

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, the Beneficent and the Most Merciful

THE PRAYER OF SIGNS (*SALAT AL-AYAT*)

According to the rulings of Ayatullah al-Sistani Dama-Dhilluhu

Salat al-Ayat, for which the method of performance will be explained later, becomes obligatory when the following three phenomena occur:

1. solar eclipse;
2. lunar eclipse;
with the occurrence of these two phenomena, *Salat al-Ayat* becomes **obligatory** even if the eclipse is partial and even if one is not frightened by it;
3. earthquake, based on **obligatory precaution**, even if one is not frightened by it.

Based on **recommended precaution**, *Salat al-Ayat* should be performed when thunder and lightning, gales that make the sky look black or red, hurricane and other similar natural celestial phenomena occur **provided that most people are frightened by them**.

NOTE: According to Sayyid Al-Khui *Salat al-Ayat* becomes obligatory when the occurrence of:
Thunder of the clouds and lightning, red and black cyclones and other similar celestial phenomena, which usually frighten the people; and the obligatory precaution is that besides the events mentioned the offering of Signs Prayers should not also be abandoned in the event of certain terrestrial events (for example, if the water of the sea recedes or the mountains fall. because of which people are usually frightened).

There is another category of Lunar Eclipse known as a Penumbral Lunar Eclipse: A penumbral lunar eclipse takes place when the moon moves through the faint, outer part of the earth's shadow. It is, however, easy to miss because when it happens, the penumbral lunar eclipse tends to look very similar to a full moon. Only penumbral lunar eclipse where a large portion of the moon is in the earth's penumbral shadow may be detectable to observers on earth.

The Ruling relating to the penumbral lunar eclipse is given below:

If penumbral lunar eclipse prevents all or some of the disc of the moon from being visible, then *Salat al-Ayat* will be obligatory. However, in many cases, penumbral lunar eclipses are either not perceptible, or, they result in a portion of the moon appearing less bright than usual, though the entire disc is still visible. In these cases, *Salat al-Ayat* will not be obligatory. (I.M.A.M. – Imam Mahdi Association of Marjaeya – The Liaison Office of Ayatullah Al-Sistani Dama-Dhilluhu in North America)

General Rules

- ❖ When a phenomenon occurs for which *Salat al-Ayat* is obligatory, only the people of the area in which the phenomenon occurred must perform *Salat al-Ayat*. It is not obligatory on people in other areas.
- ❖ The time for performing *Salat al-Ayat* for a solar or lunar eclipse commences from the moment the eclipse begins and continues until the sun or the moon goes back to its normal state (although it is better not to delay the prayer until the eclipse starts to reverse). However, once the eclipse is over, the prayer becomes *qadha'*.
- ❖ If a person did not know about the solar or lunar eclipse and came to know after the eclipse was over, he should give its *qadha* only if it was a total eclipse. If it was only a partial eclipse, *qadha* will not be obligatory.
- ❖ When an earthquake occurs, the prayer must be performed immediately in a way that it would not be considered as being delayed; and if he does delay it, the recommended precaution is that he should perform it later without making an intention of *ada'* or *qaza'*.
- ❖ When thunder and lightning, and other similar natural phenomena occur, if one wants to perform *Salat al-Ayat* as a precautionary measure and if these phenomena last a long time, it is not necessary to perform the prayer immediately.
- ❖ If a woman is in the state of *haydh* or *nifas* and an eclipse or an earthquake occurs, it is not obligatory on her to perform *Salat al-Ayat*, nor does she have to make it up.
- ❖ If in *Salat al-Ayat* one doubts how many *rak'ahs* one has performed, and having thought about it remains unsure, one's prayer is invalid.
- ❖ Every *ruku'* of *Salat al-Ayat* is a *rukn*; therefore, if a *ruku'* is intentionally or unintentionally omitted or added, the prayer is invalid.
- ❖ If more than one phenomenon that makes it obligatory to perform *Salat al-Ayat* occurs, then one must perform *Salat al-Ayat* for each one of them. For example, if there is a solar eclipse and an earthquake, one must perform two *Salat al-Ayats*.
- ❖ The legality (*mashru'iyah*) of performing in congregation *Salat al-Ayat* - except for lunar and solar eclipses - is not established.

