

## Disproved once and for all: *salat* = prayer

### The Most Powerful Argument Against the Traditional Understanding

Amongst traditional Muslims, a commonly held belief is that the Arabic word "*salat*" exclusively means "prayer", and must be done with specific words in a set routine.

For those who take guidance from 'al quran' ('the reading') alone, different views have emerged about the word "*salat*". Some still hold onto the view that it means "prayer" and that *Muslims* should uphold (*aqamoo*\*) it.

\* *aqamoo* is the Arabic word for uphold/maintain/establish, a word often used in front of the word "*salat*" in 'the reading'.

This discussion will focus on chapter 9, verses 1-12, of 'the reading'. Thus, the reader is urged to read these verses carefully, from several translations at least (choose any ones you wish). The following translation is a self-modified version of the ProgressiveMuslims.org translation:

#### Chapter 9

1. An acquittal/release from The God and His messenger to those with whom you made a treaty from among the polytheists.
2. Therefore, roam the earth for four months and know that you will not escape The God, and that The God will disgrace the ungrateful/rejecters.
3. And an announcement from The God and His messenger to the people on the day of the greatest hajj/symposium: "The God is quit/free from the polytheists and so is His messenger". If you repent, then it is better for you, and if you turn away, then know that you will not escape The God. And give news to those who conceal/reject of a painful retribution.
4. Except for those with whom you had a treaty from among the polytheists if they did not reduce anything from it nor did they plan to attack you; you shall continue the treaty with them until its expiry. Truly, The God loves the forethoughtful/conscientious.
5. So when the restricted months are passed, then you may fight the polytheists wherever you find them, and take them, and surround them, and stand against them at every point. If they repent, **and uphold/ maintain the salat** and bring forth the betterment, then clear/vacate their way/path. Truly, The God is Turning/Forgiving, Embracing/Merciful.
6. And if anyone from the polytheists seeks your protection, then you may protect him so that he may hear the word of The God, then deliver him to his safety/security. This is because they are a people who do not know.
7. How can those polytheists have a pledge/agreement with The God and His messenger, except for those with whom you made a pledge/agreement in the presence of the inviolable time of acknowledgement? As long as they are straight with you, then you are straight with them. Truly, The God loves the forethoughtful/conscientious.
8. How is it when they gain the upper-hand they disregard all ties, either those of kinship or of pledge. They seek to please you with their words, but their hearts are hostile, and most of them are wicked.
9. They purchased with The God's signs/revelations a small gain, so they could turn others from His path. Truly, evil is what they were doing.
10. They do not respect believers, nor a kinship, nor a pledge. These are the transgressors/wrongdoers.
11. But if they repent, **and uphold/ maintain the salat** and bring forth the betterment, then they are your brothers/allies in the obligation/system. We detail/explain our signs/revelations for a people who know.
12. And if they break their oaths after making them, and they assail (cause damage) in your obligation/system; then you may fight the chiefs of ungratefulness/rejection. Truly, their oaths are nothing to them, perhaps they will then stop.

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The reason why these verses are important is because the wording used here for polytheists is the same as that used for believers in many other places in 'the reading', with respect to "*salat*". The

wording I am referring to is as follows:

**"wa aqamoo al salat" = "and uphold/ maintain the salat"**

This phrase is used many times (about 40) for believers in 'the reading', some of which are: [2:177](#), [2:277](#), [7:170](#), [13:22](#), [22:41](#), [35:18](#), [35:29](#), [42:38](#). And in these occurrences it is taken, by some, to mean "prayer" thus clearly, it is very interesting then, when 'the reading' uses this same phrase for polytheists!

polytheist: one who worships or believes in more than one god.

Is The God commanding the polytheists to uphold/maintain the prayer, even though they are polytheists? Do they pray to their gods? Is The God giving them an ultimatum: somehow convert to *Muslims* and uphold/maintain the prayer or if they don't they will get punished?

My answer to all three questions would be no, because this doesn't make sense. However, for those who believe *salat*=prayer, they are forced into a corner: do they accept their interpretation doesn't make sense and reconsider their view of *salat* OR do they continue to follow *salat*=prayer and make the verses fit their view?

