



THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

Sheikh Ali Al-Tantawi

The Spirit of Prayer

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Preface

All praises are due to Allah, the Creator, the Cherisher, and the Sustainer of the universe. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus the son of Mary, Muhammad, and their followers.

I express my sincere love and devotion for the Final Messenger of Allah – Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as well as for his companions who changed the course of history, and for those who have striven throughout the centuries to strengthen the Islamic revival. Sheikh Ali Al-Tantawi is among those who spent their lives to serve Islam – the message of peace and justice. Sheikh Al-Tantawi reformed the understanding of Islam that many people have nowadays through his precise books and moving lectures. One of his most heartfelt lectures is entitled “Salat Rakaatayn”. This lecture also effected my life immensely because it changed the way I pray.

As an application of the saying of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) “None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself”, I continue to give this lecture in English in every place I go to in America. I've always had one particular dream and that is to write the lecture down in a book for English-speaking Muslims. Many Muslims can easily find *fiqh* books explaining the proper way to perform prayer but a vast number of them rarely can find something that explains why they pray.

By the blessings of Allah and through the efforts of dedicated Muslims, today English-speaking Muslims can enjoy “The Spirit of Prayer”.

The desperate servant for his Lord's forgiveness.

Fadel Soliman

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The Spirit of the Prayer

Most of us don't pray. Rather, we stand and sit, bow and prostrate, and mutter the supplications that must be said in prayer without reflecting upon anything other than our worldly lives. Typically, an employee who prepares to meet with the CEO of a company, or a teacher who sets out to meet with the Minister of education, or any of us who anticipates encountering a dignitary or a person of authority would prepare accordingly. We prepare in dress, mindset and feelings. We often prepare for these events and pay more attention to them than to prayer.

Unfortunately, we can't deny the fact that we do this every now and then even though we know that we're standing in prayer before Allah¹, the King of kings and the One who possesses all good and controls all matters. Allah is the Giver and the Taker. If He gives something to someone no one can stop Him from doing that. If he deprives someone of something no one can prevent Him from doing that either.

Furthermore, when a person enters before a true king he would never consider asking a minister or any worker among the king's staff for his needs. Quite the opposite, the person would ask the king who orders the minister and his staff. So, how can we stand before Allah when our hearts are attached to things other than Him and we are busying ourselves with thoughts of others besides Him? We love benefiting from humans and we're afraid of what they can inflict upon us. Yet, it never occurs to us that we should beg Allah, the Most High. It never crosses our minds that we should beg Him before whose Divine Hands we stand in prayer so that we may ask Him for what benefits us and so that we may ask Him to ward off anything that is capable of harming us as well.

We recite what we have to say in prayer with our tongues, but, we ignore all of it with our hearts and fail to comprehend it all with our minds during our daily prayers lamentably. What results is that our prayers are nothing more than physical exercises for our limbs and our tongues. However, this form of 'exercise' is like the body of the prayer with reverence being its soul. Therefore, how can we expect Allah to accept our prayer when it's like a body without a soul? Could a body move if it was bereft of life? I am neither describing a complete prayer done with perfection the likes of which used to bring coolness and tranquility to the Prophet Muhammad's eyes (peace be upon him) nor am I describing a prayer which wards off debauchery and evil which in turn has a lasting effect on its performer's behavior, manners, and character.

I am not describing the kind of prayer that makes its performer feel the power of Allah; a prayer that endows him with the courage to fear no one; a prayer that makes its performer feel weak in the sight of Allah and discourages him from attempting to transgress against anybody. No. Rather, I am describing the least degree of reverence in *salat* (prayer) that causes a person to ponder and contemplate upon the meanings of what he is reciting, and to reflect within his heart upon what his tongue is uttering.

¹ Allah is the Arabic word for "the one God". Arab Christians and Jews call the deity Allah as well, the word "Allah" is mentioned 17 times in the first page of the Arabic Christian Bible (Genesis).

Therefore, when the *mu'athin* (the one who calls out the *athan* or call to prayer) summons people to this “meeting,” the believer prepares to stand before Allah. He purifies his body, dress, as well as prayer area, and remembers that nothing is hidden from Allah. He remembers that the All-Seer is aware of what we keep secret and what is even more hidden than a secret. He acknowledges the fact that Allah doesn't look at appearances alone, but, to the intentions of a worshipper as well. As a result, the believer is not satisfied with purifying his outer appearance from physical impurities until he has purified his heart from immoral blemishes such as; *shirk* (polytheism), ostentation, greed, envy, and all other similar filthy vices.

