Recap >>>

Last class we did the Arkaan (Pillars) and the Waajibaat (Mandatory acts/Requirements/Obligations) of the Prayer and also the differences between them.

We learned that if we miss any of the Arkaan/Pillars (intentionally/unintentionally), we need to do it again and then make Sujud as-Sahw, but if we miss any of the Waajibaat/Mandatory acts (unintentionally), we don’t need to do it again but we should compensate it with Sujud as-Sahw.

Today we will see the Sunan As-Salaat (i.e. The Sunnah Acts of the Prayer). The Sunan As-Salaat perfects our prayers.

**Sunan As-Salaat (The Sunnah Acts of the Prayer)**


Definition of Sunan as-Salaat-

All the acts which are stated in the description of the prayer other than its Shurut (Conditions), Arkaan (Pillars) and the Waajibaat (Mandatory/Obligatory acts) are considered as Sunan as-Salaat/Sunnah acts. Leaving any of it (i.e. Sunan as-Salaat) doesn’t affect the prayer or nullify it and there is no need to compensate it with Sujud As-Sahw (if we forget any of it).
Sunan as-Salaat/the Sunnah acts are of two types: Sunan Qawliyah (Verbal Sunnah Acts) and Sunan Fa'liyah (Physical Sunnah Acts).

**i. Sunan Qawliyah [The Verbal Sunnah Acts]**

- What is Sunan Qawliyah?
  - It is an act that involves verbal expressions.

- What are the requirements for performing Sunan Qawliyah?
  - It does not require specific postures or movements associated with physical actions.

- Examples of Sunan Qawliyah:
  - "Ask for forgiveness in the morning and evening." (sunan minal jarh wa al-jabr)
  - "Ask for forgiveness in the morning and evening." (sunan minal jarh wa al-jabr)
1- Al-Istiftaah/The Opening Supplication

After the Takbeeratul Ihraam, it is Sunnah to say any of the Opening Supplications such as:

"سبحانك اللّهُمّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ."

Subhaanaka Allaahumma wa bihamdika, wa tabaarakasmuka, wa ta’aalaa jadduka, wa laa ‘ilaaha ghayruka (Glory is to You O Allah, and praise. Blessed is Your Name and Exalted is Your Majesty. There is none worthy of worship but You)

The Opening Supplication is the opening of the prayer and it is recited to make the prayer perfect.

2- At-Ta’oodh/Seeking refuge in Allah

In the first rak’ah of the prayer before reciting Surat Al-Faatihah, it is Sunnah to say: “A’oodhu billaahi min-ash-shaytaanir-rajjeem (I seek refuge with Allaah from the accursed shaytaan)”.

Sometimes if we forget or miss the Isti’aadah (At-Ta’oodh) or the Opening Supplication, the prayer will not be invalidated as these are the Sunnah acts and so we don’t need to cut/break our prayer or re-do it.

3- The Basmalah

It is Sunnah to say: “Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem (In the name of Allaah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful)” in every rak’ah before reciting Surat al-Faatihah and also before other Soorahs/Chapters (apart from Surat At-Tawbah) which are recited after Al-Faatihah (if these Chapters are recited from the beginning).

4- Saying the ‘Tasbeeh’ more than once in the Rukoo’ (Bowing) and Sujood (Prostration)

It is Sunnah to say 'Subhana Rabbiyal 'Adheem' in the Rukoo’ and ‘Subahaana Rabbiyal A’laa’ in the Sujood thrice.
This is same like Wudhu’- It is obligatory to wash all the prescribed parts once is obligatory, but it is Sunnah to wash them twice/thrice (except for wiping the head and the ears which is always done only once). It is always better to do the Sunnah acts in all the acts of worship in order to perfect them.

5- Saying more than “Rabbi-ghfir lee, Rabbi-ghfir lee (My Lord, forgive me, My Lord, forgive me)” between the two Sujoods/Prostrations.

