

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

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## CONTACT PRAYERS

As a Submitter to God (in Arabic, *Muslim*), I am privileged to perform a specific set of prayers each day, known as the Contact Prayer (in Arabic, *Salat*). I recite these prayers in Arabic, though I don't speak or understand the Arabic language. In order to avoid just reciting syllables without understanding, I try to think of the English meaning as I'm saying the Arabic words. I don't always remember, but when I do, I'm awed by the words God has given us to say. I'm overwhelmed by this gift from God to us—this opportunity to make contact with our Creator and humble ourselves before Him.

We begin, as we should begin everything, by saying "In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful." Everything we do or say or think is in the name of God, and it's important to remember that. He is in full control of everything.

*[31:22] Those who submit completely to GOD, while leading a righteous life, have gotten hold of the strongest bond. For GOD is in full control of all things.*

*[39:62] GOD is the Creator of all things, and He is in full control of all things.*

Then we praise God, who is Lord of the Universe. Again, this recognition that He created it all. The majesty and grandeur of the heavens—a vastness we can't really comprehend. And our amazing planet earth that sustains us, by His grace.

Then we repeat, "Most Gracious, Most Merciful." He shows us mercy way beyond what we deserve. He forgives our sins, allows us to repent and reform. Gives us chance after chance.

*[2:160] As for those who repent, reform, and proclaim, I redeem them. I am the Redeemer, Most Merciful.*

We then acknowledge that He is "Master of the Day of Judgment." We will all come before God in the end, each of us as an individual. There will be no one to intercede on our behalf. What we do on this earth is all being recorded, and that record will be shown to us. God overlooks many of our sins, but if we don't make the decision to worship God alone, our bad

deeds can overwhelm us. God does not forgive idol worship, if maintained until death. We have to devote ourselves absolutely to God, with our whole heart.

*[19:95] All of them will come before Him on the Day of Resurrection as individuals.*

*[17:13] We have recorded the fate of every human being; it is tied to his neck. On the Day of Resurrection we will hand him a record that is accessible.*

*[26:89] Only those who come to GOD with their whole heart (will be saved).*

Perhaps the most important sentence of all is: "You alone we worship; You alone we ask for help." If we turn to anyone or anything other than God for help or support, if we think we are in control of our lives, if we feel vain pride in our accomplishments, then we are not worshiping God alone. God is the only One who can support us, and He can support us completely. He is the only One who controls everything in our lives, every minute of every day.

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He is the only One who allows us to be successful in this world. It all comes from God alone.

*[22:15] If anyone thinks that GOD cannot support him in this life and in the Hereafter, let him turn completely to (his Creator in) heaven, and sever (his dependence on anyone else). He will then see that this plan eliminates anything that bothers him.*

*[8:17] It was not you who killed them; GOD is the One who killed them. It was not you who threw when you threw; GOD is the One who threw. But He thus gives the believers a chance to earn a lot of credit. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient.*

*[57:22-3] Anything that happens on earth, or to you, has already been recorded, even before the creation. This is easy for GOD to do. Thus, you should not grieve over anything you miss, nor be proud of anything He has bestowed upon you. GOD does not love those who are boastful, proud.*

And finally we implore God to guide us, to keep us on the right path in the company of other righteous worshipers and to protect us from the evils of this world, from those who would mislead us, from those who would tempt us to turn away from God.

*[6:71] Say, "Shall we implore, beside GOD, what possesses no power to benefit us or hurt us, and turn back on our heels after GOD has guided us? In that case, we would join those possessed by the devils, and rendered utterly confused, while their friends try to save them: 'Stay with us on the right path.'" Say, "GOD's guidance is the right guidance. We are commanded to submit to the Lord of the universe."*

The Contact Prayer then goes beyond those words. There are specific movements we are taught that continue to focus our attention on God—how great He is and how small we are.

We bow respectfully, while reciting several times an Arabic phrase that means, glory be to my Lord, the Great. And as we come up from this bow, we remind ourselves that God, in His mercy, responds to those who pray to Him.

Next, we prostrate on the ground. Not just on our knees, but with our foreheads on the floor. And in this most humble position we glorify God again, saying He is the Most High. I thank God for allowing me to be able to prostrate—physically, mentally and spiritually—before His Majesty.

To be able to prostrate shows willingness to submit totally to God's will. We are acknowledging that we are as nothing compared to God. He fully controls everything in us and everything around us. He has told us that when we come before Him on the Day of Judgment, everyone will be required to prostrate before Him. Those who haven't nurtured their souls and submitted willingly to God during their lives, those who chose not to prostrate here and now, will be unable to prostrate on that Day. It takes practice, enthusiasm and preparedness. It must be something willingly done during our life on earth.