METHOD OF PERFORMING SALATUL AYAAT

Salat al-Ayat consists of two *rak'ahs* with five *ruku's* in each *rakah*. The method of performing the prayer is as follows:

NORMAL METHOD OF PERFORMING SALAT AL-AYAT

Niyyah (intention) two *rak'ah Salat al-Ayat wajib qurbatan ilal-lah Takbiratul Ihram*

Recite *Surah al-Hamd* and any other complete *Surah*.

Perform *ruku'* (This will be your **first ruku'**)

Stand and recite *Surah al-Hamd* and any other complete *Surah*.

Perform *ruku'* (This will be your **second ruku'**)

Stand and recite *Surah al-Hamd* and any other complete *Surah*.

Perform *ruku'* (This will be your **third ruku'**)

Stand and recite *Surah al-Hamd* and any other complete *Surah*.

Perform *ruku'* (This will be your **fourth ruku'**)

Stand and recite *Surah al-Hamd* and any other complete *Surah*.

Perform *ruku'* (This will be your **fifth ruku'**)

After getting up from the fifth *ruku'*, perform two *sajdahs*, stand up, and proceed to perform the second *rak'ah* in the same way as the first. Then say *tashahhud* and *salaam* of the prayer. Your *Salat al-Ayat* is then completed.

It is *mustahab* to perform *qunut* before the second and fourth *ruku'* (in the first *rak'ah*), and before the sixth, eighth and tenth *ruku'* (in the second *rak'ah*).

OPTION FOR A SHORTER METHOD OF PERFORMING SALAT AL-AYAT

If whatever reason one cannot perform the *Salat* with the normal method, then one has an option of performing it with a shorter method. However, one will have to be careful with the second *surah* that one recites; as that *surah* has to be divided into five parts, one has to ensure that one remembers to recite the next *ayah* of the *surah* as one continues with each successive *qiyam*.

After making the intention of performing *Salat al-Ayat*, say *Takbiratul Ihram* and recite *Surah al-Hamd*; then, divide the verses of the other *surah* into five parts.

Start from the beginning of the *Surah* as it will not suffice to recite *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahiyim* on its own and count it as one verse.

***Salat al-Ayat* (a shorter method)**

For example, if the other *Surah* is *Surah al-Qadr (Inna Andhalnahu)*
Niyyah (intention) two *rak'ah Salat al-Ayat wajib qurbatan ilal-lah*

Takbiratul Ihram

Recite *Surah al-Hamd* and then

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ {1}

Perform *ruku'*. (This will be your **first ruku'**)

Stand and recite

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ {2}

Perform *ruku'*. (This will be your **second ruku'**)

Stand and recite

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ {3}

Perform *ruku'*. (This will be your **third ruku'**)

Stand and recite

تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ {4}

Perform *ruku'*. (This will be your **fourth ruku'**)

Stand and recite

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ {5}

Perform *ruku'*. (This will be your **fifth ruku'**)

After standing up from the fifth *ruku'*, go to *sajdah*.

Perform the two *sajdahs* and stand up for the second *rak'ah*.

In the second *rak'ah*, the same procedure is to be repeated as in the case of the first *rak'ah*. After completing 5 *ruku'*s in the second *rak'ah*, conclude *Salatul Ayaat* in the usual way by performing two *sajdahs*, *tashahhud* and *salaam*.

It is *mustahab* to perform *qunut* before the second and fourth *ruku'* (in the first *rak'ah*), and before the sixth, eighth and tenth *ruku'* (in the second *rak'ah*).

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