Then, he stands facing the direction of the *qibla* (in the direction of Mecca), imagining the *Kaaba*¹ in front of him, not as one would face a worshipped statue, or an entity that has the inherent power to bring about benefit or ward off evil. Rather, he faces the *Kaaba* as a unifying center. A center that unites Muslims from all corners of the Earth, in concentric circles. Circles that aren't stopped by mountains, deserts, or oceans from connecting, surrounding their unifying center, and complying in an organized as well as judicious manner. This is like an army whose soldiers are prepared to sacrifice their souls and wealth to please Allah. Such an army is committed to spreading justice, righteousness, and noble virtues on Earth.

A believer also tries to prepare himself to worship correctly in reverence. Therefore, he imagines that this life has ended, as it surely will, and that the Day of Judgment has arrived, as it surely will, and that he sees the *sirat*² in front of him. He pictures Paradise on his right inviting him with its everlasting luxury. Likewise, he pictures hell to the left of him, appearing with its everlasting torture.

After the above-mentioned, the believer thinks of the might of Allah, and the fears he has of this life and the hereafter as well as those of Heaven and Hell. Subsequently, his contemplation of these things eases his thoughts about them because God is greater than these things and greater than anything that ever occurred to any human mind. He (Allah) created everything from nothing with a word and He has the power to destroy everything with a word. Hence, the believer raises his hands towards his ears as if to cast off the concerns of this life from his mind and he proclaims a statement from the depths of his heart, “*Allahu Akbar*” (God is Greater). With that, he stands before Allah.

If humans were to have been left to their own intellect, they would have never been able to capture true praise of Allah. Moreover, one of the most wonderful blessings of Allah upon us is that He has taught us how to greet Him and how to praise Him at the onset of prayer. A believer greets Allah with this praise by saying “*Subhanaka Allahumma wa bi hamdika*” (Exalted are You O Allah and Praised). The meaning of “*Tasbeeh*” in Arabic is elevation or glorification; glorifying Allah above every lowly human trait that passes through our minds. Allah is absolutely different from anything that we come up with in our minds.

¹ *Kaaba* The first house of worship, built in the valley of Makkah by Adam which was subsequently remodeled by the prophets Ibrahim and Ismail.

² *Sirat* A path in the hereafter that is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword.

In addition, a believer can also begin by facing Allah and saying “*Wajjahtu wajhi*”, (I direct my face). To whom? To a human or a stone? No, rather, “*Lillahi allathi fatara assamawati wal’ardh,*” to Allah who created the heavens and the earth.

After greeting the Most High with a praise worthy of His Majesty, a worshipper seeks protection from the fiercest enemy of mankind. This enemy is like no other because he hates mankind and that hate is what drives him to do his unrelenting evil acts. He lies in wait, attempts to make evil seem beautiful to a believer, and even tries to make him like disobedience. He tries to make a believer prefer this transient life and its temporary pleasures above the everlasting hereafter with its eternal bliss. A believer asks Allah to protect him from Satan, when he says, “*A’uthu billahi mina ashaytan arrajeem.*” (I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan).

Afterwards, he recites the opening chapter of the Qur’an in the name of his Lord. “*Bismillahi Rahmani rraheem.*” In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. He neither recites it in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, as the British say, nor in the name of the people, as others say. He doesn’t recite it in the name of any statue or idol and certainly not in the name of a people’s group or party either. His recitation isn’t for prospect or wealth. On the contrary, he reads the opening chapter in the name of a far higher, greater, and more exalted being.

In the name of whom all differences of color, race, and language are erased; all voices of desire, dominance, authority, and wealth are silenced. In the end, People become obedient listeners, totally ready for noble and good deeds executed in the name of Allah.

Then the believer reads *Al-Fatiha*¹ (The Opening Chapter). Every human-made book has an opening chapter, which is an introduction that sums up the purpose of the book and clarifies its goals. So this chapter is the introduction of the Divine lasting Book that isn’t encompassed by falsehood. The Qur’an is the preserved book that Allah revealed and guaranteed to protect.

“*Al-hamdulillah*” (Praise be to Allah). Praise be to Allah whose bounties are innumerable: the blessing of life, health, safety, hearing, sight, family, and children.

