

The Quran and its Message

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Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

ARE THERE 3 OR 5 PRAYERS IN THE DAY?

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It is argued by some Muslims that as the Quran only mentions three prayers by name, these are the only 3 daily prayers ordained by the Quran.

The premise of the claim appears extremely questionable.

Where the Quran has mentioned the names of 'prayer', it has not named them with a view to establish them. Rather, the named prayers are referred to indirectly as a reference point while dealing with other matters. In one case, it is singled out requiring special attention.

In verse 24:58, where the names of the prayer 'Salaat-il-Fajri' and 'Salaat-il-Isha' do appear, they are referred to by virtue of them being reference points when certain groups of people require permission at times of undress / privacy.

024:058

"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 morning prayer (Arabic: Salaat-il Fajri)**; and when you put aside your clothes for the noon; and after the **late-night prayer (Arabic: Salaat-il'isha)**: 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 God make clear the Signs to you: for God is full of knowledge and wisdom"

With regards Salaat-al-Wusta, which is incidentally not a named prayer today (but simply implies a middle prayer), it is simply referred to as a prayer that requires special attention.

002:238

"Guard (Arabic: Hafizu) strictly your prayers (Arabic: salawaat), especially the middle (Arabic: wusta) prayer; and stand before God in a devout (frame of mind)"

To establish prayer, **the Quran never makes use of 'names'**. Rather, when it instructs believers to 'establish prayer' it does so by referring to the periods of the day.

011:114

“And establish regular prayers at the **two ends (Arabic: Salata Tarafayi)** of the day and at the **approaches of the night (Arabic: wazulafan mina al-layli)**: For those things, that are good remove those that are evil: Be that the word of remembrance to those who remember (their Lord)”

The Quran remains fully detailed and should be scrutinised to ascertain what periods are being instructed by the Quran as times for prayers.

006:114

"Say: "Shall I seek for judge other than God? - when He is the One who has sent to you the Book, **explained in detail (Arabic: Mufassalan)**." They know full well, to whom We have given the Book, that it has been sent down from your Lord in truth. Never be then of those who doubt"

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Quran refers to **establishing prayer** (aqimi-salata) by referring to the periods of the day and **not** by reference to their names. Names of particular prayers in the Quran have only been cited as reference points and to emphasise a particular prayer and not with a view to establish them.

What is often extremely unfortunate to note are the lengthy debates that often ensue. At times the debates lead to vociferous exchanges and judgmental attacks with regards whether or not a 3 or 5 daily prayer system is an instruction closer to the Quranic narratives.

It is quite ironic, that in such exchanges, basic Quranic etiquettes and guidance as to how to conduct oneself, especially between believers are completely compromised.

Whether one believes in a 3 or a 5 prayer system as being a more cogent Quranic decree, in the light of the following verse directed to the Prophet of God and the wisdom from it, any arguments seem absolutely futile.

006:052

"Repel not those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, desiring His Countenance. You are not accountable for them in aught, nor are they accountable for you in aught. So if you were to repel them, then you would be of the wrong-doers"

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