

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL CONCEPT OF PRAYER TIMES

A. The Obligation of Prayer (*M'ashrū'iyyah al-ṣalāh*)

Prayer was obliged at night of journey (*lailah Al-Isrā*) approximately five years before the migratory of the prophet Muhammad PBUH to Madinah. It was the most famous argument among the historians. This statement is based on the hadith narrated by Anas: “prayers are obliged for the Prophet, peace be upon him, at night of journey fifty prayers, and then decreased until five prayers”. Part of Ḥanafīyyah said that it was Ramadhan 17th a year and half before the migratory. Ibnu Ḥajar said that it was the night of Rajab 27th.¹

Prayer represents a fundamental and significance obligation in Islam. This obligation becomes one of the five Islamic pillars or which is ordinary referred as “*arkān al-Islām*” (Islamic Foundations). The Prophet Muhammad PBUH said in his tradition:

حَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُوسَى قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا حَنْظَلَةُ بْنُ أَبِي سُفْيَانَ عَنْ عِكْرِمَةَ بْنِ خَالِدٍ عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ وَالْحَجِّ وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ.²

Means: “Narrated from ‘Ubaidullah bin Mūsā, he said narrated from Ḥanḍalah bin Abī Sufyān from ‘Ikrimah bin Khālid from Ibnu ‘Umar said: Rasūlullāh PBUH said: “Islam is built on five things, witnessing that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the

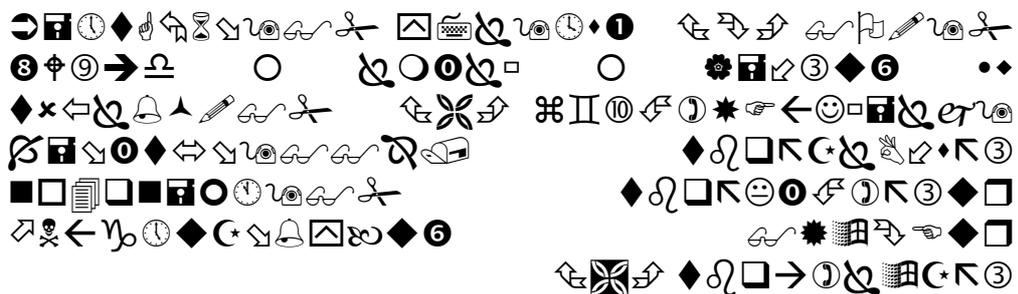
¹ Wahbah Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuhu*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah al-Iṣḍār 3.8, Vol. 1, p. 573.

² Al-Bukhāry, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah al-Iṣḍār 3.8, vol. 1, p. 11

Prophet of God (shahadah), being steadfast in prayer (ṣalāh), practicing regular charity, hājj, and fasting in Ramadhan.”

Ṣalāh or prayer is the ritual worship practiced by Muslims in supplication to Allah SWT. The term is commonly used to refer to the five daily prayers, which are compulsory upon all mature Muslims. Prayer is considered the most important act of worship in Islam and its importance is such that under very few circumstances it can be omitted. There are many verses in the Quran or the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH explaining the obligation of prayer. Leaving prayer, without any permitted reason, means to oppose command which Allah pass to His slave. It has a big consequence. One who leaves it will carry on a big sin which must be accounted by the perpetrator and will be asked in the eternity for the responsibility.

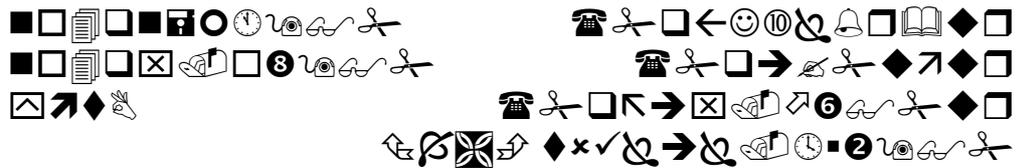
Prayer also represents the fundamental frame of belief in God. It means that a person, who performs prayer with his hearth and only to God, believes the existence of God and fears Him. Allah says in His Holly Quran Chapter Al-Baqarah verse 1-3:



Means: *“Alif, Lām, Mīm (1) This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah; (2) Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; (3) (Al-Baqarah [2]: 1-3)³*

³ English Translation Text Copied from *DivineIslam's Qur'an Viewer software v2.910* developed by Jamal Al-Nasir

Worshipping Allah SWT which is performed by praying is an absolute obligation. There are many verses in the Holy Qur'an or tradition of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH tells about it. Al-Qur'an states the obligation of prayer using a command word such as in chapter Al-Baqarah verse 43:



Means: *And be steadfast in prayer; practice regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship).* (Al-Baqarah [2]: 43)⁴

To state the obligation of prayer, Allah orders every Muslim to pray and He will give a great reward for the perpetrator or He will torture who obeys to perform praying.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ أَعْرَابِيًّا جَاءَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ذُنْبِي عَلَى عَمَلٍ إِذَا عَمَلْتُهُ دَخَلْتُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ تَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ لَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَتُقِيمُ الصَّلَاةَ⁵

Means: “Narrated from Abū Hurairah, actually a person has come to the Prophet PBUH and asked: show me a deed, if I do it causes me to enter paradise. The Prophet PBUH said: you worship Allah and don't idolize things with God and you perform regular prayer.”