I have no doubt in my mind, that their initial reaction will be to choose the latter option. If they do not, their entire argument for *salat*=prayer collapses because there is no way 'the reading' would use the exact same wording for polytheists and believers, telling both of them to uphold/maintain the prayer!

'The reading' itself will prove conclusively beyond doubt, that to hold the *salat*=prayer view for these verses is impossible without severe reinterpretation of the text/meanings and ignoring what the text actually says. Lets analyse the verses in detail:

**9:1** begins with the Arabic word '*barratun*' which means acquittal/release/absolve [see also [54:43](#)], signifying the subject of this verse and the following verses. This verse tees up the rest of the verses in this direction. Thus it is established right from the start it is about a treaty with the polytheists. There has been an acquittal/release, thus the treaty has effectively been terminated with the polytheists.

**9:2** uses a firm tone. The word "you" clearly refers to the *mushrikeen*/polytheists from the previous verse (i.e. those with whom the treaty was terminated). They are also called *kafireen*/ungrateful /rejecters at the end. This word implies what led to the treaty's termination.

**9:3** discusses an announcement to the people: "The God is quit/free from the polytheists and so is His messenger". This is clearly a public announcement of the termination of the treaty. This is clearly demonstrated by 'the reading' using the same\* word as it did in [9:1](#) to describe the same event - '*baree*' which means quit/free [see also [4:112](#), [6:19](#), [6:78](#), [8:48](#), [10:41](#), [11:35](#), [11:54](#), [26:216](#), [59:16](#)].

For the remaining verse the object of the word "you" is continued, i.e. "you" is referring to the polytheists (specifically those who violated the treaty). Hence, the phrase "If you repent...", because repenting is only done when someone has done something wrong. The only wrongdoing mentioned in the context is the violation of the treaty, thus it is solid that repent ('*tubtum*' in Arabic) refers to this.

\* they share the same root (Ba-Ra-Alif) and verb form, but are different derivatives (similar to acquittal and quit).

**9:4** begins with the Arabic word "*illa*" which means "except", thus reinforcing the point that the object of reference in the previous verse are those who violated the treaty. This verse continues with the opening subject of treaty violation, and explains what was actually done to violate the treaty.

**9:5** continues with the object of reference - *mushrikeen*/polytheists - and then uses the words "If they repent and uphold/maintain the *salat*...". Here, "they" obviously refers to the polytheists, but yet "they" are ordered to uphold/maintain the *salat*! This is where the *salat*=prayer view becomes exposed.

I hope the reader has realised it is extremely unlikely that the polytheists are being ordered to uphold/maintain the prayer, thus in order for the *salat*=prayer view to hold, reinterpretation of the text/meanings becomes necessary.

Traditional *Muslims* have explained away this anomaly by arguing that somehow a conversion has taken place and the previous polytheists have now become *Muslims*. Even though the actual text says nothing like this, they put forth the following argument: the word repent (*taboo* in Arabic) implies a conversion. They are forced into choosing this because the only word in between "If they (polytheists)..." & "...and uphold/maintain the *salat*" is repent/*taboo*. Hence, a change must have occurred between these two points, and this change must be related to *taboo*.

'The reading' has already shown this word, as used in 9:3, simply means 'repent'. But let's further examine this reinterpretation of repent/*taboo* to see if it is correct. The root of the Arabic words *tubtum* & *taboo* is Ta-Waw-Ba (TWB) and this root occurs 87 times in 'the reading':

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*taba* verb form (I)

The examples in this specific case are in the perfect active state, and occur 34 times: [2:37, 2:54, 2:160, 2:187, 2:279, 3:89, 4:16, 4:18, 4:146, 5:34, 5:39, 5:71, 6:54, 7:143, 7:153, **9:3, 9:5, 9:11**, 9:117 (x2), 9:118, 11:112, 16:119, 19:60, 20:82, 20:122, 24:5, 25:70, 25:71, 28:67, 40:7, 46:15, 58:13, 73:20]

imperfect active state - [2:160, 3:128, 4:17 (x2), 4:26, 4:27, 5:39, 5:74, 9:15, 9:27, 9:74, 9:102, 9:106, 9:118, 9:126, 25:71, 33:24, 33:73, 49:11, 66:4, 85:10]

imperative state - [2:54, 2:128, 11:3, 11:52, 11:61, 11:90, 24:31, 66:8, noun verb - 3:90, 4:17, 4:18, 4:92, 9:104, 40:3, 42:25, 66:8, participle active - 9:112, 66:5]