This means it is Sunnah to say-

اللَّهُمَّ إِغْفِرْ لي، وَارْحَمْنِي، وَاجْبَرْنِي، وَعَافِنِي، وَارْفَعْنِي

Allaahumma-ghfir lee, warhamnee, wahdinee, wa 'aafinee, warzuqnee, warfa'nee (O Allah forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, support me, protect me, provide for me and elevate me), between the two Sujoods.

6- Saying more (words) than "Rabbana wa laka al-hamd (Our Lord, all praise be to You)” after rising from the Rukoo’ (Bowing)

This means after saying ‘Rabbana wa laka al-hamd’, it is Sunnah to say:

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ، حَمْداً كَثِيراً طَيِّباً مُبَارَكاً فِيهِ

(Rabbanaa wa lakal hamd), hamdan katheeran tayyiban mubaarakan feeh [(Our Lord, praise is Yours), abundant, good and blessed praise]

Or to say:

مَلَّ الْسَّمَوَاتِ وَمَلَّ الْأَرْضِ، وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا، وَمَلَّ الْعَرْوُشَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهُ

Mil'as-samaawaati wa mil'al-'ardhi wa maa baynahumaa, wa mil'a maa shi'ta min shay 'in ba'd [(A praise that) fills the heavens and the earth and what lies between them, and whatever else You please]
7- Reciting more or another Surah (Chapter) from the Qur’an after Surat Al-Faatihah. It is Sunnah to recite the longer ones of al-mufassal in the Fajr Prayer, the shorter ones of it in the Maghrib Prayer, and the medium ones of it in the remaining prayers (i.e. Salaat Ad-Dhuhr, Al-‘Asr & Al-‘Isha’)

Reciting Surat Al-Faatihah is one of the Arkaan/Pillars of the prayer and it should be recited in every rak’ah. Reciting any Surah/Chapter after Surat Al-Faatihah is Sunnah.

Mostly in the five daily Prayers (i.e. Obligatory Prayers), the Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to recite the Chapters from al-mufassal; i.e. starting from Surat Qaf (Chapter 50) till the end i.e. till Surat An-Nas (Chapter 114). It is called al-mufassal (divided) because there are many breaks between the Chapters in which the Basmalah appears. The Suwar (Chapters) of al-mufassal are shorter when compared to the long Chapters such as Surah Al-Baqarah, Ale-‘Imraan etc. There are different things mentioned in the Qur’an and we can find all of these things, especially about the faith (‘Aqeedah), summarized in Juz’ al-mufassal.

In Juz’ al-mufassal we have:

❖ **Tawaal-il mufassal (Long Chapters of al-mufassal)** - These Suwar/Chapters start from Surat Al-Qaaf and end with Surat Al-Mursalat. These longer Chapters of al-mufassal are recited in **Salaat Al-Fajr**.
Awaasit al-mufassal (Medium Chapters of al-mufassal) -
These Suwar/Chapters start from Surat An-Naba’ and end with Surat Al-Layl. These medium/middle Chapters of al-mufassal are recited in Salaat Ad-Dhuhr, Al-’Asr & Al-’Isha’.

Qisaar al-mufassal (Short Chapters of al-mufassal) - These Suwar/Chapters start from Surat Ad-Dhuha and end with Surat An-Naas. These shorter Chapters of al-mufassal are recited in Salaat Al-Maghrib.

So these are the Verbal Sunnah acts (Sunan Qawliyah) of the prayer.

ii. Sunan Fa’liyah [The Physical Sunnah Acts]
1- Raising the hands with the Takbeeratul Ihraam (Opening Takbeer), when making Rukoo’ (Bowing), rising from it and when rising up to stand for the Third Rak’ah.

The Takbeeratul Ihraam/the Opening Takbeer (i.e. saying ‘Allaahu Akbar’ at the beginning of the prayer) is a Rukn/Pillar and all the other Takbeerat other than the Takbeeratul Ihraam (i.e. saying “Allaahu Akbar” while moving from one position to another during the prayer) are Waajibaat/Obligations).