The obligation of prayer also stated in many traditions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. There are many traditions told the greatness of performing prayer and also motivating to perform praying.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah al-Iṣḍār 3.8, Vol. 1, p. 97

قال صلى الله عليه و سلم : "فإن الصلوات الخمس تذهب الذنوب كما يذهب الماء الدرن"⁶

Means: "Indeed, five prayers will erase some sins such as water erases impurity".

Every Muslim has to perform the daily prayer. Five times a day is obliged to do and cannot be left for any reason. There is a very severe penalty for leaving prayer. A Muslim who leaves prayer is not a Muslim anymore because what is between belief and disbelief is leaving prayer. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH said:

إِنَّ بَيْنَ الرَّجُلِ وَبَيْنَ الشُّرْكِ وَالْكُفْرِ تَرَكَ الصَّلَاةَ⁷.

Means: "Indeed, between people and between idolatry and disbelief is leaving prayer."

With those argumentations from the Qur'an and also the tradition of the Prophet PBUH, prayer time is obligatory worship and has to be performed by every Muslim who has fulfilled the prescribed conditions.

B. Definition of prayer and prayer time.

Prayer in Arabic language is *ṣalāh* (الصلاة). It is derived from the word *ṣallā* (صلى) – *yusallī* (يصلّي) - *ṣalātan* (صلاة) not *taṣliyyan* (تصليًا)⁸ as the

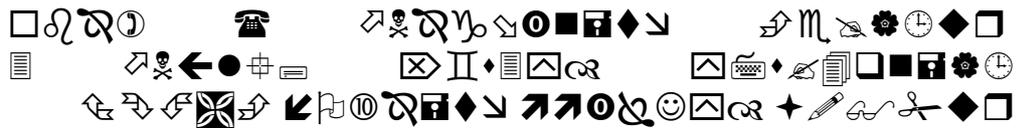
⁶ Abdurrahmān Al-Jāziri, *Kitāb al-Fiqh 'alā al-Madzāhib al-Arba'ah*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1990, p. 157.

⁷ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*, Op. Cit, p. 228.

⁸ Ibnu Mandzūr, *Lisān al-Arab*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah al-Iṣḍār 3.8, vol. 14, p. 464.

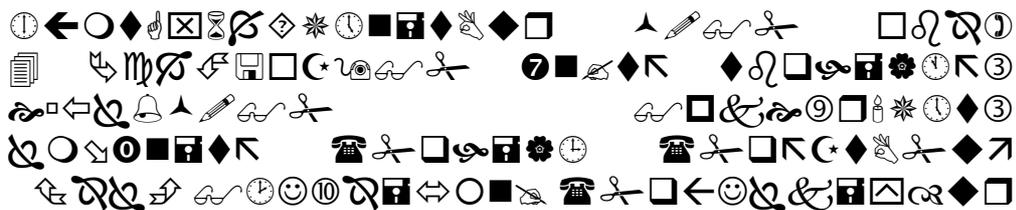
standard pattern of *taṣrīf* (morphology) in Arabic Grammar⁹. Translating "ṣalāh" as "prayer" is not usually considered precise enough, as "prayer" can indicate several different ways of relating to God. It means that the word prayer is not only used in Islam, but also in every religion to say the way of relating to God. In the past, ṣalāh has been called "the contact prayer", "the obligatory prayer", "the formal prayer", and so on, but normal academic practice in English is now to refer to the prayer by the Arabic term¹⁰.

The basic meaning of prayer is "invocation" (دعاء)¹¹. This definition as said in the holly Qur'an chapter Al-Taubah verse 103:



Means: "and pray on their behalf. Verily thy prayers are a source of security for them: And Allah is the One Who heareth and knoweth." (Al-Taubah [9]: 103)¹²

Prayer also means mercy and supplicating forgiveness. This means states in the Noble Qur'an chapter al-Aḥzāb verse 56¹³:



⁹ *Taṣrīf* (morphology) in Arabic grammar is a standard pattern to determine the form of the individual words, for example: *fa'ala* (فعل) – *yufa'ilu* (يفعل) – *taf'īlan* (تفعيلا). So, *ṣallā* (صلى) – *yuṣallī* (يصلّي) – *taṣṭiyyan* (تصليًا), but its different for *ṣalāh*.

¹⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salah>, retrieved on April 22, 2011 at 08.00 pm.

¹¹ Hasby al-Shidqy, *Pedomana Shalat*, Jakarta: N.V. Bulan Bintang, Ed. 11, 1983, p. 62. Compare with Abdurrahmān al-Jāziri, *Kitāb al-Fiqh 'Alā al-Madzāhib al-Arba'ah*, op. cit. p. 160.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Ahmad Izzuddin, *Ilmu Falak Praktis (Metode Hisab-Rukyat dan Solusi Permasalahannya)*, Semarang: Komala Grafika, 2006, p. 52.

Means: “Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you that believe! Send your blessings on him, and salute him with all respect.”¹⁴

On occasion of the verse above, Ibnu Mandzūr said in his book *Lisān al-‘Arab* that when the God prays to His prophet, means the God has completed and increased His grace to the prophet. It also means the God blesses him with His mercy. Moreover, when the angel of God prays to the Prophet of God means invocation or supplication of forgiveness. Then, when we are ordered to pray to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, means we have to glorify him in the world by continuing his rabbinic lessons, spreading it among the world, and keeping everything he left to us from God¹⁵.

