

## The pillars, obligatory parts and Sunnahs of prayer

### What are the Sunnahs of prayer?.

Praise be to Allaah.

There are many Sunnahs of prayer, both words and actions. What is meant by Sunnahs is things other than the pillars (essential parts) and obligatory parts of the prayer.

Some of the fuqaha ' stated that there are seventeen verbal Sunnahs in prayer, and fifty-five actions which are Sunnah. The prayer is not invalidated if one omits one of these actions, even if that is done deliberately, unlike the pillars and obligatory parts.

The difference between a pillar and an obligatory part is that a pillar cannot be waived, whether one omits it deliberately or by mistake, rather it must be done. An obligatory part is waived if one forgets, and it can be compensated for by doing the prostration of forgetfulness (sujood al-sahw).

It may be useful here to mention the pillars of prayer and its obligatory parts, followed by some of its Sunnahs, based on the book Daleel al-Taalib, which is a well known summary used by Hanbali fuqaha ' .

1 – The pillars of prayer, of which there are fourteen, as follows:

- (i) Standing during obligatory prayers if one is able to do so

(ii)

The opening takbeer (saying  
“ Allaahu akbar ” )

(iii)

Reciting al-Faatihah

(iv)

Rukoo ' (bowing), the least of  
which means bending so that the hands can touch the knees, but the most  
complete form means making the back level and the head parallel with it.

(v)

Rising from bowing

(vi)

Standing up straight

(vii)

Sujood (prostration), the most  
perfect form of which is placing the forehead, nose, palms, knees and toes  
firmly on the ground, and the least of which is placing a part of each of  
these on the ground.

(viii)

Rising from prostration

(ix)

Sitting between the two  
prostrations. However one sits is good enough, but the Sunnah is to sit  
muftarishan, which means sitting on the left foot and holding the right foot  
upright with the toes pointing towards the qiblah.

(x)

Being at ease in each of these  
physical pillars

(xi)

The final tashahhud

(xii)

Sitting to recite the final tashahhud and the two salaams

(xiii)

The two salaams. This means saying twice, “ al-salaamu ‘ alaykum wa rahmat-Allaah (Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allaah). ” In naafil prayers it is sufficient to say one salaam; the same also applies to the funeral prayer.

(xiv)

Doing the pillars in the order mentioned here. If a person deliberately prostrates before bowing, for example, the prayer is invalidated; if he does that by mistake, he has to go back and bow, and then prostrate.

2 – The obligatory parts of prayer, of which there are eight, as follows:

(i)

Takbeers other than the opening takbeer

(ii)

Saying “ Sami ’ a Allaahu liman hamidah (Allaah hears those who praise Him ” – for the imam and for the one who is praying alone.

(iii)

Saying “ Rabbana wa

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Taka ' I-hamd (Our Lord, to You be praise) ”

(iv)

Saying “ Subhaana rabbiy  
al- ‘ azeem (Glory be to my Lord Almighty) ” once when bowing

(v)

Saying “ Subhaana rabbiy  
al-a ' laa (Glory be to my Lord most High) ” once when prostrating

(vi)

Saying “ Rabb ighfir li  
(Lord forgive me) ” between the two prostrations

(vii)

The first tashahhud

(viii)

Sitting for the first tashahhud

3 – The Sunnah words of the prayer,  
of which there are eleven, as follows:

(i)

Saying after the opening  
takbeer, “ Subhaanaka Allaahumma wa bi hamdika, wa tabaaraka ismuka,  
wa  
ta ' aala jadduka wa laa ilaaha ghayruka (Glory and praise be to You, O  
Allaah; blessed be Your name, exalted be Your Majesty, and there is no god  
but You). ” This is called du ' aa ' al-istiftaah (opening du ' aa ' )

(ii)

Seeking refuge with Allaah

(iii)

## Saying Bismillaah

(iv)

Saying Ameen

(v)

Reciting a soorah after  
al-Faatihah

(vi)

Reciting out loud, in the case  
of the imam

(vii)

Saying after the tahmeed  
(Rabbana wa laka ' I-hamd), for one who is not praying behind an imam: " Mil ' al-samawaati wa mil ' al-ard wa mil ' ma shi ' ta min shay ' in ba ' d (Filling the heavens, filling the earth, and filling whatever else You wish). " (The correct view is that it is also Sunnah for one who is praying in congregation)

(viii)

Saying the tasbeeh when bowing  
more than once, such as a second or third time or more

(ix)

Saying the tasbeeh in  
prostration more than once

(x)

Saying " Rabb ighfir li  
(Lord forgive me) " more than once between the two prostrations

(xi)

Sending prayers upon the family  
of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in the last  
tashahhud and sending blessings upon him and upon them, and saying

du 'aa '  
after that.

4 – Actions which are Sunnah, which are called postures:

- (i)  
Raising the hands when saying  
the opening takbeer
  
- (ii)  
Raising the hands when bowing
  
- (iii)  
Raising the hands when rising  
from bowing
  
- (iv)  
Dropping them after that
  
- (v)  
Placing the right hand over the  
left
  
- (vi)  
Looking towards the place of  
prostration
  
- (vii)  
Standing with the feet apart
  
- (viii)  
Holding the knees with fingers  
spread apart when bowing, holding the back straight and making the head  
parallel with it.

(ix)

Placing the parts of the body

on which one prostrates firmly on the ground, apart from the knees, because

it is makrooh to press them firmly on the ground.

(x)

Keeping the elbows away from

the sides, and the belly from the thighs, and the thighs from the calves;

keeping the knees apart; holding the feet upright; holding the toes apart on

the ground; placing the hands level with the shoulders with the fingers

spread.

(xi)

Sitting muftarishan between the

two prostrations and in the first tashahhud, and sitting mutawarrikan in the

second tashahhud.

(xii)

Placing the hands on the thighs

with the fingers together between the two prostrations, and in the

tashahhud, except that in the latter the pinkie and ring fingers should be

held in, a circle made with the middle finger and thumb, and one should

point with the forefinger when remembering Allaah.

(xiii)

Turning to the right and left

when saying the salaam

There are some differences of opinion among the fuqaha ' regarding some of these issues; what is regarded as obligatory by some is

regarded as Sunnah by others. This is discussed in detail in the books of

fiqh.

And Allaah knows best.