A person does not know the value of a blessing unless he or she loses it. You would know how valuable your sense of smell is if the flu were to congest your nose. Likewise, you would know the value of sight, if dust were to shut your eyes. You would see the value of safety, if fear were to overpower you. You would know the value of your foot if you were to twist it and not be able to walk. Imagine these blessings when you say, “*Alhamdu- lillah.*”

The second portion of the first verse reads “*Rabbil ‘alameen*” (The Lord of the worlds) What does the word “*Rabb*” mean? Its meaning does not imply a ruler or a king or even a master. The word “*Rabb,*” or Lord, entails rearing, educating,

¹ *Al-Fatiha* The opening chapter of the Qur’an, it consists of 7 verses:

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. The Compassionate, the Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. You alone we worship; and to You alone we turn for help. Guide us to the straight path. The path of those whom You have favored. Not of those who have incurred Your anger, nor of those who have gone astray. Amen.

protecting, and nurturing. The “*Rabb*” is the one who carries out the job of raising someone or something. The word “*Al-alameen*,” or the worlds, is the plural of “*Aalam*” (world). Thus, He is the Sustainer and Creator. He is the One who developed and preserved the world of the Earth, stars, waters, Jinns, demons, angels, and all other worlds.

Therefore, imagine all these meanings when you read these four words, “*Al-hamdulillahi rabb al-‘alameen*” (Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds).

The next verse states “*Arrahman Arraheem*” (the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful). He attributed mercy to Himself and repeated it because His mercy is recurring. Choosing these two names is a blessing and a bounty that should be appreciated. He did not say, “*Al-Jabbar Al-Muntaqim*” (The Compeller, The Avenger), or “*Al-Qawiyy Al-Aziz*” (The Omnipotent, The Exalted in Might). Rather, he proclaimed “*Arrahman Arraheem*” (The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful).

Thus, He helps us feel His mercy, which has spanned everything. Have you seen the mercy a mother has for her only child as she breastfeeds him or her? Indeed, Allah is more merciful to His servants than a mother to her child.¹ If a child wrongs his mother, or disobeys her or, for instance, uses her money in a way she disapproves of, she would shun him and prevent him from using that money. In contrast, a disbeliever uses the tongue Allah gave him to express disbelief while Allah provides for him and treats him with mercy. A transgressor uses the wealth Allah gave him to disobey Allah while Allah extends His mercy, sustains him, and treats him well. Allah has placed in this life one portion of mercy, which is between humans as well as amongst other creatures. A mother has mercy for her child, a brother for his sister, a husband for his wife, etc. He saved ninety-nine other portions of mercy for the Hereafter.² The portion of mercy that He dispensed among His creatures is one of the primary blessings that we should praise Allah for.

After the servant says in his prayer, “*Al-hamdulillahi rabbi l’alamin arrahman irraheem*” (Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the Most Gracious the Most Merciful) and starts to feel the mercy of Allah, he proceeds by saying, “*Maliki yawmi ddeen*” (Master of the Day of Judgment). With this phrase he senses Allah’s power and he recognizes that Allah is both Merciful as well as Sovereign. He is the most Merciful so none should despair of His mercy. He is Sovereign so no one should take His power for granted.

“*Yawmi ddeen*” (The Day of Reckoning) is the Last Day. The day when every single being that was created will rise. Every human being will be resurrected on that day; be it one killed in battle, one who died in bed, one who was devoured by a beast, one who drowned in the sea, and even one who was burned until his body turned to ashes. Allah will gather them all, first to last. A king might be standing next to a slave, the wealthy beside the destitute, and all distinctions will disappear leaving nothing except for good deeds. At that point, an announcer will ask, “*Limanil-mulk ul-yawm?*” (To whom does sovereignty belong today?) To the Sultans? To the tyrants? To the wealthy? No, “*Lillahi l’wahidi l’qahar*”³ (To Allah the One, the All-Mighty). That is the Lord of the Worlds and the Master of the Day of Judgment.

¹ Sahih Al-Bukhari , Hadeeth # 5540

² Sahih Al-Bukhari , Hadeeth # 5541

³ Qur’an, Surat Ghafir, verse # 16. (40:16)

“*Iyyaka na’budu wa iyyaka nasta’een*” (You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek assistance).