Prayer in term of Al-Qur’an is called ṣalāh (الصلاة) because when a person is performing prayer, he is also glorifying, praising, and sanctifying the God. It is stated clearly when he read *tashahhud* (الصلوات لله) which only God who has the right to be glorified, praised and sanctified¹⁶.

The definition of prayer (ṣalāh) in terminology of Islamic jurists (*fuqahā*) is:

أقوال وأفعال مفتوحة بالتكبير مختتمة بالتسليم بشرائط مخصوصة¹⁷

“Some certain known and prescribed sayings and actions starting with *Takbīr* (saying *Allāhu Akbar* Allah is the Greater), and ending with *Taslīm* (saying: *al-salāmu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh* may Allah’s Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you) with prescribed conditions.”

¹⁴ English Translation Text Copied from *DivineIslam's Qur'an Viewer software v2.910* developed by Jamal Al-Nasir

¹⁵ Ibnu Mandzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, *Op. cit.*

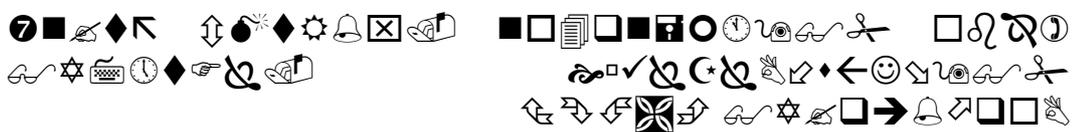
¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Abdurrahmān Al-Jāzīrī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh ‘alā al-Madzāhib al-Arba’ah*, *op. cit.* p.160.

Mālikiyyah, Ḥanafīyyah and Shāfi’iyyah define prayer clearly as to worship God through some prescribed actions such as *rukū’* (bowing the body until the palms are on the knees) and *sujūd* (prostration), and through some prescribed sayings such as reciting holly Quran and *tasbīh* (glorifying God) with hearth deeply absorbed in God.¹⁸

The definition of **time** is a part of the measuring system used to sequence events, to compare the durations of events and the intervals between them, and to quantify rates of change such as the motions of objects. It is used to place events in sequence one after the other, and also to compare how long events last.¹⁹ Prayer time is the durations of prayers and the intervals between them. Time is important for prayer so Muslim knows when he has to pray or when he does not.

Prayer times or *awqāt al-ṣalāh* (أوقات الصلاة) according to Islamic jurists (*fuqahā*) is the times that Allah has explained in His holly Qur’an to do prayer.²⁰ It is a certain time that a certain prayer should be performed on that time. In brief, each prayer has different time and one can not perform prayer anytime he wants. Allah has said:



Means: “*For such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times.* (Al-Nisa [4]: 103)²¹”

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time>

²⁰ Muhammad Bin Ismā’īl Al-Ṣan’ānī, *Subūl al-salām*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ālamiyyah, Ed. 1, 1988, p. 193.

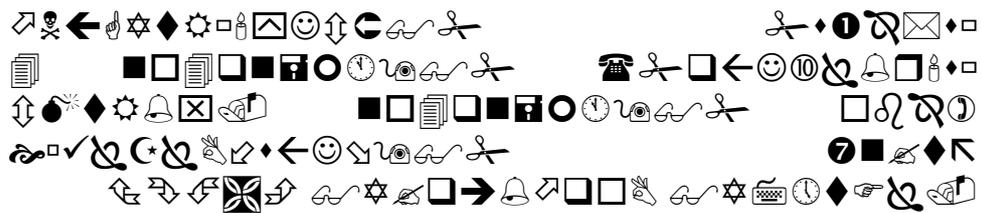
²¹ *Ibid.*

C. The Legal Ground of Prayer Times

Prayer is one of five pillars that Islam built on. Every Muslim in this world, wherever and however has to perform prayer in his entire life. There is no excuse for leaving prayer because the obligatory of prayer is clear. Allah has mentioned this obligation in the Holly Qur'an in many verses. The order is repeated several times, such us in chapter Al-Baqarah verse 43, 83, and 110 (وأقيموا الصلاة), verse 177 (وأقام الصلاة), chapter al-Nisā verse 162 (والمقيمين), chapter al-A'raf verse 170 and al-Hājj verse 41 (وأقاموا الصلاة), chapter Ibrāhīm verse 37 (ليقيموا الصلاة) and so on, there are many others like chapter Tāhā verse 14, al-Nūr 56, al-Ankabūt 45, and al-Aḥzāb 33.

a. Chapter Al-Nisa Verse 103

Allah Almighty is a great God. He does not only order people without any explanation how and when they have to do it. As a result, the God gives the other verses to tell people the time for praying. He says in the holly Qur'an:



Means: *When you are free from danger, set up Regular Prayers: For such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times.* (Al-Nisa [4]: 103)²²

Look at the phrase (كتابا موقوتا) from that verse. The phrase means *stated times* that indicates Allah has set up times for regular prayers. This verse

²² Ibid.

asserts that Moslems are not allowed to practice their obligatory of prayer anytime, but there is a specific time when they have to pray.

