system clearly rules out any room for nonsensical-untruths. The fact that such a system is laid out in the Arabic Glorious Qur’ān by itself bears witness to the divine nature of the Arabic Glorious Qur’ān!

## ***Ḥadīth and sunnah***

This book does not quote any traditional *ḥadīth* related to *ṣalāh*. Rather, it is concerned only with the relevant Qur’anic verses.

Note that Al-Qur’ān does not use the terms *ḥadīth* and *sunnah* in the way that most use them today. In Al-Qur’ān, nowhere does the word *ḥadīth* refer to the sayings and practices of Muḥammad ﷺ. The word *ḥadīth* is defined clearly in Al-Qur’ān as the Book of Allāh in [39:23], [45:6–10], [68:44], [18:6], [56:80–82] and as narrations in Al-Qur’ān. All other *ḥadīth* are idle tales [31:6].

Here is the list of verses where the word *ḥadīth* is used in Al-Qur’ān: [4:140]; [6:68]; [7:185]; [18:6]; [20:9]; [31:6]; [33:53]; [39:23]; [45:6];

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<sup>8</sup> Examples of knowledge contained in verses, where the knowledge was discovered many centuries after the verses were revealed: [21:30], [51:47], [23:12–14], [75:38–39], [21:33], etc.

[51:24]; [52:34]; [53:59]; [56:81]; [68:44]; [77:50]; [79:15]; [85:17]; [88:1]; [4:42]; [4:78]; [4:87]; [12:111]; [66:3]; [12:6]; [12:21]; [12:101]; [23:44]; [34:19] Total: 28 times

Example in which the word *ḥadīth* refers to Al-Qur'ān itself:

[39:23]

Allāh has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful Message (*ḥadīth*) in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, (yet) repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their *Rabb* (Lord) tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of Allāh's praises. Such is the guidance of Allāh: He guides therewith whom He pleases, but such as Allah leaves to stray, can have none to guide.

The word *sunnah* appears 14 times in nine verses in Al-Qur'ān. Nowhere in Al-Qur'ān is *sunnah* referred to as Muhammad's sayings and practices. The word *sunnah* means: the ways/actions of Allāh!

The references for the word *sunnah* in Al-Qur'ān are:

[8:38]; [15:13]; [17:77 (2)]; [18:55]; [33:38]; [33:62 (2)]; [35:43 (3)]; [48:23 (2)]; [40:85] Total: 14 times

Example in which the word *sunnah* refers to Allāh's way (the word *sunnah* appears thrice in this verse):

[35:43]

On account of their arrogance in the land and their plotting of evil, but the plotting of evil will hem in only the authors thereof. Now are they but looking for the

way (*sunnah*) the ancients were dealt with? **But no change wilt thou find in Allāh's way (*sunnah*) (of dealing): no turning off wilt thou find in Allāh's way (*sunnah*) (of dealing).**

# 1. Qur'anic verses with the word *ṣalāh*

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There are Qur'anic verses related to *ṣalāh* in which the word *ṣalāh* is used. There are also verses where the word *ṣalāh* is not used but which also clearly relate to *ṣalāh* when read in context. This section presents all the verses in Al-Qur'ān in which the word *ṣalāh* specifically appears. The word appears in the Qur'ān 75 times, sometimes more than once in a verse. (Comments in the ensuing sections of this book have references to these verses. Readers may refer to this section for the full quotes as necessary.)

The verses in which the word *ṣalāh* is used:

[2:3]

Who believe in the unseen (*al-ghayb*), **are steadfast in *ṣalāh* (prayer)**, and spend out of what We (Allāh) have provided for them;

[2:43]

And **be steadfast in *ṣalāh* (prayer)**; practise *zakāh* (regular charity); and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship).

[2:45]

Nay, seek (Allāh's) help with **patient perseverance and *ṣalāh* (prayer)**: it is indeed hard, except for the humbly submissive (to Allāh)

[2:83]

And remember We (Allāh) took a covenant from the Banī Isrā'īl (Children of Israel) (to this effect): worship none but Allāh; treat with kindness your parents and

kindred, and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people; **be steadfast in *ṣalāh* (prayer)**; and practise *zakāh* (regular charity). Then did ye turn back, except a few among you, and ye backslide (even now).

[2:110]

And **be steadfast (*aqīmū*) in *ṣalāh* (prayer)** and *zakāh* (regular in charity): and whatever good ye send forth for your selves (*anfusikum*) before you, ye shall find it with Allāh: for Allāh sees well all that ye do.

[2:153]

O ye who believe! **Seek help with patient perseverance and *ṣalāh* (prayer)**; for Allāh is with those who patiently persevere.

[2:177]

... to **be steadfast in *ṣalāh* (prayer)**, and *zakāh* (practice regular charity); to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allāh-fearing.

[2:238]

**Guard strictly your (habit of) ṣalāh (prayers), especially the ṣalātu l-wuṣṭā<sup>9</sup> (best ṣalāh); and stand before Allāh in a devout (frame of mind).**

[2:277]

Those who believe, and do deeds of righteousness, and **establish (wa aqāmu) ṣalāh (regular prayers) and zakāh (regular charity), will have their reward with their Rabb<sup>10</sup> (Lord): on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.**

[4:43]

**O ye who believe! Approach not ṣalāh (prayers) with a mind befogged (sukārā)<sup>11</sup>, until ye can understand**

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<sup>9</sup> *Ṣalāt ul-wuṣṭā*: Many translators have translated it as “middle prayer”. (This *ṣalāh* can only be the *Jumu`ah ṣalāh*. It is the only *ṣalāh* specifically mentioned in [62:9]). That and its following verse indicate the importance of *ṣalāh* and that it takes place during the daytime, as the command is to leave off all work and trading to rush towards the *masjid* and that once the *Jumu`ah ṣalāh* is completed, one can go back to one’s mundane work.

[6:92] “And This (Qur’ān) is a Book which We (Allāh) have sent down, bringing blessings, and confirming (the Revelations) which came before IT: that thou (Muḥammad) mayest warn the Mother of Cities (Makkah) and all around her. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in This (Qur’ān), and they are constant in guarding their *ṣalāh* (prayers).

<sup>10</sup> *Rabb*, referring to Allāh, means “the One who evolves things”. No such word existed in any other language at the time of the inception of the Qur’ān. “Evolution” is a word that was coined in the English language only in the 17th century. According to ar-Rāghib al-Isfahān, in his *Mufradāt alfāz al-Qur’ān*, *Rabb* means “The One who fosters a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion.” The attribute *Rabb* appears about one thousand times in Al-Qur’ān, more than any other attribute of the Creator. Everything went through a process of creation, and there is no change in the process of creation ([30:30], [67:3-4], [21:30] not quoted.) Please note that the word has different meanings when it does not refer to the Creator.

<sup>11</sup> One should be conscious of Allāh when performing *ṣalāh*. *Sukārā* (when the mind is not properly concentrating) is different from *khamr* [5:91], which means in a state of drunkenness, intoxicants, drugs etc.

**all that ye say**, – nor in a state of ceremonial impurity (except when travelling on the road), until after washing your whole body. ...

[4:77]

Hast thou not turned thy vision to those who were told to hold back their hands (from fight) but **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayers)** and spend in regular *zakāh* (charity)? ...