Worship is every action a servant does that consists of acknowledging Lordship. Therefore, prayer is considered to be worship. Prostration is worship. Supplication is worship. Surrounding graves with the intention of glorifying them like people circumambulate the Kaa’ba is a form of worship too, however, it’s a form of worship towards others than Allah. Consequently, such worship is not permissible in Islam. Additionally, seeking assistance can be defined as seeking help with what bolsters a human’s physical means. So, there is nothing wrong with getting a doctor’s help in prescribing medication or seeking a lawyer’s help for a proper defense. Impermissible beseeching entails asking people for things, which only Allah can provide. For instance, a person who asks others besides Allah to cure his ailment without searching for treatment is committing a form of impermissible beseeching. Likewise, those who ask others than Allah to return a lost loved one to them without searching, or to release a prisoner without appealing to the courts, or to get out of a predicament without making efforts to rid themselves of the problem are all seeking the wrong form of assistance.

After praising Allah for his blessings, you acknowledge that He is the Lord of the Worlds and the Most Merciful of the merciful ones. Likewise, you acknowledge the fact that He is the Master of the Day of Reckoning and you dissociate Him from any partner (overt or covert). After doing all of the above and dedicating your worship solely to Him, Allah instructs you on how to ask Him for what benefits you. He combines all goodness for his servants in one phrase, “*Assirat al-mustaqeem*” (The Straight Path).

“*Ihdina ssirata l’mustaqeem*” (Guide us to the straight path). Which means, guide us to the path that leads to every good thing in this life and in the hereafter. “*Sirat allatheena an’amta alaihim, ghairi l’maghdoubi alaihim wala addalleen.*” (The Path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger, nor of those who have gone astray).

“*Al-maghdoubi alaihim*” (Those who have evoked Your anger), are those who knew the truth but did not follow it, like the Jewish community who knew the prophet, but denied him. And “*Addalleen*” (those who have gone astray), are those who did not know the truth and did not follow it, like the Christians who rejected the message. Those on whom Allah has bestowed His favor knew Him as well as followed Him. They are the Prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs, and the righteous.

Amen, Which means Oh Allah, respond to us and accept our prayers. Then the believer reads a chapter of the Qur’an pondering its meanings. Let us choose one of the shortest chapters of the Qur’an, *Al-Ma’un* (The Utensils, chapter 107).

In this chapter, three types of people are defined. The first type is the type that believes in the message of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and such people are characterized as having the best traits of humane and noble virtues.

The second type is that of those who believe but neither implement nor maintain what they believe in. So, they may forget prayer or abstain from doing even the most simple of good deeds such as lending a utensil to a neighbor.

The third type is that of those who reject the religion and lack all humane characteristics. Thus, they may be harsh towards orphans and not care to have compassion for the destitute.

“*Ara’ayta l’athi youkathibu biddeen*” (Have you seen the one who denies the recompense?). Allah addresses His messenger Mohammed (PBUH) in this verse telling him, “Aren’t you surprised by this person who rejects the obvious realities (truths)? He believes with his intellect and denies with his tongue what he acknowledges in his heart. Could there be any of all truths more established than the existence of Allah? Is there anything closer and more obvious than this religion that leads along the path of goodness?”

“*Fa thalika allathi yadu’u l’yateem*” (For he is one who repulses away the orphan). Meaning he is cruel with orphans and has no compassion for the orphan’s vulnerability. This is a persistent result of denying the day of recompense. “*Wa la yahuddu ‘ala ta’aami l’miskeen*” (And he does not encourage feeding the destitute). He neither has the inclination to do so nor does he think of the pain of others. He cares about no one in this life but himself. This is an example of the third category of people discussed earlier.

The first category of people is understood to be the opposite of the descriptions in these verses. So, unlike the denier of recompense who pushes away the orphan and does not encourage feeding the destitute, a believer shows mercy to the orphans. He cares about feeding the destitute and contributes to whatever has goodness for people.

The second category for whom Allah gave an example are those who pray but take it lightly and according to themselves are often too busy to do it. The verse continues, “*Fawailun!*” (So woe!) *Wailun* in Arabic is a term referring to torment, “*lilmusallina allatheena hum ‘an salatihim sahoon*” (To those who pray but are inattentive of their prayer), “*Allatheena hum yura’una*” (Those who show off). They don’t seek Allah’s pleasure when they pray. “*wa yamna’una al-ma’un*” (And they withhold the utensils), because it is part of their character that they offer no good to anyone no matter how small that good may be. Consequently, whoever disregards his prayer but then repents and performs it sincerely without showing off becomes one who loves goodness. Such a person will no longer fall under the second category of people.