*[7:206] Those at your Lord are never too proud to worship Him; they glorify Him and fall prostrate before Him.*

*[22:77] O you who believe, you shall bow, prostrate, worship your Lord, and work righteousness, that you may succeed.*

*[68:42-3] The day will come when they will be exposed, and they will be required to fall prostrate, but they will be unable to. With their eyes subdued, humiliation will cover them. They were invited to fall prostrate when they were whole and able.*

Between these movements, we recite the well-known phrase "Allahu Akbar" which simply means God is Great. How can anyone deny that the One who created the heavens and the earth, the One who controls our life

and our death, the One who provides for us and protects us, how can you deny that He is Great.

And to finish, while still on our knees, we say to God that we bear witness that He is the One and only God and that He has no partners. There is no one who equals God, no one who can stand beside Him, no one who can intercede for us.

*[112:4] "None equals Him."*

*[39:44] Say, "All intercession belongs to GOD." To Him belongs all sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, then to Him you will be returned.*

*[2:48] Beware of the day when no soul can avail another soul, no intercession will be accepted, no ransom can be paid, nor can anyone be helped.*

When I recite my Contact Prayer, this is what I try to concentrate on. May God accept from me my worship and keep me on the right path.

Al-Fātehah

*[1:1] In the name of GOD, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

*[1:2] Praise be to GOD, Lord of the universe.*

*[1:3] Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

*[1:4] Master of the Day of Judgment.*

*[1:5] You alone we worship; You alone we ask for help.*

*[1:6] Guide us in the right path;*

*[1:7] the path of those whom You blessed; not of those who have deserved wrath, nor of the strayers.*

Lydia

This article was first published in "The Heart of Quran" on Medium. Medium is a writers forum used by millions around the world. "The Heart of Quran" is a publication which encourages people to write about faith issues, using Quran alone. You can enjoy many inspiring articles at <https://medium.com/the-heart-of-quran> I hope you'll check it out.

## Contact Prayers (Salat)

The Salat is one of the commandments in the Quran and of course we want to uphold all the commandments the best we can. The word “salat” comes from the root word “Sila” which means connection or contact. When we observe the Contact Prayer, Salat, we make contact with our Creator. It’s more than just “pray”. God gives us an opportunity to make contact with Him 5 times a day.

We know that the Salat has many benefits for the real us, the soul. There are also benefits for the body. At a very simple level: getting up and moving every so often is good for the health, while sitting for long hours ironically causes the body more stress. Waking up at dawn is also shown to provide better mental health.

In soul terms, we see that righteous works strengthen and develop the soul.

*[30:44] Whoever disbelieves, disbelieves to the detriment of his own soul, while those who lead a righteous life, do so to strengthen and develop their own souls.*

### Requirements of the Test

*[6:158] Are they waiting for the angels to come to them, or your Lord, or some physical manifestations of your Lord? The day this happens, no soul will benefit from believing if it did not believe before that, and did not reap the benefits of belief by leading a righteous life.\* Say, “Keep on waiting; we too are waiting.”*  
\*6:158 After believing, the soul must grow and develop through the worship practices prescribed by God.

*[7:8] The scales will be set on that day, equitably. Those whose weights are heavy will be the winners.*

*[23:102] As for those whose weights are heavy, they will be the winners.*

*[101:6] As for him whose weights are heavy. [101:7] He will lead a happy (eternal) life.*

Let’s turn our attention to the verses about Salat and its importance in making us a “soul heavy-weight”, God willing.

Salat is mentioned more than 70 times in the Quran. It is associated with righteousness (2:3), seeking help (2:45), steadfastness (2:45, 2:153, 13:22, 22:35, 31:17), remembering God (4:103, 20:14, 29:45), God’s protection / God “being with us” (5:12), belief in the Hereafter (6:92), wiping out evil works (11:114), attaining God’s mercy (24:56).

We’re reminded or commanded to observe salat early in the Quran. The Quran starts with Al-Fātehah, which we recite in Salat. Then we turn to Sura 2, and it says:

*[2:1] A.L.M. [2:2] This scripture is infallible; a beacon for the righteous; [2:3] who believe in the unseen, observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and from our provisions to them, they give to charity.*

This is reiterated in Sura 31.

*[31:1] A. L. M. [31:2] These (letters) constitute proofs of this book of wisdom.*

*[31:3] A beacon and a mercy for the righteous. [31:4] Who observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and as regards the Hereafter, they are absolutely certain.*

*[31:5] They are following the guidance from their Lord, and they are the winners.*

We are clearly commanded to do the Salat. And to do so consistently.