[4:101]

When ye travel through the earth, there is **no blame on you if ye shorten your *ṣalāh* (prayers)**, for fear the unbelievers may attack you: for the unbelievers are unto you open enemies.

[4:102]

When thou (O Messenger) art with them, and standest to **lead them in *ṣalāh* (prayer)**, let one party of them stand up (in *ṣalāh*) with thee (Muḥammad), taking their arms with them: when they finish their prostrations, let them take their position in the rear: and let the other party come up **which hath not yet prayed (*lam yuṣallū*) – and let them pray (*fa-yuṣallū*) with thee** (Muḥammad), taking all precaution, and bearing arms: the unbelievers wish, if ye were negligent of your arms and your baggage, to assault you in a single rush. But there is no blame on you if ye put away your arms because of the inconvenience of rain or because ye are ill; but take (every) precaution for yourselves; for the unbelievers Allāh hath prepared a humiliating punishment.

[4:103]

When ye pass **(congregational) ṣalāh (prayers)**, celebrate Allāh's praises, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides; but when ye are free from danger, **set up (fa'aqīmū) regular ṣalāh (prayers)**: For **such ṣalāh (prayers) are enjoined** on believers at (*mawqūtan*) stated times.<sup>12</sup>

[4:142]

The **hypocrites** – they think they are over-reaching Allāh, but He (Allāh) will over-reach them: when they **stand up to ṣalāh (prayer)**, they stand **without earnestness**, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allāh in remembrance;

[4:162]

But those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and the believers, believe in what hath been revealed to thee (Muḥammad) and what was revealed before thee: and (especially) **those who establish regular ṣalāh (prayer)** and practise regular *zakāh* (charity) and believe in Allāh and in the last Day: to them shall We (Allāh) soon give a great reward.

[5:6]

O ye who believe! **When ye prepare for ṣalāh (prayer)**, (*faghsilū*) **wash** your faces, and your hands

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<sup>12</sup> Ṣalāh is mentioned three times in this one verse: congregational, regular, and stated or fixed times. See Section 4 for the set times for ṣalāh.



(and arms) to the elbows; (*wamsaḥū*) **rub** your heads (with water); and (wipe) your feet to the ankles<sup>13</sup>. ...

[5:12]

Allāh did aforetime take a **covenant from the Children of Isrā'īl**, and We (Allāh) appointed twelve captains among them. And Allāh said: "I (Allāh) am with you: if ye (but) **establish regular ṣalāh (prayers)**, practise regular *zakāh* (charity), believe in my messengers, honour and assist them, and loan to Allāh a beautiful loan, verily I (Allāh) will wipe out from you your evils, and admit you to gardens with rivers flowing beneath; but if any of you, after this, resisteth faith, he hath truly wandered from the path or rectitude.

[5:55]

Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allāh, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers, – those who **establish regular ṣalāh (prayers)** and regular *zakāh* (charity), and they bow (*rāki`ūn*) down humbly (in worship).

[5:58]

**When ye proclaim your call (*nādaytum*)<sup>14</sup> to ṣalāh (prayer)** they take it (but) as mockery and sport that is because they are a people without understanding.

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<sup>13</sup> The verse describes the method of ablution (*wuḍū* – common usage) before performing *ṣalāh*.

[5:91]

Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants (*khamr*) and gambling, and hinder you from **the *dhikr* (remembrance) of Allāh, and from ṣalāh (prayer):** will ye not then abstain?<sup>15</sup>

[5:106]

O ye who believe! when death approaches any of you, (take) witnesses among yourselves when making bequests, – two just men of your own (brotherhood) or others from outside if ye are journeying through the earth, and the chance of death befalls you (thus). If ye doubt (their truth), **detain them both after ṣalāh (prayer),** and let them both swear by Allāh: ‘we wish not in this for any worldly gain, even though the (beneficiary) be our near relation: we shall hide not the evidence before Allāh. If we do, then behold! the sin be upon us!

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<sup>14</sup> *Adhān* and *nāday* are different words used differently in Al-Qur'ān. While we use the word *adhān* to refer to the call to prayer, the word used for the call to prayer in [5:58] above and in [62:9] is *nāday*.

*Adhān* means to announce/announcement, as used in [9:3] and [12:70]:

[9:3] “And an announcement (*adhān*) from Allāh and His Messenger, to the people (assembled) on the day of the Great Pilgrimage, – that Allāh and His Messenger dissolve (treaty) obligations with the Pagans. If then, ye repent, it were best for you; but if ye turn away, know ye that ye cannot frustrate Allāh. And proclaim a grievous penalty to those who reject Faith.”

[12:70] “At length when he had furnished them forth with provisions (suitable) for them, he put the drinking cup into his brother's saddle-bag. Then shouted out a crier (*adhdhana mu'adhdhin*): ‘O ye (in) the caravan! behold! ye are thieves, without doubt’ ”

<sup>15</sup> Cf. [38:1] and [15:9], where Al-Qur'ān is referred to as *dhikr*.

[6:72]

To establish (*aqīmū*) regular *ṣalāh* (prayers) and to fear Allāh: for it is to Him (Allāh) that we shall be gathered together.”<sup>16</sup>

[6:162]

Say: “Truly, my *ṣalāh* (prayer) and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allāh, the *Rabb* (Cherisher and Sustainer) of the Worlds:”

[7:170]

As to those who hold fast<sup>17</sup> by the Book and (*aqīmū*) establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer), – never shall We (Allāh) suffer the reward of the righteous to perish.

[8:3]

Who establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayers) and spend (freely) out of the gifts We (Allāh) have given them for sustenance:

[8:35]

Their (the unbelievers) *ṣalāh* (prayer) at the House (of Allāh) is nothing but whistling and clapping of hands: (its only answer can be), “taste ye the penalty because ye blasphemed.”

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. [3:9] “Our *Rabb* (Lord)! Thou art He (Allāh) that will gather mankind together against a day about which there is no doubt; for Allāh never fails in His promise.”

<sup>17</sup> [3:103] “And hold fast, all together, by the rope (Al-Qur’ān) which Allāh (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; ... Thus doth Allāh make His Signs Clear to you so that ye may be guided.” (Cf. [43:43-44], [19:12], [28:85–86], [42:52], [33:2] and [12:108], not quoted.)

[9:5]

But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and **establish regular ṣalāh (prayers)** and practise regular *zakāh* (charity), then open the way for them: for Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.<sup>18</sup>

[9:11]

But (even so), if they repent, **establish regular ṣalāh (prayers)**, and practise regular *zakāh*<sup>19</sup> (charity), – they

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<sup>18</sup> It is very important to read the verse in context. [9:1–19]: Muḥammad had made a number of peace treaties with (many) different tribes in Arabia, as is evident in the verses. Some tribes broke the treaties and others adhered to the treaties. The order to “fight and slay the pagans” refers to those tribes who broke the treaties, and not to those tribes who adhered to the treaties. [9:4]: “(But the treaties are) not dissolved with those pagans with whom ye have entered into alliance and who have not subsequently failed you in aught, nor aided any one against you. So fulfil your engagements with them (pagans) to the end of their term, for Allāh loves the Righteous.” [9:6]: “If one amongst the pagans asks thee for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of Allāh, and then escort him to where he can be secure. That is because they are men without knowledge.”