Al-Alūsī explained the meaning sense of *kitāban mauqūtan* is that prayer is an obligatory worship which is limited by times. Performing prayer is not allowed out of time in any conditions.²³ Furthermore, al-Thabary clarified that some Muslim scholars has different meaning about *kitāban mauqūtan*. Some said the same that the verse is talking about stated times for prayer which means prayer has time like hājj (pilgrimage) has. But, the others said that the verse is only talking about the obligatory of prayer, not the time.²⁴

Al-Zamakhsharī in his book *al-Kashshāf* interpreted this verse that someone may not delay or prioritize time of prayer in any case, safe or fear.²⁵ Moreover, Rāsyid Ridhā in *Tafsīr al-Manār* interpreted that Allah SWT has set up times for prayer. *كتابا* means strengthen obligatory which has been set up the times in *lauḥ mahfūd*. *موقوتا* means prescribed times.²⁶

From the interpretations above, it can be concluded that logical consequence of this verse is prayer must be performed precisely at times which has been determined pursuant to the theorems either from Al-Qur'an or Sunnah. A clearer clarification regarding times of prayer will be explained by the next verses.

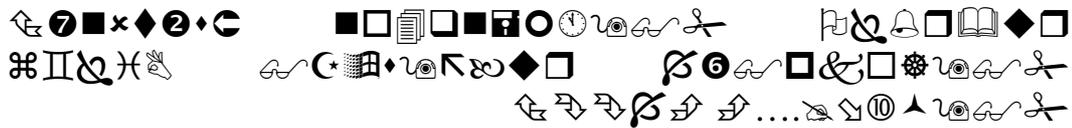
²³ Shihābuddīn Maḥmūd Al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Adzīm wa al-Sab'i al-Mathānī*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah al-Iṣḍār 3.8, Vol. 4, p. 213.

²⁴ Abū Ja'far Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah al-Iṣḍār 3.8, Vol. 9, p. 164-169.

²⁵ Al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr Al-Kashshāf*, Beirut: Dār Al-Fikr, 1997, Vol. 1, p. 240

²⁶ Rāsyid Ridha, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Dār Al-Ma'rifah: Beirut, Vol 5, p. 383

b. Chapter Hūd Verse 114



Means: “*And establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night*” (Hūd [11]: 114)

The verse above was revealed before five prayers are obliged to Muslims in the night of *isrā* and *mi'rāj*²⁷. At that time, the obligatory prayer was two prayers: prayer before sunrise and prayer before sunset.²⁸

The interpretation told by Quraish Shihab in his book *Tafsir al-Mishbah* is clear. Muslim interpreters agreed that the verse is talking about the obligatory prayers. The meaning of verse is: *And establish prayer regularly and correctly with its prescribed pillars, requirements and conditions at the two ends of the day* which means morning and afternoon or *Ṣubuh*, *ḍuhr* and ‘*Aṣr* prayer *and at the approaches of the night* for *Magrib* and *Ishā* prayer.²⁹

Some Muslim interpreters have different interpretation about طرفي النهار (the two ends of the day). Some of them had a notion that the first end is *Ṣubuh* prayer and the second end is *ḍuhr* and ‘*Aṣr* prayers. Another said that the two ends of the day is *Ṣubuh* and *Magrib* prayer. The other also said that the second end is ‘*Aṣr* prayer only and other said that the second

²⁷ Two part of night journey that, according to Islamic tradition, the prophet Muhammad took during a single night around the year 621. It has been described as both a physical and spiritual journey.

²⁸ Ibnu Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Adhīm*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah Al-Iṣḍār 3.8, Vol. 4, p. 355.

²⁹ M.Quraisy Syihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, (Jakarta : Lentera Hati). Ed. III, 2005, vol. 6, p. 355.

end is ‘Aṣr and Magrib. The most popular argument is that the first end is Ṣubuh prayer and the second end is ḍuhr and ‘Aṣr prayers.³⁰ But, al-Thabary said that the second end is for Magrib prayer. The reason is that the first end prayer or Ṣubuh is performed before sunrise, so the second end should be performed after sunset and the prayer is Magrib.³¹

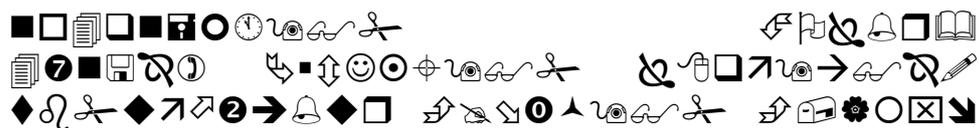
Moreover, al-Zamakhsharī clarified that طرفي النهار means morning and afternoon. Morning prayer is Ṣubuh and afternoon prayer is ḍuhr and ‘Aṣr. Then, the word زلفا is plural form of زلفة which means *nearby*. So, *zulafan min al-lail* means the first time of night which is nearby the last of the day. Quraish Shihab said that *zulafan min al-lail* is the first time after sunset. Both of al-Zamakhsharī and Quraish Shihab agreed that this time is for Magrib and Ishā.³² This statement is supported by the sunnah of the Prophet PBUH:

هما زلفتا الليل : المغرب و العشاء³³

Means: “Two at the approaches of the night is Magrib and Ishā”

c. Chapter Al-Isrā Verse 78

Another verse tells about times of prayer is the sentence in chapter Al-Isrā Verse 78. Allah says:



³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

³¹ Abū Ja’far Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, *Op. cit.* vol. 15, p. 505.

³² Al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr Al-Kashshāf*, *Op. cit.* read also M.Quraishy Syihab, *Tafsīr Al-Misbah, Loc. cit.*

³³ Ibnu Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Adhīm*, *Loc. cit.*



Means: “Establish regular prayers - at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and the morning prayer and reading: for the prayer and reading in the morning carry their testimony.” (Al-Isrā [17]: 78)³⁴

Time of prayer at the sentence above is indicated by phrases: دلوك الشمس (*the sun's decline*), غسق الليل (*the darkness of the night*), and قرءان الفجر (*the morning prayer*).