Raising the hands (to the level of shoulders or ears) with the Takbeeratul Ihraam and when making Rukoo’, rising from the Rukoo’ and when rising up to stand for the third rak’ah (i.e. after reciting the Tashahhud Al-Awwal/First Tashahhud)] is one of the Sunnan as-Salaat/Sunnah acts.

So raising the hands is not an Obligatory act of the prayer but it is one of the Sunnan as-Salaat and so we don’t need to make issues in this matter though there are differences of opinion among the scholars according to the various opinions of the four Madhahib. May Allah guide us always to the best (ameen).

2- Placing the right hand over the left while standing before the Rukoo’ (Bowing) and after it.

It is Sunnah to place the right hand over the left when standing before the Rukoo’ and also after rising from it. We can find almost everyone placing
their right hands over the left when standing in every rak’ah before the Rukoo’, but only a few after the Rukoo’ and it is one of the issues on which the scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) have differed.

So if we see a person placing his right hand over the left while standing after the Rukoo’, we should not make it an issue as it is a Sunnah act.

3- Looking at the place of prostration.

4- Separating the hands from the belly/stomach and sides during Sujood/Prostration.

It is Sunnah to keep away or separate the arms from the stomach and sides (flanks) and also to separate the stomach from thighs during the Sujood.

5- Al-Iftiraash-

Sitting in the position of Iftiraash which is to lay the left leg on its side and to sit/rest on it while keeping the right foot erect/upright with its toes facing the Qiblah (as seen in the picture). It is Sunnah to sit in this position in all the sittings of the prayer, except for Tashahhud Al-Akheer/The Final Tashahhud of the prayers which are prayed in more than 2 rak’ahs/units.

So it is Sunnah to sit in the position of Al-Iftiraash (Muftarishan)-

- In the First Tashahhud (i.e. Tashahhud Al-Awwal) of the prayers that are prayed in more than 2 rak’ahs (i.e. prayers having 2 Tashahhuds-Awwal & Akheer, for ex: Salaat Ad-Dhuhr, Al-‘Asr, Al-Maghrib & Al-‘Isha’).
- Between the two Sujoods/Prostrations.
• When sitting for Tashahhud in the final rak’ah of the Fajr prayer and all the Voluntary/Sunnah prayers which are prayed in 2 rak’ahs/units (These prayers have only one Tashahhud).

6- At-Tawarruk-

*Sitting in the position of At-Tawarruk which is to rest on the left thigh while placing the left leg under the right and keeping the right foot upright (as seen in the picture). It is Sunnah to sit in this position for Tashahhud Al-Akheer/The Final Tashahhud of the prayers which are prayed in more than 2 rak’ahs/units.*

So it is Sunnah to sit in the position of At-Tawarruk (Mutawarrikan) for the Tashahhud al-Akheer (Final Tashahhud) in the final rak’ah of those obligatory prayers which are prayed in more than 2 rak’ahs/units such as Salaat Ad-Dhuhr, Al-‘Asr, Al-Maghrib & Al-‘Isha’ (except Salaat Al-Fajr which is prayed in 2 rak’ahs).

Both Al-Iftiraash and At-Tawarruk are two ways/positions of sitting. Sitting for both the Tashahhuds [Awwal (First) and Akheer (Final)] and also between the two Sujoods (Prostrations) is important/obligatory, but if a person finds it difficult to sit in the positions of Al-Iftiraash or At-Tawarruk, he doesn’t need to worry about it as it is Sunnah to sit in these positions and not obligatory.

So these are the Physical Sunnah Acts (Sunan Fa’liyah) of the prayer.

In our previous classes we had done Sifat Salaat An-Nabi and we had mentioned all the actions of the prayer which the Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to do *(For more details on Sifat Salaat An-Nabi, please refer the notes of class 20 on 04.12.2012).* The Sunnah acts are those
which the Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to sometimes do and sometimes not because he didn’t want to make them obligatory upon his ummah. For example: At first the Prophet (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) used to pray Taraweeh in congregation in the masjid, then he stopped praying because he (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) feared that it might be made obligatory upon his ummah.