*[2:43] You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and bow down with those who bow down. [2:44] Do you exhort the people to be righteous, while forgetting yourselves, though you read the scripture? Do you not understand? [2:45] You shall seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat). This is difficult indeed, but not so for the reverent,*

*You Shall Observe the Contact Prayers [2:238] You shall consistently observe the Contact Prayers, especially the middle prayer, and devote yourselves totally to GOD.*

The next verse reminds us the importance of observing Salat, even if we’re stuck in a car and cannot get out safely or in any unusual situation. We should consistently do our Contact Prayers, because it’s that good for us. It’s that important. *[2:239] Under unusual circumstances, you may pray while walking or riding. Once you are safe, you shall commemorate GOD as He taught you what you never knew.*

Salat, along with worshiping God alone and giving our zakat charity, are “basics” for our religion. *[98:5] All that was asked of them was to worship GOD, devoting the religion absolutely to Him alone, observe the contact prayers (Salat), and give the obligatory charity (Zakat). Such is the perfect religion.*

As submitters, when God asks us to do something, we respond and say we hear and we obey.

### Traits of the Believers

*[42:37-38] They avoid gross sins and vice, and when angered they forgive. They respond to their Lord by observing the Contact Prayers (Salat). Their affairs are decided after due consultation among themselves, and from our provisions to them they give (to charity).*

In addition to being in some sense one of the first reminders we see when we open the Quran, Salat keeps coming up when submitters or believers are described. In Sura 23, The Believers, the first thing God tells us: *[23:1] Successful indeed are the believers; [23:2] who are reverent during their Contact Prayers (Salat).*

This is also seen in sura 70: *[70:22-35] Except for the worshipers. Who always observe their contact prayers (Salat). ... They consistently observe their contact prayers (Salat), on time. They have deserved a position of honor, in Paradise.*

The true believers are described in Sura 8 and they clearly observe the Salat:

*[8:2] The true believers are those whose*

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MASJID TUCSON United Submitters International

PO Box 43476 Tucson AZ 85733-3476 USA

Tel: (520) 323 7636

internet web site: [www.masjiduntucson.org](http://www.masjiduntucson.org)

e-mail: [info@masjiduntucson.org](mailto:info@masjiduntucson.org) (or: [masjiduntucson@gmail.com](mailto:masjiduntucson@gmail.com) )

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hearts tremble when GOD is mentioned, and when His revelations are recited to them, their faith is strengthened, and they trust in their Lord. [8:3] They observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and from our provisions to them, they give to charity. [8:4] Such are the true believers. They attain high ranks at their Lord, as well as forgiveness and a generous provision.

When righteousness is defined, the Contact Prayers are part of that description (2:177). It's a trait of those who believe in the Hereafter (6:92). It's part of our natural instinct toward monotheism (30:30-1).

We have many examples of righteous people doing Salat: Moses (10:87), Jesus (19:31), Ismail (19:54-5), and of course, Abraham, who delivered all religious duties (21:73). We also have examples of those who lost the practice. They went astray and then God took away the gift of prayer. [19:59] *After them, He substituted generations who lost the Contact Prayers (Salat), and pursued their lusts. They will suffer the consequences. [19:60] Only those who repent, believe, and lead a righteous life will enter Paradise, without the least injustice.*

We need to do our worship practices here and now. Otherwise we'll be physically unable to prostrate before God. Our

soul will just be too weak on the Day of Judgment. [68:42] *The day will come when they will be exposed, and they will be required to fall prostrate, but they will be unable to. [68:43] With their eyes subdued, humiliation will cover them. They were invited to fall prostrate when they were whole and able.*

The most important objective of Salat is remembering God (29:45, 20:14, 87:14-5). Let's keep in mind that remembering God is a commandment in itself (2:152, 4:103, 7:205, 33:41-42) and is a means of being happy (20:130, 13:28-29). How does that happen? A nourished soul is a happy soul. And remembering God allows us to grow our souls and thus grow closer to God.

[29:45] *You shall recite what is revealed to you of the scripture, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), for the Contact Prayers prohibit evil and vice. But the remembrance of GOD (through Salat) is the most important objective. GOD knows everything you do.*

[20:14] *"I am GOD; there is no other god beside Me. You shall worship Me alone, and observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) to remember Me.*

[87:14] *Successful indeed is the one who redeems his soul. [87:15] By remembering the name of his Lord, and observing the contact prayers (Salat). [87:16] Indeed, you are preoccupied with this first*

*life. [87:17] Even though the Hereafter is far better and everlasting.*

God tells us to be reverent during Salat (23:2). If we're reverent, we're more likely to be remembering God during Salat rather than work or some worldly thing that's on our mind. We also see the connection between salat and avoiding evil and vice (29:45). Perhaps because we are more aware of God, we are more likely to follow God's commandments and not go astray.

The contact prayers are a gift from God. [108:1] *We have blessed you with many a bounty. [108:2] Therefore, you shall pray to your Lord (Salat), and give to charity.*

If we want to attain God's mercy, we need to consistently observe our Salat.

#### *Formula for Success*

[24:56] *You shall observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and obey the messenger, that you may attain mercy.*

#### *The Winners*

[9:71] *The believing men and women are allies of one another. They advocate righteousness and forbid evil, they observe the Contact Prayers (Salat) and give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and they obey GOD and His messenger. These will be showered by GOD's mercy. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise.*

Faiz