Al-Zamakhsharī explained that the meaning of (دلوك) *dulūk*, which is derived from (دلك) *dalaka*, is sunset or decline. Furthermore he explained that if the meaning of *dalaka* is decline, so the verse above contains five prayers. On the other hand, if the word means sunset, so the verse does not contain ḍuhr and ‘Aṣr.³⁵

Indeed, Al-Alūsī has given a clear meaning about *dalaka*. It means decline or sunset. He clarified that the original word of (دلك) means *move*. So, when it relates to decline, it means that the sun moves from the middle of the day and when it relates to sunset, means that the sun move beneath from the horizon. In general, دلوك الشمس is the time from the sun's decline until sunset. This time is for ḍuhr and ‘Aṣr prayer.³⁶

The word (لدلوك) *li dulūk* is derived from (دلك) *dalaka*. If the word is related to the sun, it has several meaning such us: sunset, turn yellow, and decline from the middle of the sky. These three meanings are contained in

³⁴ English Translation Text Copied from *DivineIslam's Qur'an Viewer software v2.910* developed by Jamal Al-Nasir

³⁵ Al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr Al Khasyaf*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah Al-Iṣḍār 3.8, Vol. 3, p. 472.

³⁶ Syihābuddīn Mahmūd Al-Alūsī, *Rūh al-Ma’āny fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Adzīm wa al-Sab’i al-Mathānī*, *Op. cit.* Vol. 11, p. 43.

the word (ذلك) *dalaka*. Therefore, دلوك الشمس refers to two obligatory prayers: ḍuhr and ‘Aṣr. Implicitly, it also refers to ‘Aṣr, because ‘Aṣr time is when the sun turns yellow.³⁷

The phrase غسق الليل (*gasaq al-lail*) means *the darkness of the night*. Muslim interpreters have different opinion about the prayer performed at the darkenes of the night. Some of them said that the time is for Magrib prayer and other said that it is for Ishā prayer.³⁸ The word غسق (*gasaq*) means “full”. The night is called *gasaq al-lail* because it is full of darkness.³⁹ It means that *gasaq al-lail* is Ishā time.

In conclusion, the phrase لدلوك الشمس إلى غسق الليل (*at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night*) means the time between the sun’s decline from the middle of the day till the darkness of the night or in the middle of the night. It is for four times of prayer: ḍuhr, ‘Aṣr, Magrib and Ishā. This is the argument al-Ṭaba’ṭaba’ī which is cited by Quraish Shihab in his book *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*.⁴⁰

For the word قرءان الفجر (*reading Al-Qur’an at dawn*) most of interpreters agree that the phrase indicates Ṣubuh prayer. Quraish Shihab clarified clearly that there is no obligation of reading Al-Qur’an at dawn except reading Al-Qur’an at Ṣubuh prayer.⁴¹

³⁷ M.Quraisy Syihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, Op. Cit. Vol. 7, p. 525.

³⁸ Syihābuddīn Mahmūd Al-Alūsī, *Rūh al-Ma’ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Adzīm wa al-Sab’i al-Mathānī*, Loc. Cit.

³⁹ M.Quraisy Syihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, Op. Cit. Vol. 7, p. 526.

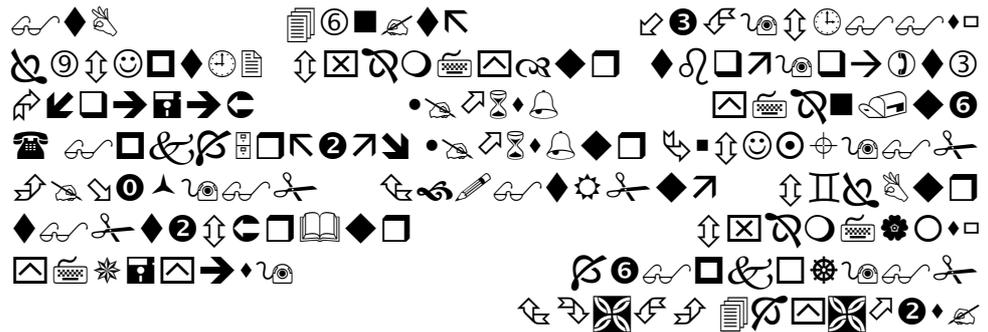
⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

d. Chapter Tāhā Verse 130

The next verse indicates the time of prayer is chapter Tāhā verse 130.

The verse says:



Means: “Therefore be patient with what they say, and celebrate (constantly) the praises of thy Lord, before the rising of the sun, and before its setting; yea, celebrate them for part of the hours of the night, and at the sides of the day: that thou may have (spiritual) joy.” (Tāhā [20]: 130)⁴²

The indication of prayer time refers to phrase: قبل طلوع الشمس (before the rising of the sun), قبل غروبها (before its setting), اثناء الليل (part of hours of the night), أطراف النهار (the sides of the day).

The majority Muslim interpreters like al-Zamakhsharī, Al-Alūsī, Al-Samarqandī include Quraish Shihab agreed that the meaning of the phrase وسبح بحمد ربك (and celebrate (constantly) the praises of thy Lord) is the order of prayer or it means establish regular prayer. Generally, prayer contains approbation, commendation and veneration of the God Almighty.

⁴² English Translation Text Copied from DivineIslam's Qur'an Viewer software v2.910 developed by Jamal Al-Nasir

If the meaning is prayer, so this verse explains about the times of prayer which is determined by Allah SWT⁴³.