*matab*, noun masculine - [13:30, 25:71]

*tawwab*, noun masculine - [2:37, 2:54, 2:128, 2:160, 2:222, 4:16, 4:64, 9:104, 9:118, 24:10, 49:12, 110:3]

Grammatically: 'perfect' means an action done or completed, 'active' refers to the doer of the action, 'imperfect' means action in the process of being done, 'imperative' means "mood," order or command.

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Can this word possibly mean conversion? To find out, we can use several different methods:

**1)** Check all 34 occurrences to see if there is a clear example of 'conversion'. Not only that, we can check the entire root to see if this meaning (conversion) is possible. Thus, out of 87 occurrences, how many show a conversion has taken place? The answer is zero, there are no other examples of polytheists converting to *Muslims*. Feel free to check the occurrences.

**2)** Check if the Classical Arabic dictionaries give 'conversion' as a possible meaning of the root Ta-Waw-Ba:

'Dictionary of the Holy *Quran*' by Abdul Mannan Omar

(which utilises: '*Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*', '*Lisan al-Arab*', '*Taj al-Arus min Jawahir al Qamus*' and '*The Arabic English Lexicon*')  
 To return; repent; turn one's self in a repentant manner (with *ila*/to or without it), turn with mercy (with *ala*), repentance.

(with *ila*), repentance.

'*The Arabic English Lexicon*' by Edward W. Lane

He repented; or repented toward God (as will be shown by what follows), adapt to repentance,

returning from disobedience to obedience.

From the above, its clear 'conversion' is not listed as one of the possible meanings.

It should be noted that the possible meaning 'return' is given. Thus some might say they are being asked to return to Islam, or return as *Muslims*. Since the context never mentions they were Muslims originally, this is a completely baseless assumption. Furthermore, it can be seen from the usage of the word itself throughout 'the reading', it is unlikely to mean 'return'. Even if it did mean return, it would obviously refer to returning to the treaty.

The underlined parts in the dictionary quotes show that the word (repent) can mean repent with or without a following '*ila*' which means 'to'. And secondly, the object that follows 'repent' can tell us to whom the repentance is being done, if it is not clear from the context. Please note, that both sources state it is not necessary for an object to follow the word 'repent'.

From the dictionary meanings, the only possibility of a word that could imply conversion is "turn", i.e. turn to God/Islam (even though the underlined part is an insertion/extrapolation). However if "turn" is used, then it should be followed by an object. Not only does this make sense logically, this is how 'the reading' itself uses it! Can those who support the '*taboo*=turn (to God/*Islam*) in 9:5' view find another example where "turn" is meant but no object is mentioned? The answer is no, there is none.

In other words, this word is never used to mean "turn" without mentioning an object that the turning is done to. Once again, feel free to check the occurrences.

In fact, this is how 'the reading' distinguishes the usage of the term. When the prepositions '*ila*/to' or '*ala*/to' are used *twb* always means turn. Without them, *twb* means repent. You will not find an exception to this rule in the entire quran. Not only is this alluded to in 'Dictionary of the Holy *Quran*', it is also explicitly stated in 'A Concordance of The *Quran*' by Hanna E Kassis:

*taba* vb. (I) ~ repent, to be penitent, to do penance; (with prep. *ala*) to turn towards someone (in forgiveness); (with prep. *ila*) to turn towards someone (in penance). (n. vb.) repentance, penitance. (pcple. act.) one who repents, penitent.

**3)** Use the grammar of the verse. A closer examination of the grammar reveals that it is extremely unlikely for the final "...hum" to refer to other than the previous "...hum" (i.e. the polytheists). "...hum" is simply an Arabic suffix (found at the end of words) which means "them/their/they" referring to the previous object of reference. An example: "The Government is responsible for the control and administration of public policy. They decide which laws to pass through debate and review committees which they appoint."