<sup>19</sup> Most people misunderstand this verse. They think that Muḥammad forced the pagans to perform *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh*, which is not true. When the narration is read in context [9:1–19], it becomes clear that quite a number of treaties were concluded with the various tribes. We can clearly deduce there were certain clauses specific to the different tribes. In verse [9:5], it is clear that a few tribe/s (not all) attacked the Muslims and thereby violated the treaty/treaties. In [9:1–3], those pagans who broke the treaties were given immunity for four months (this was announced by Muḥammad on the Day of Ḥajj) to put things right as per their treaty, or face the consequences. If after four months they still continued to break the treaty by attacking the Muslims, then the Muslims were given permission to fight back. The ones that had to perform *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh* can refer to those mentioned in [8:35, not quoted]. They did perform “their kind of *ṣalāh*” (clapping hands, etc.), which in the mutual treaty must have been specifically excluded. They must have agreed to perform *ṣalāh* as the believers performed it and to pay *zakāh* as per the treaty. That is why the following words in [9:11]: “But (even so), if they repent, establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayers), and practise regular *zakāh* (charity), – they are your brethren in faith (*dīn*):”

are your brethren in faith (in *dīn*): (thus) do We (Allāh) explain the *āyāt* (signs, proofs, evidence, Revelation, verses) in detail, for those who understand.

[9:18]

The *masājid* of Allāh shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in Allāh and the Last Day, **establish regular (*aqāma*) *ṣalāh* (prayers)**, and practise regular *zakāh* (charity), and fear none (at all) except Allāh. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance.

[9:54]

The only reasons why their (**the hypocrites**) contributions are not accepted are: that they reject Allāh and His Messenger; that they **come to *ṣalāh* (prayer) without earnestness**; and that they offer contributions unwillingly.

[9:71]

The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: **they observe regular (*yuqīmūna*) *ṣalāh* (prayers)**, practise regular *zakāh* (charity), and obey Allāh and His

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shows that they had agreed not to pray as before, but to pray as the believers. In [9:18–19], those who did not adhere to the Qur'anic injunctions of *ṣalāh* were banned from Masjid al-Ḥarām in Makkah. However, in [9:11], now if that particular tribe/s repented, performed *ṣalāh* and paid *zakāh* and thereby restored the treaty, they were accepted back into the fold of Islām. They were not forced to *ṣalāh* and pay *zakāh* as some misunderstand, but they performed *ṣalāh* and paid *zakāh* to the original terms of the treaty. That is why Allāh says in [9:11] “they are your brethren in faith (in *dīn*):” (Cf. [49:10], all believers are brethren in faith, not quoted.)

Messenger. On them will Allāh pour His mercy: for Allāh is Exalted in power, Wise.<sup>20</sup>

[10:87]

We (Allāh) inspired Mūsā (Moses) and his brother (Hārūn) with this Message: “Provide dwellings for your people in Miṣr (Egypt), and make your dwellings into places of worship, and **establish regular ṣalāh (prayers)**: and give glad tidings to those who believe!”

[11:87]

They said: “O Shu`ayb! **Does thy ṣalāh command thee that we leave off the worship which our fathers practised**, or that we leave off doing what we like with our property? Truly, thou art the one that forbearth with faults and is right- minded!”

[11:114]

And **establish regular ṣalāh (prayers)** at the beginning and at the end of the day, as well as during the early watches of the night: for, verily, good deeds remove evil deeds: this is a (reminder) *dhikr* (remembrance) to those who remember (their *Rabb*)<sup>21</sup>

[13:22]

Those who patiently persevere, seeking the countenance of their *Rabb* (Lord); **establish (aqāmū) ṣalāh (regular prayers)**; spend out of (the gifts) We (Allāh) have bestowed for their sustenance, secretly and openly; and

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. [9:107–110], not quoted.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. [25:70], [6:160] and [29:7], not quoted.

turn off evil with good: for such there is the final attainment of the (eternal) home, –

[14:31]

Speak to My (Allāh's) servants who have believed, that they should **establish (*yuqīmū*) *ṣalāh* (regular prayers)**, and spend (in charity) out of the sustenance We (Allāh) have given them, secretly and openly, before the coming of a Day in which there will be neither mutual bargaining nor befriending.

[14:37]

O our *Rabb* (Lord)! I (Ibrāhīm) have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House (*Baytika l-Muḥarram*); in order, O our *Rabb* (Lord), that they may **establish regular (*li-yuqīmū*) *ṣalāh* (prayer)**: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks.

[14:40]

O my *Rabb* (Lord)! **Make me (Ibrāhīm) one who establishes regular (*muqīma*) *ṣalāh* (prayer)**, and also (raise such) among my offspring, O our *Rabb* (Lord)! And accept Thou (Allāh) my *du`ā'* (supplication).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Ṣalāh* and *du`ā'* are two separate words meaning two separate things. *Du`ā'* means to supplicate for one's needs. *Ṣalāh* is the formal method of praying. In [14:40], the Qur'anic Arabic word *ṣalāh* is mentioned first, i.e. the establishing of *ṣalāh*. Thereafter *du`ā'* is mentioned, asking for acceptance of his supplication.

[17:78]

**Establish regular (aqimī) ṣalāh (prayers)** – at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and the morning prayer and Qur'ān (reading): for the prayer and Qur'ān (reading) in the morning carry their testimony.

[17:110]

Say: “Call upon Allāh, or call upon Rahmān: by whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him (Allāh) belong the Most Beautiful Names<sup>23</sup>. **Be not too loud in your ṣalāh<sup>24</sup> (prayer) nor speak it in a low voice, but follow a middle course in-between**”.<sup>25</sup>

[19:31]

And He (Allāh) hath made me (‘Īsā) blessed wheresoever I be, and hath **enjoined on me ṣalāh (prayer) and zakāh** (charity) as long as I live;<sup>26</sup>

[19:55]

He (Ismā‘īl) used to **enjoin on his people ṣalāh (prayer) and zakāh** (charity), and he was most acceptable in the sight of his *Rabb*.

[19:59]

But after them there followed **a posterity who missed ṣalāh (prayers)** and followed after lusts: soon, then, will they face Destruction,—

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. [59:22-24] not quoted

<sup>24</sup> Many misunderstand this verse: they mistake *ṣalāh* as *du`ā`*. See note 22 above.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. [73:4]: “... and recite the Qur'ān in slow, measured rhythmic tones.” (Cf. [73:20] and [59:22–24], not quoted.)

<sup>26</sup> Cf. [5:116–119], [5:75] and [3:55], not quoted.



[20:14]

Verily, I am Allāh. There is no god but I: so serve thou Me (Allāh only), and **establish (*aqimi*) regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)** for celebrating My (Allāh's) praise.

[20:132]

**Enjoin *ṣalāh* (prayer) on thy people, and be constant therein.** We (Allāh) ask thee not to provide sustenance: We (Allāh) provide it for thee. But the (fruit of) the Hereafter is for righteousness.

[21:73]

And We (Allāh) made them leaders, guiding (people) by Our Command, and We (Allāh) sent them inspiration to do good deeds, **to establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayers)**, and to practise regular *zakāh* (charity); and they constantly served Us (Allāh only).

[22:35]

To those whose hearts when Allāh is mentioned, are filled with fear, who show patient perseverance over their afflictions, **keep up regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)**, and spend (in charity) out of what We (Allāh) have bestowed upon them.

