

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2026

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

*Produced by:*

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# **Study 10: Prayer — Means of Purification**

- In a hadith, the saying of prayers is compared to washing oneself in a river. It is reported:

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: “Tell me if there were a stream running by the door of any of you and he takes bath in it every day five times, what do you say, will it leave anything of the dirt which was on him?” They said: “Nothing of the dirt on him will be left.” He said: “So that is the example of the five prayers by which Allāh obliterates the sins.”

(Bukhari, hadith 528)

- By the obliterating or blotting out of evils is meant curbing the tendency to go against God's commands. The person who feels himself in the presence of God five times a day has his mind purified of all scum, just as the one who is bathing is purified of physical dirt.
- Prayer, according to the Holy Quran and Hadith, is the means for the purification of the **soul**.
- As a preparation for prayer, the purification of the **body** and the **garments** that we wear is declared in the Quran to be necessary.

- The 74th chapter of the Quran is the second revelation which the Holy Prophet ﷺ received. Its first five verses are quoted below to show the importance of outward cleanliness in the religion of Islam. Addressing the Holy Prophet, it says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ﴿٢﴾ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ﴿٤﴾ وَالرُّجُزَ فَاهْجُرْ ﴿٥﴾

“O you who wrap yourself up! Arise and warn, and your Lord do magnify,  
and your garments do purify, and uncleanness do shun.”

— 74:1–5

- Three fundamental duties are laid down here:
  1. “Warning the people” (i.e., warning them of the consequences of wrongdoing),
  2. “magnifying the Lord” which is done through prayer, and
  3. “purifying the garments, and the body”.
- The two ideas, the purification of the body and of the soul, are very often mentioned together in the Quran, for example:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

“Surely Allah loves those who turn much to Him,  
and He loves those who purify themselves.” — 2:222

لَمَسْجِدًا أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ<sup>ط</sup>  
فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا<sup>ط</sup> وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

“Certainly a mosque founded on observance of duty from the first day is more  
deserving that you should stand in it.

In it are men who love to purify themselves.

And Allah loves those who purify themselves.”

— 9:108

- In the first verse above, the words “those who turn much to Allah” refer to the need for us to purify ourselves spiritually, in mind, heart and character. The words “those who purify themselves” refer to the need for us to purify ourselves bodily. The two kinds of purifications are connected with each other.
- In the second verse above, by those “who love to purify themselves” are meant those who purify themselves bodily to go to the mosque for prayer. But before that, the “observance of duty” is mentioned, which can only be done by purifying the heart.

- Hadith also lays special stress on outward purification of the body. According to one hadith:

“The key to paradise is prayer, and the key to prayer is purification.” (Mishkat, hadith 294).
- According to another hadith:

“Purification is one-half of faith.” (Sahih Muslim, hadith 223).
- The word translated as “purify”, in the verses and hadith reports quoted above, is based on the word *ṭahārat* طهارة.

- Inward purity is the real aim, but outward purity is a necessary preparation. A **pure mind in a pure body** is the watchword of Islam. Here cleanliness is not *next* to godliness, as runs the common saying, but it is *half* of godliness or faith.
- The Holy Quran further says:

يَبْنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ خُذُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ ...

“O children of Adam, attend to your adornment  
at every time (or place) of prayer ...” — 7:31

- This shows that when assembling in mosques for prayer, attention must be paid to outward appearance and purity as well. One who is dirty in clothing or in his body would undoubtedly be offensive to others. Hence it is specially laid down that, in the larger gatherings on Fridays, everyone must take a bath before coming to prayer, and use scent if possible.

- But what is specially aimed at is adornment or beautification **in a spiritual sense**. A Muslim must attend to inner beautification, for prayer is really meant as an aid to the beauty of the soul. He must come to prayer with a **heart** free from all impurities and full of the highest aspirations and noblest sentiments.

- *Wuḍū*, in the terminology of Islamic teachings, means the washing of certain parts of the body before prayers. The necessary details of *wuḍū* are given in the Holy Quran, chapter 5, verse 6.
- *Wuḍū* may be performed before every prayer, but the necessity for it arises only when there has been passing of urine, stools or wind, or when a person has been fast asleep.
- Taking of a bath is necessary in certain cases before prayer can be performed; for example after sexual intercourse. Bath is also necessary for the Friday and the Eid prayers.

- The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

“A person has not performed prayer if he has not done *wuḍū*, and a person has not performed *wuḍū* if he did not remember Allah in doing it.”

(Abu Dawud, hadith 101)

- Doing *wuḍū* for prayer is not a mere bodily ritual. A person should be clean and he should feel that he stands in need of the purification of the soul as he stands in need of the cleaning of the body. The remembrance of Allah during *wuḍū* is needed to direct attention to this.

- Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes the following instruction for his followers:

“When you stand up for prayer (*namaz*), it should not be as if you are performing a ritual. But before the prayer, just as you perform an outward *wuḍū*, also perform an inward *wuḍū* and wash off ungodly thoughts from your limbs. Then, with both these kinds of *wuḍū*, stand up and make many supplications (*duas*) in your prayer.”

(Izala Auham, p. 829)

**END OF STUDY 10**