The phrase *قبل طلوع الشمس* (*before the rising of the sun*) clearly refers to Ṣubuh prayer which is performed at dawn before the sun rises. The majority Muslim interpreters are agreed and there is no difference. *قبل غروبها* (*before its setting*) means time for ‘Aṣr prayer which is performed before the sun sets.⁴⁴ Some of Muslim interpreters said that *before setting* is time for ḍuhr and ‘Aṣr, because prayer performed before the sun sets is not only ‘Aṣr, but also ḍuhr is.⁴⁵

ءانئ الليل (*part of hours of the night*) is time for Ishā prayer.⁴⁶ It is the last time for Ishā for who likes to pray in the middle of the night because it is one of the Prophet PBUH traditions. *أطراف النهار* (*the sides of the day*) is time for Magrib and ḍuhr. The word *أطراف* (the sides) in Arabic word indicates that there are three or more sides. ḍuhr prayer is performed at the last of the first side of the day and the beginning of the second sides of the day. Magrib prayer is performed at the third side of the day.⁴⁷

Some Muslim interpreters have different opinion about the interpretation of the verse. *قبل غروبها* (*before its setting*) indicates time for ‘Aṣr prayer, *ءانئ الليل* (*part of hours of the night*) indicates time for Magrib

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Vol 8, p. 399.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 400. Read also Abū Ja’far Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, *Op. cit.* Vol. 18, p. 400.

⁴⁵ Al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr Al-Kashshāf*, *Op. Cit.* Vol. 4, p. 192.

⁴⁶ Abū Ja’far Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 400-401.

and Ishā prayers, and أطراف النهار (*the sides of the day*) is time for ḍuhr prayer only.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 401. Read also M.Quraisy Syihab, *Tafsīr Al-Misbah, Op. cit.* Vol. 8, p. 400.

e. The Hadith (Tradition) of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH

Furthermore, Allah SWT sent His Angel *Jibrīl* to the prophet Muhammad PBUH to teach him more detail about prayer times that is based on sun's motion. This explanation as written on the Prophet tradition narrated from Jabir bin Abdullah r.a.:

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ آدَمَ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ عَنْ حُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي وَهْبُ بْنُ كَيْسَانَ عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ جَاءَهُ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ قُمْ فَصَلِّهِ الظُّهْرَ حِينَ زَالَتْ الشَّمْسُ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ الْعَصْرَ فَقَالَ قُمْ فَصَلِّهِ الْعَصْرَ حِينَ صَارَ ظِلُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِثْلَهُ أَوْ قَالَ صَارَ ظِلُّهُ مِثْلَهُ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ الْمَغْرِبَ فَقَالَ قُمْ فَصَلِّهِ حِينَ وَجَبَتْ الشَّمْسُ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ الْعِشَاءَ فَقَالَ قُمْ فَصَلِّهِ حِينَ غَابَ الشَّفَقُ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ الْفَجْرَ فَقَالَ قُمْ فَصَلِّهِ حِينَ بَرَقَ الْفَجْرُ أَوْ قَالَ حِينَ سَطَعَ الْفَجْرُ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ مِنَ الْعَدِ لِلظُّهْرِ فَقَالَ قُمْ فَصَلِّهِ الظُّهْرَ حِينَ صَارَ ظِلُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِثْلَهُ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ لِلْعَصْرِ فَقَالَ قُمْ فَصَلِّهِ الْعَصْرَ حِينَ صَارَ ظِلُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِثْلِهِ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ لِلْمَغْرِبِ الْمَغْرِبِ وَقَتًا وَاحِدًا لَمْ يَزَلْ عَنْهُ ثُمَّ جَاءَ لِلْعِشَاءِ الْعِشَاءَ حِينَ ذَهَبَ نِصْفُ اللَّيْلِ أَوْ قَالَ ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ فَصَلِّهِ الْعِشَاءَ ثُمَّ جَاءَهُ لِلْفَجْرِ حِينَ أَسْفَرَ جَدًّا فَقَالَ قُمْ فَصَلِّهِ الْفَجْرَ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَا بَيْنَ هَذَيْنِ وَقْتُ (رواه أحمد)⁴⁹

Means: “*Yaḥyā bin Adam Narrated from Ibnu al-Mubāarak from Ḥusain bin ‘Alī, He said: Wahhāb bin Kaisān Narrated me from Jābir bin Abdullah and he is an Anṣārī, he said that Jibrīl came to The Apostle of Allah PBUH and said: Stand up and pray it! Then he*

⁴⁹ Ahmad bin Hambal, *Musnad Ahmad*, al-Maktabah al-Shamilah Al-Iṣḍār 3.8, vol. 29, p. 60.