[22:41]

(They are) those who, if We (Allāh) establish them in the land, **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)** and give regular *zakāh* (charity), enjoin the right and forbid wrong: with Allāh rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs.

[22:78]

And strive in His Allāh's cause as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline). He (Allāh) has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in *dīn* (religion); it is the cult (*millah*)<sup>27</sup> of your father Ibrāhīm. It is He (Allāh) Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the messenger may be a witness for you, and ye be witnesses for mankind! **So establish regular ṣalāh (prayer)**, give regular *zakāh* (charity), and hold fast to Allāh! He is your Protector – the Best to protect and the Best to help!

[23:2]

Those who **humble themselves in their ṣalāh (prayers)**;

[23:9]

And who (strictly) **guard their ṣalāh (prayers)**;

[24:37]

By men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can **divert** from the *dhikr* (Remembrance: i.e. Qur'ān)<sup>28</sup> of Allāh, nor **from regular ṣalāh (prayer)**, nor from the practice of regular *zakāh* (charity): their (only) fear is

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<sup>27</sup> *Dīn*: a way of life as prescribed in Al-Qur'ān. *Millah* (cult): A system of religious belief and worship as prescribed in Al-Qur'ān. Cf. [16:123] “So We (Allāh) have taught thee (Muḥammad) the inspired (Message), the ways (*millah*) of Ibrāhīm the true in Faith, and he (Ibrāhīm) joined not gods with Allāh. (Cf. [6:90] and [42:13], not quoted.)”

<sup>28</sup> [15:9] “We (Allāh) have, without doubt, sent down the *dhikr* (Message, admonition); and We (Allāh) will assuredly guard IT (from corruption).”

[38:1] “*Ṣād*: by the Qur'ān, full of *dhikr* (Admonition): (this is the truth).”

for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new),<sup>29</sup>

[24:56]

**So establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer) and give regular *zakāh* (charity), and obey the messenger that ye may receive mercy.**<sup>30</sup>

[24:58]

O ye who believe! let those whom your right hands possess, and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your permission (before they come to your presence), on three occasions: before *fajr* (**morning**) *ṣalāh* (**prayer**); the while ye doff your clothes for the noonday heat; and **after the 'ishā'** (**late-night**) *ṣalāh* (**prayer**): these are your three times of undress: outside those times it is not wrong for you or for them to move about attending to each other: Thus does Allāh make clear the *āyāt* (Signs) to you: for Allāh is full of knowledge and wisdom.

[27:3]

Those who **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayers)** and give in regular *zakāh* (charity), and also have (full) assurance of the hereafter.

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. [14:48], [39:69] and [57:21], not quoted.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. [6:16, Allāh's Mercy], [44:24, Allāh's Mercy], [40:9, Allāh's Mercy] and [1:3, Allāh is Most Merciful, Most Gracious].

[29:45]

Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee (Muḥammad), and **establish regular ṣalāh (prayer): for ṣalāh (prayer) restrains from shameful<sup>31</sup> and unjust deeds; and the *dhikr* (remembrance) of Allāh is the greatest (*Allāhu Akbar*)** (thing in life) without doubt. And Allāh knows the (deeds) that ye do.

[30:31]

Turn ye back in repentance to Him, and fear Him (Allāh): **establish regular ṣalāh (prayers)**, and be not ye among those (*mushrikīn*) who join gods with Allāh.<sup>32</sup>

[31:4]

Those who **establish regular ṣalāh (prayer)**, and give regular *zakāh* (charity), and have (in their hearts) the assurance of the Hereafter.<sup>33</sup>

[31:17]

(Luqmān said) O my son! **Establish regular ṣalāh (prayer)**, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong; and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.

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<sup>31</sup> [7:33] “Say: the things that my *Rabb* (Lord) hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allāh, for which He (Allāh) hath given no authority; and saying things about Allāh of which ye have no knowledge.” (Cf. [17:36], not quoted.)

<sup>32</sup> [31:13] Behold, Luqmān said to his son by way of instruction: “O my son! join not in worship (others) with Allāh: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing.”

<sup>33</sup> Cf. [3:9], [18:49] and [17:13–14], the Day of Judgment, not quoted.

[33:33]

And stay quietly in your houses, and make not a dazzling display, like that of the former times of ignorance; and **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)**, and give regular *zakāh* charity; and obey Allāh and His Messenger. And Allāh only wishes to remove all abomination from you, ye members of the (Muḥammad's) family, and **to make you pure and spotless.**

[35:18]

... Thou canst but admonish such as fear their *Rabb* (Lord) unseen and **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)**. And whoever **purifies himself** does so for the benefit of his own *nāfs* (self); and the destination (of all) is to Allāh.<sup>34</sup>

[35:29]

Those who rehearse the Book of Allāh (Al-Qur'ān), **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)**, and spend (in charity) out of what We (Allāh) have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a commerce that will never fail:

[42:38]

Those who hearken to their *Rabb* (Lord), and **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)**; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out of what We (Allāh) bestow on them for Sustenance;

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. [9:108], *Ṣalāh* is to purify oneself.

[58:13]

Is it that ye are afraid of spending sums in charity before your private consultation (with him)? If, then, ye do not so, and Allāh forgives you, **then establish regular ṣalāh (prayer)**; practise regular *zakāh* (charity); and obey Allāh and His messenger<sup>35</sup>. And Allāh is well acquainted with all that you do.

[62:9]

O ye who believe! When the (*nūdiya*) **call is proclaimed to ṣalāh (prayer)** on Friday (the Day of Jumu`ah), hasten earnestly to the *dhikr* (Remembrance) of Allāh, and leave off business (and traffic): that is best for you if ye but knew!<sup>36</sup>

[62:10]

And when **the (Jumu`ah) ṣalāh (prayer)** is finished, then may ye disperse through the land, and seek of the Bounty of Allāh: and celebrate the *dhikr* (praises) of Allāh often (and without stint): that ye may prosper.<sup>37</sup>

[70:23]

Those who **remain steadfast to their ṣalāh (prayer)**;

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<sup>35</sup> Refer to the document on “Obey Allāh and obey His Messenger”, which is available for download from: <http://bit.do/quranonly>

<sup>36</sup> Note the importance of *Jumu`ah* (Friday) *ṣalāh*. Refer to [2:238, *ṣalāt ul-wuṣṭā* – best *ṣalāh*].

<sup>37</sup> See note 36 above. Cf. [72:18, not quoted].

[73:20]

Thy *Rabb* (Lord) doth know that thou (Muḥammad) standest forth (to prayer) nigh two-thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and so doth a party of those with thee. But Allāh doth appoint night and day in due measure He (Allāh) knoweth that ye are unable to keep count thereof. So He (Allāh) hath turned to you (in mercy): read ye, therefore, of the Qur'ān<sup>38</sup> as much as may be easy for you. He (Allāh) knoweth that there may be (some) among you in ill-health; others travelling through the land, seeking of Allāh's bounty; yet others fighting in Allāh's cause, read ye, therefore, as much of the Qur'ān as may be easy (for you); and **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)** and give regular *zakāh* (charity); and loan to Allāh a Beautiful Loan. And whatever good ye send forth *anfusikum* (for yourselves) ye shall find it in Allāh's Presence, – yea, better and greater, in Reward and seek ye the Grace of Allāh: for Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

[98:5]

And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allāh, offering Him (Allāh) sincere devotion, being true (in faith); **to establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer)**; and to practise regular *zakāh* (charity); and that is the *dīn* (Religion) Right and Straight.