We know that performing the Pillars of the prayer without hastening and performing them in the correct order are mentioned in the Arkaan/Pillars of the prayer and they are the essential parts/acts of the prayer. So we cannot hasten while performing these Pillars/Obligations of the prayer or omit any of them in order to shorten our prayer, but if we really need to shorten our prayers due to some situations (ex: illness/other valid reasons), then we can skip any of its Sunnah acts instead of hastening while performing it. For example: You can recite the Tasbeeh; i.e. Subhaana Rabbiyal 'Adheem in the Rukoo’ and Subhaana Raabiyal A'laa in the Sujood, only once instead of saying it thrice. We can also recite the short Suwar (Chapters) or the shortest Surah like Surat Al-Kauthar in the prayer, but if we are reciting a long Surah, then we cannot hasten while reciting it.

SubhanAllah! Allah is giving the reward for the five daily prayers even if we leave the Sunnah acts of these prayers and shorten them (due to some situations/valid reasons). We must understand that practicing our religion is very easy, Alhamdulillah. We cannot judge people who make their prayers shorter or longer because everyone has their own reasons.

Remember!

We should not make it a habit to skip the Sunnah acts every time and shorten the prayer. When we neglect the Sunnah, we are missing out on a great reward.

Differences between Sunan as Salaat (Sunnah acts), Arkaan (Pillars) and the Waajibaat (Mandatory/Obligatory acts) →

- The Arkaan/Pillars are more about actions of the prayer such as Qiyaam, Rukoo’, Sujood, Tashahhud etc.
• The Waajibaat/ Obligations are more about words/statements that has to be recited in the prayer.
• The Sunan as-Salaat/Sunnah acts are about reciting more words/statements than those that are recited in the Waajibaat.
• If we miss/omit any of the Pillars intentionally or unintentionally, it will invalidate the prayer and so we should do it again and also do the Sujud as-Sahw.
• If we omit any of the Obligatory acts intentionally, it will invalidate the prayer, but if we forget or omit it unintentionally, then there is no need to repeat it, but we should make it up with Sujud as-Sahw.
• If we forget or omit any of Sunnah acts, it will not invalidate the prayer and so we don't need to do it again or compensate it with Sujud-as-Sahw.

For ex: The Opening supplication is not mentioned in the Pillars or the Mandatory Acts/Requirements of the prayer. So it is one of the Sunnah acts of the prayer and if we recite it we will get extra reward for it, but if we forget or miss it, the prayer will not be nullified. So we don't need to cut/break the prayer or re-start it in order to recite the Opening Supplication again and there is no need to make it up with Sujud as-Sahw.

We need to learn all the Arkaan (Pillars), Waajibaat (Obligations) and Sunan (Sunnah acts) of the Prayer in order to perfect our prayers and not to miss out any of its essential acts and to know what we should do if we miss one of them in our Prayers. As there are many Sunnah as-Salaat, we need to better memorize the Arkaan and the Waajibaat of the prayer, so that we know the rest of the acts are Sunan As-Salaat.

When we are doing the Sunnah acts, we are following the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam). On the Day of Resurrection, any shortfall in our obligations will be made up from our Sunnah actions, if we have any to our credit.

So performing the Sunnah acts (Voluntary acts) perfects our prayers and all the other acts of worship and makes us closer to Allah.
SubhanAllah! Look at this beautiful hadeeth mentioned by our teacher during the class >>>

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: Messenger of Allah (sallallaahu ’alayhi wa sallam) said, "Allah, the Exalted, has said: ‘I will declare war against him who treats with hostility a pious worshipper of Mine. **And the most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawaafil (voluntary prayers or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) until I love him, (so much so that) I become his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me something, I will surely give him, and if he seeks My Protection (refuge), I will surely protect him'. [Al-Bukhaari]

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Please check out these links for more information on some of the above mentioned Sunnah acts-

http://www.islamqa.info/en/ref/3267/Raising%20the%20hands
http://www.islamqa.info/en/ref/2427/placing%20the%20hands%20after%20the%20Rukoo'
http://www.islamqa.info/en/ref/21358/placing%20the%20hands%20after%20the%20Rukoo

And Allah knows best