The transliteration and translation will be posted side by side for comparison:

Fa-itha insalakha al-ashhuru alhurumu faoqtuloo almushrikeena haythu wajadtumoo**hum** wakhuthoo**hum** waohsuroo**hum** waoqAAudoo la**hum** kulla marsadin fa-in taboo waaqamoo alssalat<sup>a</sup> waatawoo alzzak<sup>a</sup>ta fakhalloo sabeela**hum** inna Allaha ghafoorun raheemun

So when the restricted months are passed, then you may fight the polytheists wherever you find **them**, and take **them**, and surround **them**, and stand against **them** at every point. If **they** repent, and uphold/maintain the *salat* and bring forth the betterment, then clear/vacate **their** path. Truly, The God is Turning/Forgiving, Embracing/Merciful.

If those who believe the final "*hum*" in "*sabeela**hum***" refers to converts, then please provide other examples where 'the reading' changes the object of reference mid-sentence. Furthermore, where a verb (e.g. repent/*taboo*) is used to create a new group of people, then that creation is used as a reference for "...hum". Can they find any examples like this in the entire *quran*?

To put it simply, there is zero evidence from the grammar or linguistically that shows this passage refers to people who are not mentioned at all. In fact, the evidence goes against that being the case.

**4)** Use our logic/reason. Is it logical that The God would give the polytheists an ultimatum, forcing them to convert to *Muslims* otherwise they will be punished? This notion is nowhere to be found in 'the reading' and completely goes against its principles, which state:

There is no compulsion in this obligation/system, the right way has been made clear from the wrong way. Whoever rejects falsities, and believes in The God, then he has grasped the most solid branch that will never break. The God is Hearer, Aware/Knower. [2:256]

The situation in 9:1-12 is similar to the thief [5:38-39] and those who fight against The God and His messenger [5:33-34], they are not required to convert, they are required to repent and amend, i.e. it is not necessary for them to become *Muslim*, as this would be absurd. Nor are they required to repent to The God, because this would imply there are no disbelieving thieves, an impossibility. That is why there is no 'ila/to' mentioned in the context, just like in 9:3, 9:5, 9:11. 'The reading' could have easily used 'ila/to' if that was actually the intended meaning, like it did in 66:4 for example, but it didn't.

If repenting to The God or converting to *Muslim* was required then imagining a workable example in a real-life situation is difficult. The reader is strongly recommended to think of real-life situations.

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**9:6** If we accept conversion as one of the options, let's look at the solution apparently suggested:

- 1) The polytheists convert to *Muslims*, uphold/maintain the prayer and bring forth the betterment.
- OR
- 2) They can seek protection, without the need to give an apology, no re-commitment to the treaty, no compensation, delivered to safety/security, nothing in return except having to ask for protection.

This is extremely unlikely, especially when considering the firm tone of the verses. The only way the above can be made plausible is if option (2) actually refers to delivering them to their safety/security, i.e. out with the community/land, i.e. banishment. From my understanding of the verses and taking into account 5:33, this is what is recommended. But if this is chosen for those who hold the *salat*=prayer view, then it means people either convert to *Muslims* or are banished from the land/community. Is this likely?

The phrase which follows "**fa khalloo sabeelahum**" = "**then clear/ vacate their way/ path**", implies that they should be allowed to go their own way/path, i.e. practice their own faith, if they "uphold/maintain the oath/bond" and bring forth the betterment". This is an insightful understanding for any multi-faith based society. In fact, this is how many Western societies work today, i.e. as long as you live by the law of the land you are allowed to practice your own faith.

\* to see how '*salat*' can be understood as 'oath/bond', please read on.

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**9:7-10** continues with the object of reference: the polytheists.