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<sup>38</sup> We are to recite the seven oft-repeated verses (Sūrah Fātiḥah), and verses from Al-Qur'ān in *ṣalāh*: [15:87] “And We (Allāh) have bestowed upon thee the Seven Oft-repeated (verses) together (*wa*) with the Grand Qur'ān.”

*Ṣalāh* according to Al-Qur'ān

[107:4-5]

So woe to the worshippers

Who are **neglectful of their *ṣalāh* (prayers)**



## 2. Commanded to establish *ṣalāh*

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### Muḥammad commanded to establish *ṣalāh*

We are commanded to establish regular *ṣalāh*, according to multiple Qur’anic verses such as [20:132], [17:78], [7:170], [6:72], [2:125] and [4:102–103]. Here is the full quote of one verse (see Section 1 of this book for other relevant verses):

[20:132]

**Enjoin *ṣalāh* on thy people (O Muḥammad), and be constant therein.** We (Allāh) ask thee not to provide sustenance: We (Allāh) provide it for thee. But the (fruit of) the hereafter is for righteousness.

To “establish regular *ṣalāh*” means the following, all of which are applicable: to enjoin, direct, require, command or admonish; to prescribe (a course of action) with authority or emphasis; to direct or order to do something. To be constant means: not changing or varying, uniform, regular, invariable; continuing without pause or let up, marked by firm steadfast resolution or faithfulness, exhibiting constancy of mind or attachment.

## Previous prophets also established ṣalāh

The institution of ṣalāh (obligatory prayer) was established by all the prophets of Islām, and was not new in Muḥammad's time, as nothing was said to Muḥammad that was not said to the prophets before him.<sup>39</sup>

There are a many Qur'anic verses that also mention the ṣalāh of various prophets, such as in the following examples:

- Ibrāhīm: [22:78], [2:125],<sup>40</sup> [14:37, 40], [21:73]
- Mūsā: [10:87]
- `Īsā: [19:31]
- Maryam: [3:43]<sup>41</sup>
- Ismā`īl: [19:55]

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<sup>39</sup> [41:43] “Nothing is said to thee (Muḥammad) that was not said to the messengers before thee (Muḥammad): that thy *Rabb* (Lord) has at his Command (all) forgiveness as well as a most Grievous Penalty.”

<sup>40</sup> [2:125] “Remember We (Allāh) made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Ibrāhīm as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Ibrāhīm and Ismā`īl, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer).”

<sup>41</sup> [3:43] “O Maryam! worship Thy *Rabb* (Lord) devoutly: Prostrate thyself, and bow down (in prayer) with those who bow down.”

### 3. Reasons for performing *ṣalāh*

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The Qur’ān includes the following reasons for establishing regular *ṣalāh*: to celebrate Allāh’s praise, to restrain from shameful and unjust deeds, for remembrance of Allāh, to repent, to remove evil deeds, to seek Allāh’s help, mercy, grace and pleasure, and to purify oneself:

[20:14]

Verily, I am Allāh. There is no god but I: so serve thou Me (Allāh only), and **establish (*aqimi*) regular *ṣalāh* (prayer) for celebrating My (Allāh’s) praise.**<sup>42</sup>

[29:45]

Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration (through Revelation: *wahy*) to thee (Muḥammad), and **establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer): for *ṣalāh* (prayer) restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and *dhikr*<sup>43</sup> (Remembrance: i.e. Qur’ān) of Allah is the greatest (*Allāhu Akbar*) (thing in life) without doubt. And Allāh knows the (deeds) that ye do.**<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> In [1:2], the words in the opening chapter of the Divine Book states to praise Allāh: “Praise be to Allāh, the *Rabbi l-‘Ālamīn* (Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds)”. In [20:14], believers are directed how to Praise Allāh, i.e. by performing *ṣalāh*. Other verses, as presented later, explain how to perform *ṣalāh*, i.e. including the postures of standing, bowing and prostrating, reciting parts of Al-Qur’ān with concentration, etc.

<sup>43</sup> [15:9] “We (Allāh) have, without doubt, sent down the *dhikr* (Message, admonition); and We (Allāh) will assuredly guard IT (from corruption).” [Cf: 41:41-42, not quoted]

[38:1] “*Ṣād*: by the Qur’ān, full of *dhikr* (admonition): (this is the truth).”

Cf. [54:17,22,32,40], not quoted.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. [7:33] and [13:28, hearts find peace], not quoted.

[11:114]

And establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayers) at the beginning and at the end of the day, as well as during the early watches of the night: for, verily, **good deeds remove evil deeds**: this is a (reminder) *dhikr* (remembrance) to those who remember (their *Rabb*).<sup>45</sup>

[24:56]

So establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer) and give regular *zakāh* (charity), and obey the messenger **that ye may receive Mercy**.<sup>46</sup>

[2:45]

Nay, **seek (Allāh's) help with patient perseverance and *ṣalāh* (prayer)**: it is indeed hard, except for the humbly submissive (to Allāh)<sup>47</sup>

[2:153]

O ye who believe! **Seek help with patient perseverance and *ṣalāh* (prayer)**; for Allāh is with those who patiently persevere.

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. [35:18].

<sup>46</sup> Cf. [6:16], [44:42] and [1:3] (to receive Allāh's Mercy), not quoted.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. [23:2].

[48:29]

Muḥammad is the messenger of Allāh; and those<sup>48</sup> who are with him (Muḥammad) are strong against the unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other. Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), **seeking *faḍlan* (Grace, Bounty, Favour) from Allāh** and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration.

[35:18]

... Thou canst but admonish such as fear their *Rabb* (Lord) unseen and **establish (*aqāmū*) regular *ṣalāh*** (prayer). And whoever **purifies himself** does so for the benefit of his own *nafs* (self); and the destination (of all) is to Allāh.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> [8:62–63] “Should they intend to deceive thee (Muḥammad), – verily Allāh sufficeth thee (Muḥammad): He (Allāh) it is that hath strengthened thee (Muḥammad) with His aid and with (the company of) the Believers; and (moreover) He (Allāh) hath put affection between their hearts: not if thou (Muḥammad) hadst spent all that is in the earth, couldst thou (Muḥammad) have produced that affection, but Allāh hath done it: for He (Allāh) is Exalted in Might, Wise.”

[9:100] “The vanguard (of Islām) – the first of those who forsook (their homes) (*muhājirīn*) and of those who gave them aid (*anṣār*), and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds, – well pleased is Allāh with them, as are they with Him (Allāh): for them hath He (Allāh) prepared Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever: that is the Supreme felicity.”

Cf. [33:23] and [59:9–10], not quoted.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. [9:108].

## 4. Set times of ṣalāh

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An important point to always remember is that Allāh states in many verses that this is an Arabic Qur'ān so that it makes things clear, and that He explains all things in detail (through Al-Qur'ān):

[41:3]

A Book, whereof the **verses are explained in detail; – a Qur'ān in Arabic**, for people who understand;–

[41:44]

**Had We (Allāh) sent this as a Qur'ān (in the language) other than Arabic, they would have said: “why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (a Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger) an Arab?” Say: “IT is a Guide and a Healing to those who believe; and for those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their (eyes): they are (as it were) being called from a place far distant!”**

It is therefore important to study the original Arabic words, to get a clear understanding of their meanings. In the following sub-sections, we will look at the words used in various verses for the different set times for ṣalāh, i.e. *fajr*, *zuhr*, *ʿaṣr*, *maghrib* and *ishā*. Not all of the ṣalāh times are mentioned by name. However, the descriptions of the five ṣalāh times are set out as in the sub-sections that follow.