(the prophet) prayed *ḍuhr* (noon) when the sun had passed the meridian. Then the *Jibrīl* came to him at *Aṣr* (Afternoon) time and said: Stand up and pray it! Then the Prophet prayed *Aṣr* when the shadow of everything was as long as itself. Then the *Jibrīl* came to him at *Magrib* (sunset) and said: stand up and pray it! Then the prophet prayed *Magrib* when the sun sets. Then the *Jibrīl* came to him at *Ishā* (Night) time and said: stand up and pray it! Then the prophet prayed *Ishā* when the twilight had ended. Then the *Jibrīl* came to him at *Fajr* (dawn) time and said: stand up and pray it! Then the prophet prayed it when the dawn rises. Then the *Jibrīl* came to him on the morrow for *ḍuhr* and said: Stand up and pray it! Then the Prophet prayed *ḍuhr* when the shadow of everything was as long as itself. Then the *Jibrīl* came to him for *Aṣr* prayer and said: Stand up and pray it! Then he prayed *Aṣr* when the shadow of everything was twice as long as itself. Then the *Jibrīl* came to him for *Magrib* prayer and said: Stand up and pray it! Then he prayed *Magrib* at the same time as before. Then the *Jibrīl* came to him for *Ishā* prayer and said: stand up and pray it! Then the Prophet prayed *Ishā* when about the half or the third of the night had passed. Then the *Jibrīl* came for *Fajr* prayer when there was a fair amount of light and said: stand up and pray it! Then the Prophet prayed *Fajr*. Then the *Jibrīl* said: the time is anywhere between two times.” (Narrated by Ahmad)

The tradition above is strengthened by the hadith narrated by Muslim in his book *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. He said:

حَدَّثَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الدَّوْرَقِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الصَّمَدِ حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامٌ حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ عَنْ أَبِي أَيُّوبَ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ وَقْتُ الظُّهْرِ إِذَا زَالَتْ الشَّمْسُ وَكَانَ ظِلُّ الرَّجُلِ كَطُولِهِ مَا لَمْ يَحْضُرِ العَصْرُ وَوَقْتُ العَصْرِ مَا لَمْ تَصْفَرَ الشَّمْسُ وَوَقْتُ صَلَاةِ المَغْرِبِ مَا لَمْ يَغِبِ الشَّفَقُ وَوَقْتُ صَلَاةِ العِشَاءِ إِلَى نِصْفِ اللَّيْلِ الأَوْسَطِ وَوَقْتُ صَلَاةِ الصُّبْحِ مِنْ طُلُوعِ الفَجْرِ مَا لَمْ تَطْلُعِ الشَّمْسُ فَإِذَا طَلَعَتِ الشَّمْسُ فَأَمْسِكَ عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَإِنَّهَا تَطْلُعُ بَيْنَ قَرْنَيْ شَيْطَانٍ (رواه مسلم)⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah Al-Iṣḍār 3.8, Vol. 3, p. 294.

Means: *“narrated to me Aḥmad bin Ibrāhīm ad-Daurāqī, narrated to us Abd al-Ṣamād, narrated to us Hammām narrated to us Qatādah from Abī Ayyūb from Abdullah bin ‘Amr, indeed, the prophet of Allah peace be upon him said: ‘time for ḍuhr prayer is when the sun declines and the shadow of a man is as long as him, before Aṣr prayer comes and the time for Aṣr prayer is before the sun turns yellow and the time for Magrib prayer is before the red cloud disappears and the time for Ishā is until midnight and the time for Ṣubuh prayer is from the rising dawn before the rising sun and when the sun rises, do not pray because the sun rises between the two devil horns’.”* (Narrated by Muslim)

The meaning of these two hadiths is clear. The prophet of Allah Muhammad PBUH tried to give an explanation and clarification of the verses about prayer times. The Prophet PBUH realized that those verses are too general to be understood. As a result, he explained and clarified the times for prayer.

The two hadiths above clearly gives an explanation about how many times prayer should be done and when the beginning and the end of prayer times. According to the text, there are five obligatory prayers should be performed by people in their daily life. The prayers are: ḍuhr which starts when the sun declines from midday, Aṣr which begins when the shadow of everything was as long as itself, Magrib which starts when the sun sets, Ishā which begins when the twilight had ended, and Ṣubuh which starts when the dawn rises. They have different times so people have to perform them separately in the exact time as mentioned.

The text said that prayer times is based on the sun motion and depends on where the position of the sun is. The effects of this motion and difference positions are alteration of the length of shadow’s object, the

rising and the setting sun, appearing and disappearing red cloud at dawn and after sunset. The text also tells us that the way to determine times for prayer is by observing position of the sun. However, technology improvement has increased so fast. People do not need to observe directly the sun's motion to know prayer times. They can calculate the time using mathematical astronomy.

D. Prayer Times in Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh)

a. Ḍuhr

Time for Ḍuhr prayer is started when the sun declines (*zālat al-shams*). When the sun moves from the middle of sky at day, time for Ḍuhr prayer is begun. This time ends when the length of shadow's object is as long as the object. This is the argument of Ḥanafiyah and three Imam of Islamic jurists. According to Abū Hanīfah, the end of Ḍuhr is when the length of shadow's object is twice the object.⁵¹ Mālikiyyah said that when the sun declines until the length of shadow's object is as long as the object is choice time (*al-waqt al-ikhtiyārī*) for Ḍuhr prayer. In addition, emergency time (*al-waqt al-ẓarūrī*) begins when 'Aṣr time begins and ends when the sun sets.⁵²

The declining of the sun is known by observing a stick which is embedded on flat ground. When the sun is on east (before declining) the shadow of the stick will decrease. When the shadow is stop moving

⁵¹ Wahbah Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī Wa Adillatuhu*, *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 583

⁵² Abdurrahmān al-Jāzirī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh 'Alā Madzāhib al-Arba'ah*, *Op. cit.*, p. 167.