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**9:11** "they" (*mushrikeena*/polytheists, *muAAtadoon*/transgressors/wrongdoers) are asked to repent/*taboo*. Once again, those who believe *salat*=prayer are forced to reinterpret *taboo* to mean "turn", even though there is no *ila/to* used after, and it has been shown *taboo* is never used in the entire *quran* to mean "turn" without stating the object that is being turned to in the context. This fact alone should disprove their entire argument but they can cling to the implication that telling them to uphold/maintain the *salat* is sufficient enough to imply the object must be Islam/God. Even if this is a possible implication, it doesn't change the fact its never used like that in the rest of 'the reading'.

It can be alleged that they must be converts because they can be regarded as our "brothers in the system/obligation". On the surface this seems like a good point, but after examination of the term *akhw*/brother, it becomes weak. Firstly, let's see what the Classical Arabic dictionaries say about this word:

\* *deen* does not mean religion, it is closer to the meaning of obligation/due [see 12:76, 15:35, 24:25]. Alternatively, please check any Classical Arabic dictionary.

'Dictionary of the Holy Quran' by Abdul Mannan Omar

Male person having the same parents as another or a male only having one parent in common; person of the same descent/land/creed/faith with others; brother; friend; companion; match; fellow of a pair; kinsman; intimately acquainted.

'The Arabic English Lexicon' by Edward W. Lane

A brother. Signifying the relation of a brother - brotherhood/fraternity. Act in a brotherly manner. An associate/fellow. Sister, female friend. When it does not relate to birth, it means



conformity/similarity and combination/agreement or unison in action.

Clearly, according to the dictionaries, *akhw* has a much wider meaning. In fact, 'the reading' itself confirms this understanding [2:220, 3:103, 7:65, 7:73, 7:85, 11:50, 11:61, 15:47, 17:27, 26:106, 26:124, 26:142, 26:161, 27:45, 33:5, 46:21, 49:10, 58:22]. Specifically see 3:156 where the term is used for those who have the trait of "kafar" (ungrateful/concealer/rejecter), and also see 33:18. It simply means a fellow/comrade/companion.

Now, I will admit that this wider understanding of *akhw*/brother for 9:11 is not solid from the evidence so far, but the following verse clarifies and proves the point conclusively. Please note the final object of reference for this verse: "then they are your brothers...".

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**9:12** proves "they" are not brothers in terms of *Muslims* or believers or in terms of conversion because it continues on from 9:11 with *And/wa* and states "And if they break their oaths after making them...". Its clear the verses have been referencing "they" with transgressors/polytheists throughout, especially the verses before 9:11. If they have converted, why are they still being held to account for their oaths? What is going on?

One answer, and perhaps the only one that can be put forth, to resolve this confusion from the traditional viewpoint, is that these oaths refer to the "oath of *Islam*" that was apparently undertaken during the alleged conversion! Firstly, there is no formal/ceremonial public "oath of *Islam*" ever mentioned in 'the reading'. Secondly, if this is the view held then they are expecting a great deal from the small word *taboo*: "oath of *Islam*" is a noun, whilst turn/*taboo* is a verb, so which is it? It cant be both. And last but by no means least, nowhere in 'the reading' does it state fight those who break their "oath of *Islam*", i.e. those who become disbelievers after accepting *Islam*. In fact, people are free to believe then disbelieve if they wish [4:137].

The wording of this verse strongly implies that they (polytheists/transgressors) are not considered to be anything other than polytheists/transgressors: "...and THEY assail in YOUR obligation/system (deen)...". This clearly shows they are being discussed as separate groups and it was NEVER considered their "deen".

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### Additional Notes

Not once in 9:1-12 are a section of the polytheists/transgressors referenced as believers/*mumineen*. If indeed, a conversion had taken place and they were performing prayer (which requires belief) they could have been referenced as believers. This could have easily been done in 9:11 with "then they are believers in the obligation/system". This would have nullified my entire argument. Its no coincidence this never happened. It never happened because this was never meant.

Some people have still argued that these signs/verses discuss conversion in order to make peace. IF this is the case, where else in the entire *quran* does The God give conversion as a possible solution for similar problematic situations? Can they find any? And if this is possible, why is this so-called solution listed some of the time and not others? What is their criteria?