Note that in many of the following verses, the term *ḥamd* (glorifying/praising/remembering/celebrating) is used instead of the term ṣalāh. Because of the context in which *ḥamd* is used, it can only refer to ṣalāh.

## **Fajr**

*Fajr* is from the earliest hours of dawn to just before sunrise. The following words are used in the Qur’ān for *fajr ṣalāh*:

[52:48]

“*ḥamdi Rabbika ḥīna taqūm*” meaning “celebrate the praise of thy *Rabb* the while you stand forth” (after getting up in the morning)

[52: 49]

“*idbār an-nujūm*” meaning “retreat of the stars”

[50:39]

“*qabla tulū`i sh-shamsi*” meaning “before the rising of the sun”<sup>50</sup>

[76:25]

“*bukratan*” meaning “morning time”<sup>51</sup>

[30: 17]

“*ḥīna tuṣbiḥūn*” meaning “when ye get the morning”

[7: 205]

“*bil-ghuduwwi*” meaning “in the morning”

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. [55:17, East] and [20:130].

<sup>51</sup> Cf. [33:42].

## **Ẓuhr**

The Qur'ān uses the following words for *ẓuhr ṣalāh*:

[17:78]

“*li-dulūki sh-shams*” meaning “at the sun’s decline”

[30:18]

“*hīna tuḥirūn*” meaning “when ye get the sun’s decline”

[11: 114]

“*ṭarafayī n-nahār*” meaning “extremes of the day” – one extreme of the day refers to *ẓuhr* time

[24:58]

“*ẓahīrah*” meaning “just after the sun has passed its zenith when it is very hot”, referring to *ẓuhr* time.



## **`Aṣr**

The Qur'ān uses the following words for *`aṣr ṣalāh*:

[7:205]

“*wa l-āṣāl*” meaning “and in the evenings”. “In the evening” is before sunset, and that can only refer to *`aṣr ṣalāh*.) The word *āṣāl* is found in Al-Qur'ān ten times in two derived forms.

[33:42]

“*wa aṣīlā*” meaning “and in the evening”, prior to sunset

[76:25]

“*wa aṣīlā*” meaning “and in the evening”

[20:130]

“*wa qabla ḡhurūbihā*” meaning “before sunset”

[50:39]

“*wa qabla l-ḡhurūb*” meaning “before sunset”

The first part of the declining phase of the sun is *zuhr* time, while the last part is *`aṣr* time.

## ***Maḡhrib***

The Qur'ān uses the following words for *maḡhrib ṣalāh*:

[30: 17]

“*ḥīna tumsūn*” meaning “when ye enter the night”

[11: 114]

“*zulafa mina l-layl*” meaning “approach of the night”

[20: 130]

“*aṭrāfa n-nahār*” meaning “ends of the day”

[55:17]

“*maḡhribayn*” meaning “the time (place) setting of the sun”

One of the ends of the day is sunset. The timing for *maḡhrib ṣalāh* is from sunset to the appearance of darkness of the night.

## **‘Ishā’**

The Qur’ān uses the following words for *‘ishā’ ṣalāh*:

[17:78]

“*ghasaqi l-layl*” meaning “darkness of the night”

[52:49]

“*mina l-layl*” meaning “a part of the night”

[76:26]

“*wa mina l-layl*” meaning “part of the night” and  
“*laylan ṭawīlā*” meaning “a long night through”

[50:40]

“*wa mina l-layli fasabbih-hu wa adbāra s-sujūd*”  
meaning “Glorify Him in the night after prostration”  
(after *‘ishā’ ṣalāh*)

The timing for *‘ishā’ ṣalāh* is the portion of the dark hours of the night prior to our night sleep. If we break the night sleep for *ṣalāh*, it would be termed the *tahajjud ṣalāh* (optional or additional).<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> [17:79] “And pray in the small watches of the morning: (it would be) an additional prayer (of devotional benefit) for thee (Muḥammad); soon will thy *Rabb* (Lord) raise thee (Muḥammad) to a Station of Praise and Glory!”

## Five times of ṣalāh

The following verse also mentions the five times of ṣalāh:

[20:130]

Therefore bear patiently what they say, and celebrate the praises of thy *Rabb*, before the rising of the sun, and before its setting; and glorify Him (Allāh) during the hours of the night, and at the extremes of the day, that thou mayest attain spiritual joy.”

The descriptions in the above verse correspond to the ṣalāh times as follows:

- before rising – *fajr*
- before setting – *‘aṣr*
- hours of the night – *‘ishā’*
- extremes of the day – *zuhr* and *maghrib*.

Regarding the last bullet above, one of the two “extremes of the day” refers to *zuhr*; the other extreme can refer to either *fajr* or *maghrib*, which is the last extreme point of the day. Because the *fajr* (before the rising of the sun) ṣalāh has been mentioned separately, we can conclude that the phrase “extremes of the day” denotes the *zuhr* (midday) and *maghrib* (just after sunset) ṣalāh.

## 5. Postures in *ṣalāh* from Al-Qur’ān

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The postures in *ṣalāh* are standing, bowing and prostrating. This is clearly stipulated in Al-Qur’ān in verses such as the following:

[2:125]

Remember We (Allāh) made the House a place of assembly for mankind and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Ibrāhīm as a **place of prayer**; and We (Allāh) covenanted with Ibrāhīm and Ismā’īl, that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it as a retreat, **or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer).**<sup>53</sup>

[3:39]

While he (Zakariyyā) was **standing in prayer (*yuṣalli*)** in the chamber, the angels (*malā’ikah*) called unto him: “Allāh doth give thee glad tidings of Yaḥyā, witnessing the truth of a Word from Allāh, and (be besides) noble, chaste, and a prophet (*nabī*), – of the (goodly) company of the righteous.

[3:43]

O Maryam! Worship Thy *Rabb* (Lord) devoutly: **Prostrate thyself, and bow down** (in prayer) with those who bow down.

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. [22:26].

[7:29]

Say: “My *Rabb* (Lord) hath commanded justice; and that ye **set your whole selves (to Him) at every time and place of prayer (*masjid*)**<sup>54</sup> and call upon Him (Allāh), making your devotion sincere as in His sight: such as He (Allāh) created you in the beginning, so shall ye return”

[26:218–219]

(Allāh) Who seeth thee (Muḥammad) standing forth (*taqūm*) (in prayer)

**And thy movements (*wa taqallubaka*) among those who prostrate themselves (*as-sājidīn*) (in prayer),**<sup>55</sup>

[48:29]

Muḥammad is the messenger of Allāh; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other. **Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking Grace from Allāh and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are their marks, (being) the traces of their prostration.** This is their similitude in the At-Tawrāh; and their similitude in the Al-Injīl (Gospel) is: like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, (filling) the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result,

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<sup>54</sup> [72:18] “And the *masājid* (places of worship) are for Allāh (alone): so invoke not any one along with Allāh.”