After completing the chapter, the believer says, “*Allahu Akbar*” (God is Greater) and then bows. He lowers his head to combine reverence in a physical and spiritual way with body and heart. The expression “Allah is Greater” is the motto of prayer as it is repeated before every movement like a weapon at hand. So, every time Satan whispers to you and tells you, “Rush your prayer because an important person is waiting for you,” you say, “Silence and retreat, for I am standing before Allah and Allah is Greater.”

Also, if your mind drifts towards trade, profit, pleasure, desire or fear, you say, “Allah is Greater.” You praise Allah, your Lord the Exalted, with your heart full of His praise and you reflect upon His Majesty. You exit out of your body and worldly ambitions to allow the spirit of prayer to flow from your tongue giving you the good news: “*Sami’a Allahu liman hamihah*” (Allah listens to the one who praises him). So you gladly and hopefully say “*Rabbana wa laka al-hamd*” (Our Lord, to you belongs praise).

Immediately after all the abovementioned, comes *sujud*, or prostration. Prostration is yet another clearer and more powerful expression of obedience as well as submission. You place your forehead submissively on the ground and say, “*Subhana rabbi al-a’laa*” (Exalted is my Lord Most High). Allah allows you to feel the pleasures of worship and honor when you proclaim this praise encompassed by obedience. At that moment, you truly taste the sweetness of faith. The Prophet (PBUH) once stated, “Verily, the servant (of Allah) is closest to Allah when prostrating,” for this very reason.

Finally, you stand again and read the *Fatiha*¹ as well as another chapter of the Qur’an. Let us take another chapter of only 3 verses which is short, but, is also fit to be a constitution for individuals and societies. The chapter doesn’t leave any gate that leads to goodness shut. Nor does it leave any trait that effects the reform of an individual or society. One scholar even said (I believe he was Al-Shafei’e),² “If Allah had revealed nothing from the Qur’an except this *surah* (chapter), it would have sufficed for all people.” In addition, among the miracles of Qur’an is that it encompassed all the following meanings in 3 short verses.

The chapter is, “*Bismillahi rrahman irraheem, wal ‘asr, inna l’insana lafi khusr, illa l’atheena ‘aamanu wa amilu ssalihati wa tawasaou bil haqqi wa tawasaou bi ssabr.*” It is the chapter called, “*Al-Asr*” (Time, chapter 103): (By time. Indeed man is in loss. Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.

I will not cite the various interpretations of *Al-Asr* as to whether *Asr* means Time through the ages, the time of *Asr* prayer, the prayer of *Asr* itself etc. I won’t do so because Allah unveiled another meaning to me. That is, that *Al-Asr* means time through a lifespan, and every person loses as a result of this time.

A person loses his age so to speak, in that if he were to live 70 years, he would lose one year every time a year would pass. A person also loses his youth and strength. He ends up with the passing of time at the doorstep of death. At that point, he loses everything, life itself, and nothing remains except his faith and good deeds.

Faith, as I understand it, is related to correctness of belief, while good deeds are linked to implementation. Therefore, faith is formed when a person who wishes to avoid total loss or failure establishes his belief system on the basis of distinguishing truth from falsehood. He must believe in the truth alone. He must be upright in vision and thought. A Muslim must also implement the truth that he has known and believed in during his life.

This understanding includes comprehensive guidelines for a person’s life, be it its intellectual or scientific aspects. He who knows the truth and acts upon it reaches the highest possible level of human perfection.

In addition, this verse has a constitution for the life of a society. It is not enough that an individual knows the truth and keeps it to himself. Rather, he must admonish and inform others. It isn’t enough that an individual implements truth alone either. It is necessary to enjoin cooperation as well as team work and to have patience with the hardships in doing so.

¹ *Fatiha*: The opening chapter of the Qur’an, see page 6.

² *Al-Shafei’e*: A great scholar and the founder of an Islamic school of thought.

Here are three necessary lessons that can be drawn from this chapter:

First: Humans can only swear by utilizing the phrase, “By Allah.” It is not permissible to swear by others than Allah to begin with because oaths imply ultimate glorification and worship. However, Allah’s oaths appear in the Qur’an invoking some of His creation such as: “*Wa al-Asr*” (By time), “*Wa adduha*” (By the morning brightness), “*Wa al-layl*” (By the night), “*Wa assamaa*” (By the sky). Thus, He swears to illustrate special features of these created things and to draw attention to them.