means the sun is in the culmination point. It is called *Istiḥā* time which is the point when the sun is at its highest point. This corresponds to the shortest shadow of the stick. Then, when the shadow increases means that the sun has declined from the point. It also means ḍuhr time is begun. The shadow will continue moving. Finally, when the length of shadow is as long as the stick length, it is the end of ḍuhr prayer.⁵³

b. ‘Aṣr

‘Aṣr time begins by the end of ḍuhr time and ends when the sun sets. Clearly, according to the most Islamic jurists, it starts a moment after the length of shadow is as long as the stick length, whereas Ḥanafīyyah said that ḍuhr time begins a moment after the length of shadow is twice the stick length. The Islamic jurists compromised that the end of ‘Aṣr prayer is when the sun sets. The hadith said:

من أدرك ركعة من العصر قبل أن تغرب الشمس، فقد أدرك العصر
(رواه الأئمة الستة في كتبهم)⁵⁴

Means: “who got one raka’at of ‘Aṣr prayer before the sun sets, he actually got ‘Aṣr prayer.” (Narrated by six Imam in their books)

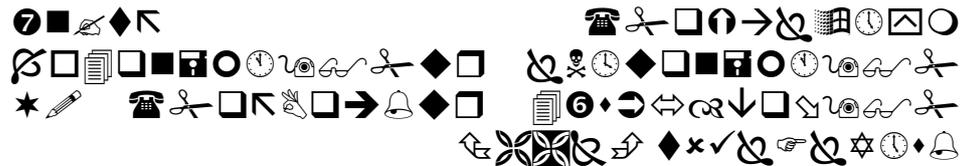
Mālikīyyah said ‘Aṣr prayer has two times, the choice time (*al-waqt al-ikhtiyārī*) and the emergency time (*al-waqt al-ẓarūrī*). The choice time is a moment after the length of shadow is as long as the stick length until

⁵³ Wahbah Zuhailī, *al-Fiḥ al-Islāmī Wa Adillatuhu*, *Loc. cit.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 584.

the sun turns yellow. The emergency time starts when the sun turns yellow on the ground and ends when the sun sets.⁵⁵

The ‘Aṣr daily prayer may be mentioned as the middle prayer (*ṣalāh al-wuṣṭā*) in the Qur'an at chapter Al-Baqarah verse 238:



Means: “Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers, especially the Middle Prayer; and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind).” (Al-Baqarah [2]: 238)⁵⁶

It is called the middle prayer because it is between two prayers at night and two prayers at day.⁵⁷

c. Magrib

The time for Magrib prayer is when the sun sets or when the sun disk is fully disappear in the western sky until disappearing the twilight or red cloud approximately an hour after sunset. This is the most popular argument according to Ḥanafiyah, Hanabilah and Shāfi’iyah based on the hadith:

وقت المغرب ما لم يغب الشفق

Means: “Time for Magrib prayer is before disappearing the twilight”.

⁵⁵ Abdurrahmān al-Jāzirī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh ‘Alā Madzāhib al-Arba’ah*, *Loc. cit.*

⁵⁶ English Translation Text Copied from *DivineIslam's Qur'an Viewer software v2.910* developed by Jamal Al-Nasir

⁵⁷ Wahbah Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī Wa Adillatuhu*, *Loc. cit.*

الشفق or twilight according to Hanabilah and Shāfi'iyyah is the red twilight. According to Ḥanafiyah, the horizon has three condition after sunset, white then red and then black.⁵⁸

Mālikiyyah said that there is no extension for Magrib time, but it is limited by the time it can be performed with all of the prescribed conditions and requirements and also the time for azan and *iqāmah*. This is the choice time (*al-waqt al-ikhtiyārī*) for Magrib prayer. The emergency time (*al-waqt al-ẓarūrī*) for Magrib is by the end of the choice time until the dawn rises.⁵⁹

d. Ishā

The time for Ishā is when the red twilight disappears until the dawn rises. The reason is that the time of every prayer is extended until the next prayer except Ṣubuh. Mālikiyyah and Ḥanafiyah said that Ishā prayer has two times, the choice time (*al-waqt al-ikhtiyārī*) and the emergency time (*al-waqt al-ẓarūrī*). The choice time is begun after disappearing the red twilight until midnight or a third of night. It is based on the hadith from Anas:

أخر النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ صلاة العشاء إلى نصف الليل ثم صلى

Means: “The Prophet PBUH delayed Ishā prayer until midnight the he prayed.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 585.

⁵⁹ Abdurrahman al-Jāzirī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh ‘Alā Madzāhib al-Arba’ah*, *Op. cit.* p. 168.

The emergency time for Ishā is after the end of the choiceh time until the true dawn rises.⁶⁰

e. **Şubuh**

The time for Şubuh prayer is when the true dawn (*fajr şādiq*) rises until the sun rises. The true dawn is the white light spread in the eastern horizon. It is based on the hadith⁶¹:

و وقت صلاة الصبح من طلوع الفجر، ما لم تطلع الشمس

Means: “and the time for Şubuh prayer is from the rising dawn before the rising sun”.

Mālikiyyah said that Şubuh prayer has two times: the choice time for Şubuh is from the rising true dawn until the darkness disappears, and the emergency time is from the end of the choice time until the rising sun.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* See also Wahbah Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī Wa Adillatuhu*, *Op. cit.* p. 587.

⁶¹ Wahbah Zuhailī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī Wa Adillatuhu*, *Op. cit.*, p. 587.

⁶² Abdurrahmān al-Jāzirī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh ‘Alā Madzāhib al-Arba’ah*, *Op. cit.*, p. 169.