<sup>55</sup> Cf. [15:97–99] and [96:19], where Muḥammad is told to prostrate and draw closer to Allāh. Not quoted.

it fills the unbelievers with rage at them. Allāh has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness, and a great Reward.

[9:108]

**Never stand thou (Muḥammad) forth therein.**<sup>56</sup>

There is a *masjid* whose foundation was laid from the first Day on piety; **it is more worthy of (you) the standing forth (for prayer) therein.** In it are men who love to be purified; and Allāh loveth those who make themselves pure.

[9:112]

Those that turn (to Allāh) in repentance; that serve Him, and Praise Him (**Allāh**); that wander in devotion to the cause of Allāh: **that bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer;** that enjoin good and forbid evil; and observe the limit set by Allāh. – (these do rejoice). So proclaim the glad tidings to the believers.

[73:2]

(Addressed to Muḥammad) **Stand** (to prayer) by night, but not all night, –

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<sup>56</sup> [9:107] “And there are those who put up a *masjid* by way of mischief and infidelity – to disunite the believers – and in preparation for one who waged war against Allāh and His Messenger aforetime. They will indeed swear that their intention is nothing but good; but Allāh doth declare that they are certainly liars.” (Muḥammad is ordered never to stand in this particular *masjid* of the hypocrites to perform *ṣalāh*.)

[22:18]

Seest thou not that **to Allāh bow down in worship all things** that are in the heavens and on earth, – the sun, the moon, the stars; the hills, the trees, the animals; and a great number among mankind? But a great number are (also) such as are fit for punishment: and such as Allāh shall disgrace, – none can raise to honour: for Allāh carries out all that He (Allāh) wills.



## 6. Number of circuits (*raka`āt*) in daily *ṣalāh*

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The word *rak`ah* is derived from *raka`a*, meaning he bowed down, and literally the *rak`ah* is an act of bowing down before Allāh. The root word *raka`a* means to bow in *ṣalāh* before prostrating. It is common for Muslims to use the word *rak`ah*, or its plural *raka`āt*, to describe the number of times one completes the sequence of standing, bowing and prostrating in *ṣalāh*. Since the Qur`anic Arabic word *rak`ah* used in combination with *ṣalāh* means to bow before prostrating, the word “circuit”<sup>57</sup> seems more suitable to describe the number of times to perform the act of standing, bowing and prostrating in *ṣalāh*.

There are numerous verses making it clear that Allāh alone explains the Qur`ān, and omits nothing in it.<sup>58</sup> Every word in Al-Qur`ān is there for us to ponder over. We can therefore look to the following verses to deduce the number of circuits in each of the five daily *ṣalāh*:

[4:101–102]

When ye travel through the earth, there is **no blame on you if ye shorten your *ṣalāh* (prayers)**, for fear the unbelievers may attack you: for the unbelievers are unto you open enemies.

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. [26:218–219] “(Allāh) Who seeth thee (Muḥammad) standing forth (in prayer), and thy movements among those who prostrate themselves,”

<sup>58</sup> Examples of verses stating that it is Allāh who explains Al-Qur`ān and omits nothing in it:

[75:19] “Nay more, it is for Us (Allāh) to explain IT (Qur`ān) (and make it clear):”

[6:38] “There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. **Nothing have We (Allāh) omitted from the Book**, and they (all) shall be gathered to their *Rabb* (Lord) in the end.”

[10:82] “And Allāh by His (Allāh’s) words doth prove and establish His Truth, however much the sinners may hate it!” [Cf: 3:60 not quoted]

When thou (O Messenger) art with them, and standest to **lead them in ṣalāh (prayer)**, let one party of them stand up (in **ṣalāh**) with thee (Muḥammad), taking their arms with them: when they finish their prostrations, let them take their position in the rear: and let the other party come up **which hath not yet prayed (lam yuṣallū) – and let them pray (fal-yuṣallū) with thee** (Muḥammad), taking all precaution, and bearing arms: the unbelievers wish, if ye were negligent of your arms and your baggage, to assault you in a single rush. But there is no blame on you if ye put away your arms because of the inconvenience of rain or because ye are ill; but take (every) precaution for yourselves; for the unbelievers Allāh hath prepared a humiliating punishment.

In the shortening of the **ṣalāh** in the verses above, Muḥammad led both groups in one circuit each time (“when they finish their prostrations ... let the other party come up ...”). Since the shortened prayer consisted of one circuit for each of the two groups, we can deduce that the normal prayer would consist of two circuits. If there had to be more than two circuits in each **ṣalāh**, then the instructions to Muḥammad ﷺ would have been to divide his companions into three or four groups, to give a clear indication of the number of circuits in each **ṣalāh**. This was not the case. The instruction to shorten the **ṣalāh** meant Muḥammad would lead both groups in one circuit each time instead of the normal two circuits at one time. (I would like to make clear that this is my understanding. If one wants to differ with my understanding of the number, I do not have any problem. Keep in mind that the **ṣalāh** must be read in an audible voice [17:110] in every circuit)

## 7. Other information regarding *ṣalāh*

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In addition to the command to establish *ṣalāh*, the reasons for *ṣalāh*, the set times of *ṣalāh*, postures to perform during *ṣalāh*, and number of circuits in each daily *ṣalāh*, Al-Qur’ān also provides further information about *ṣalāh*, summarised as follows with examples of verses given as references:

- It is Allāh who taught us how to pray – [2:238–239]
- Nabī Muḥammad performing *ṣalāh* – [26:217–220]
- The call (*nāday*) to *ṣalāh* – [5:58]
- Ablution (*wuḍū’*) before *ṣalāh* – [5:6]
- Wearing best apparel when performing *ṣalāh* – [7:31]
- Direction to face when performing *ṣalāh* – [2:142–45,150]
- Being attentive in *ṣalāh* – [4:43]
- Being humble in *ṣalāh* – [23:2]
- Reciting seven oft-repeated verses in *ṣalāh* (Sūrah Fātiḥa) – [15:87]
- Reciting Al-Qur’ān in *ṣalāh* – [73:20]
- Reciting Al-Qur’ān in a melodious, rhythmic tone – [73:4]
- Reciting Al-Qur’ān in a middle tone, not too loud nor too soft – [17:110]
- Shortening of *ṣalāh* – [4:101–02]
- Muḥammad leading *ṣalāh* for long hours in the night – [73:20]
- Additional prayer for Muḥammad<sup>59</sup> – [17:79]

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<sup>59</sup> There is no such thing as *sunnah ṣalāh*, as the Qur’anic Arabic word *sunnah* means “the ways and actions of Allāh”, and does not refer to the Messenger Muḥammad in any way. (See the Introduction for the Qur’anic meaning of *sunnah*.)

- Nabī Muḥammad and his companions performing *ṣalāh*, mentioned in At-Tawrāh and Al-Injīl thousands of years before they were born (marks on their foreheads through prostrations) – [48:29], [7:157–158]<sup>60</sup>
- Hypocrites coming lazily to *ṣalāh* – [9:54], [4:142]
- Those who are unmindful of their *ṣalāh* – [107:4–5]

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<sup>60</sup> [7:157] “Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (scriptures),– in the At-Tawrāh (Law) and the Al-Injīl (Gospel); – for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); he releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him, – it is they who will prosper.”

[7:158] “Say: O mankind! I (Muḥammad) am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allāh, to whom belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: it is He (Allāh) that giveth both life and death. So believe in Allāh and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believeth in Allāh and His words: follow him that (so) ye may be guided.”