Second: The first fact which a human must believe in order to attain salvation in the hereafter is the existence of Allah and that the entire creation belongs to Him alone. He must also recognize the fact that the creation belongs exclusively to Allah and that to Him belongs the command. Thereafter, it is incumbent upon a person to believe in the message of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and to implement it.

Third: “Sabr” (Patience) comes in different forms.

1. One form of “**Sabr**” is to endure tragedies. Life, as we all know, is full of tragedies. None of us escapes calamities, be they in health, wealth, or death. There is no condolence for these tragedies other than advising one another to be patient and remembering the reward Allah has prepared for those who maintain prayers. In fact, if a person were to have an idea of what Allah has in store for him, he might feel happiness towards a tribulation. For instance, if a person were to lose his house and if his government were to compensate him multiple times for it over its actual value, the person would feel happy for losing his wealth or house. He might even be glad that the fire occurred because in the end he gained more wealth than before the tragedy.
2. “**Sabr**” can also be with respect to the hardship associated with worship. A person may experience hardship when he rises during the cold winter out of his warm bed to pray *fajr*. Whoever endures hunger and thirst during the summer days of *Ramadan* endures hardship. Whoever forces himself to pay the dues of *Zakat*,¹ endures hardship. But when a person reminds himself of the reward that Allah reserves for these acts and the fact that He enjoins patience upon a person inflicted with tragedy, the pain turns into delight and pleasure.
3. “**Sabr**” is also patience in abstaining from disobedience. The most difficult form of patience is to disregard the pleasure associated with sin despite the ability to commit it. For example, an employee who can see his co-workers engaging in bribery, dishonesty, and theft. He too can do the same, but, he chooses not to and elects to be patient instead. Likewise, a youngster may see indecency, temptation, and may hear his friends’ accounts of romantic adventures but prevents himself from following in their footsteps for fear of Allah. He makes himself patient and he’ll eventually find himself shaded under the shade of Allah’s throne on the day of the Last Stand² for doing so. On that day, people will not find any shade or protection from Allah’s decree.

After reading the chapter, the believer says, “*Allahu Akbar.*” He proceeds to bow, and then prostrates. Once he has completed all of this, he remains seated and sends his

¹ **Zakat**: obligatory charity.

² Sahih Al-Bukhari , Hadeeth # 620

greetings and salutations. He does so to exit the prayer just as like he did when he entered the prayer at the beginning. So, he praises his Lord alone to whom he has turned in all sincerity, hopeful of His reward, and asks Him for all the good things he wishes for. The believer then sends blessings upon Prophet Muhammad's soul (Peace be upon him), who served as an intermediary in conveying knowledge of the bounty of prayer. Lastly, he says *salam*¹ to his own self which has been purified with this prayer and upon all of the righteous servants of Allah.

This is the greatest reward for the person performing the prayer, that a part of the prayer is a greeting to himself, coupled with the greeting of Allah and His Messenger (PBUH). The believer then renews his pledge and reasserts the covenant by repeating the *Shahada*, or the testimony of Allah's Uniqueness and of Muhammad's prophethood as well as servitude to Allah. Furthermore, a believer requests whatever he needs. He begins so by asking Allah to send Mercy, Peace, and Blessings to the one upon whom His bounty has been bestowed, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), in the Abrahamic supplication.² This is the most elevated form of saying peace and blessings upon the Prophet's soul. Finally, he or she asks for his or her specific needs and for all the needs of the Muslims.

To conclude, he returns to daily activities by saying *salam*, "*Asalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah*" (May Allah's Peace and Mercy be upon you). With that the believer returns to the life of this world but with a different soul than the one he left with. The believer returns with the sweetness of faith dwelling in his heart. He returns with the pleasure of spiritual conversation still lingering within him and with the meanings of verses of Quran still reverberating within his heart. He returns with the remembrance of Allah, with the presence of soul, with consciousness of Allah that he experienced, with the strength that was felt and with the spirit of prayer.

¹ ***Salams***: Greetings of peace

² The Abrahamic supplication:

O Allah, exalt Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, as Thou did exalt Abraham and the followers of Abraham.

O Allah, bless Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, as Thou has blest Abraham and the followers of Abraham.