## 8. *Ṣalāh* and *zakāh*

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*Zakāh* is the obligatory spending of wealth by feeding the poor and needy, etc., as stated in the following verse:

[2:177]

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness – to believe in Allāh and the Last Day, and the *malā'ikah* (angels), and the Book, and the Messengers; to **spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in *ṣalāh* (prayer), and practice regular charity;** to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allāh-fearing.

The actual amount of *zakāh* is discretionary, as each one's expense varies. This is made clear in:

[30:39]

That which ye lay out for increase through the property of (other) people, will have no increase with Allāh. But **that which ye lay out in *zakāh***, seeking the countenance of Allāh, (will increase): it is these who will get a recompense multiplied.

In verses such as the following, *zakāh* is defined as **spend** (root *nafaqa*). Believers are told to **spend** for the needy:

[2:215]

They ask thee **what they should spend** (in charity). Say: “Whatever ye spend that is good, is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever ye do that is good, – Allāh knoweth it well”.

[2:219]

They ask thee (Muḥammad) concerning wine and gambling. Say: “In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit.” They ask thee (Muḥammad) **how much they are to spend**; Say: “what is beyond your needs.” Thus doth Allāh make clear to you His Signs: in order that ye may consider –

[2:270]

And **whatever ye spend** in charity or devotion, be sure Allāh knows it all. But the wrong-doers have no helpers.

There are 75 verses containing the word *ṣalāh* (quoted in Section 1). It is worth noting that *zakāh* is mentioned together with *ṣalāh* in 26 of these verses; and in other verses, *ṣalāh* and **spend** (root *nafaqa*) are mentioned together. Some reasons for *ṣalāh* is to remember Allāh [20:14]), to purify oneself [9:108], to restrain from shameful and unjust deeds [29:45], etc

[9:108]

Never stand thou (Muḥammad) forth therein.<sup>61</sup> There is a *masjid* whose foundation was laid from the first Day on piety; it is more worthy of (you) the standing forth (for prayer) therein. **In it (*masjid*) are men who love to be purified**; and Allāh loveth those who make themselves pure.

*Zakāh* purifies oneself and one's wealth:

[9:103]

Of their goods, **take alms, that so thou mightest purify and sanctify them**; and pray (*ṣalātuka*) on their behalf. Verily thy prayers are a source of security for them (*ṣalli `alayhim*): and Allāh is one who heareth and knoweth.

Examples of verses where *ṣalāh* and *zakāh* are mentioned together:

[2:110]

**And be steadfast in prayer (*ṣalāh*) and regular in charity**: And whatever good ye send forth for your souls before you, ye shall find it with Allāh: for Allāh sees well all that ye do.

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<sup>61</sup> [9:107] “And there are those who put up a *masjid* by way of mischief and infidelity – to disunite the believers – and in preparation for one who waged war against Allāh and His Messenger aforetime. They will indeed swear that their intention is nothing but good; but Allāh doth declare that they are certainly liars.” (Muḥammad is ordered never to stand in this particular *masjid* of the hypocrites to perform *ṣalāh*.)

[9:11]

But (even so), if they repent, **establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity**, – they are your brethren in Faith: (thus) do We (Allāh) explain the Signs in detail, for those who understand.

Examples of verses where **ṣalāh** and **spend** are mentioned together:

[2:3]

Who believe in the *al-gāyib* (unseen), are **steadfast in prayer, and spend** out of what We (Allāh) have provided for them.

[35:29]

Those who rehearse the Book of Allāh, **establish regular prayer (ṣalāh), and spend** (in charity) out of what We (Allāh) have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a commerce that will never fail:

Here are two lists of verses in which either the word *zakāh* or the word **spend** (root *naḥḥa*) is used together with the word *ṣalāh*:

<b>Ṣalāh and zakāh</b>				<b>Ṣalāh and spend</b>
2:43	5:12	19:55	31:4	2:3
2:83	5:55	21:73	33:33	8:3
2:110	9:5	22:41	58:13	13:22
2:177	9:11	22:78	73:20	22:35
2:277	9:18	24:37	98:5	35:29
4:77	9:71	24:56		42:38
4:162	19:31	27:3		



## 9. *Ṣalāh* part of Allāh's Laws

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Rituals such as *ṣalāh*, *ḥajj* and *ṣawm* (fasting) have been ordained by Allāh for our benefit, as mentioned earlier. For example:

[29:45]

*Ṣalāh* (prayer) **restrains** from shameful and unjust deeds;

[11:114]

Establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayers) – good deeds **remove evil deeds**:

[24:56]

So establish regular *ṣalāh* (prayer) and give regular *zakāh* (charity), and obey the messenger that ye **may receive Mercy.**”

The rituals are part of His Laws:

[22:67-69]

**To every people have We (Allāh) appointed rites (mān'sākān) and ceremonies which they must follow:** let them not then dispute with thee on the matter, but do thou invite (them) to thy *Rabb* (Lord): for thou art assuredly on the right way.

If they do wrangle with thee, say, “Allāh knows best what it is ye are doing.”

“Allāh will judge between you on the Day of Judgment concerning the matters in which ye differ.

## 10. Non-performance of ṣalāh

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Commentators like G.A. Parwez have argued that the term *ṣalāh* does not refer to the daily prayers. Consequently, many followers of this concept do not perform *ṣalāh*. However, in his arguments, Parwez mistakenly uses the wrong root construct for the word *ṣalāh*, he creates his own meanings for words without being regulated by Qur'anic usage, and he ignores certain words in his translation of verses. His translation is erroneous.

Another popular argument against *ṣalāh* and other practices such as *ṣawm* (fasting) and *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) is that Allāh is not in need of such rituals. Of course Allāh does not need these rituals. Allāh is *Aṣ-Ṣamad* – meaning The Absolute, The Eternal. Every living and non-living thing needs Him, and He does not need anything from His creation. However, Allāh Himself has ordained these rituals, as clearly stated in [22:67–69], quoted on the previous page, for our benefit.

When it comes specifically to *ṣalāh*, multiple verses in Al-Qur'ān command us to enjoin *ṣalāh*, and multiple verses set out how and when we are meant to do so. Performing *ṣalāh* is so important that we are told that the following words will be spoken by those who will be put into hell on the Day of Judgment:

[74:42–45]

**What led you into Hell Fire?**

They will say: “**we were not of those who (performed ṣalāh) prayed;**

Nor were we of those who fed the indigent;

But we used to talk vanities with vain talkers;”

I close with the following verses:

[16:49]

And to Allāh **submit** (*yasjudu*) all that is in the *samāwāt* (the entire universe excluding the earth) and that is in the earth, **of living creatures and the *malā'ikah*: for none are arrogant** (before their *Rabb*).

[22:18]

Seest thou not that **to Allāh bow down in worship all things** that are in the heavens and on earth, – the sun, the moon, the stars; the hills, the trees, the animals; and a great number among mankind? But a great number are (also) such as are fit for punishment: and such as Allāh shall disgrace, – none can raise to honour: for Allāh carries out all that He (Allāh) wills.

- This book, *Ṣalāh according to Al-Qur'ān*, as well as other books on topics from Al-Qur'ān, can be downloaded free from our Google webpage: <http://bit.do/quranonly>
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