It has been suggested that since they are required to bring forth the *zakat* this implies they must be *Muslims* because only *Muslims* can give/bring/produce the *zakat*. This is not the case [see 7:156, 19:55, 41:6-7]

Say: "I am no more than a human being like you, who is being inspired that your God is one God, therefore you shall be straight towards Him and ask His forgiveness. And woe to those polytheists. [41:6]

"Those who do not bring forth the *zakat*, and with regard to the Hereafter, they are rejecters/concealers" [41:7]

As a side note: *zakat* does not equal charity. It means positive development, betterment (which can include giving charity). However reviewing the meaning of this word is not the purpose of this article. For further reading on this point, please click [here](#).

The above passage should be read in conjunction with 8:30-40 which seems to discuss the same

events.

## Conclusion

Now, I would like to concentrate on what the verses are actually recommending rather than discussing the traditional argument.

Those who violated the treaty are asked to repent. A true repentance obviously means actually acknowledging wrongdoing, apologising, and ceasing wrongdoing [see 25:71]. Those who do not are warned of an upcoming painful retribution.

Once the restricted months are past (like a period of amnesty), those who violated the treaty and did not repent can be fought. If any of them now repent, they are required to uphold/maintain the oath/bond and bring forth the betterment. If they do this, their way is cleared. If they disagree, they can continue to be fought until they accept the terms or ask for protection (i.e. give up but still not accept the terms). If they do this, protection is granted, and they are delivered to their safety/security out with the land/community.

As you can see so far, all options are covered, except what happens to those who repent and uphold/maintain the oath/bond and bring forth the betterment initially but eventually break the oath/bond. This is covered in 9:11-12. If the oaths are now broken, the leaders of this activity are fought until this activity is stopped.

It is interesting to note the progressing options from 9:1-12. A point not recognised by the traditional understanding. Perhaps this is because to acknowledge progressing options would disprove their position. What I mean by this is that in 9:12 the punishment recommended is fighting the chiefs of rejection only, but this is not the case in 9:5. Therefore, they cannot be referring to the same situation. So what has changed? Since 9:12 is a continuation of 9:11, we can analyse them both together to see if there is an explanation. Upon examination, it is clear the only thing they were asked to uphold/maintain is the *salat*, and in doing so a direct opposing/contrasting comparison is made:

11. But if they repent, **and uphold/ maintain the salat** and **bring forth the betterment**, then they are your brothers/allies in the obligation/system. We detail/explain our signs/revelations for a people who know.

12. And if they **break their oaths after making them**, and they **assail** (cause damage) in your obligation/system; then you may fight the chiefs of ungratefulness/rejection. Truly, their oaths are nothing to them, perhaps they will then stop.

To give this further weight, a question has to be asked: can *salat* mean oath/bond? See below:

'The Arabic English Lexicon' by Edward W. Lane

prayer, supplication, petition, oration, eulogy, benediction, commendation, blessing, honour, magnify, bring forth, follow closely.

In a horse race when the second horse follows the first one so closely that its head always overlaps the first horse's body that horse is called AL-MUSSALLI (i.e. the one who follows closely / remains attached / remains in contact).

Central portion of the back, portion from where the tail of an animal comes out, the rump.

For further evidence, please read the following article, which demonstrates the core meaning of *Sad-Lam-Waw* (root of *salat*) is "to go/turn towards (in a positive/close manner)". There is not one exception to this core meaning in the entire *quran*.

### [An Understanding of salat from Al Quran](#)

Also, 8:30-40 seems to be discussing the same events as 9:1-19. In 8:35 it says for those who have the trait of "kafar", that their *salat*/bond at the house was nothing but noise/whistling and clapping/deception/aversion. When two groups sign a treaty or make a bond in public, it is usually accompanied by cheer and applause. This further reinforces the understanding given above.

Thus, it has been shown that **'the reading' itself proves, beyond reasonable doubt,**

**that "*salat*" cannot mean "prayer" in these verses.** This conclusion exposes the myth of the traditional understanding.

Once again, the options are clear: does one accept what *al quran* says or does one accept what they've been taught it says?

Shall I seek other than The God as a judge when He has sent down to you this scripture fully detailed? Those whom We have given the scripture know it is sent down from your Lord with truth; so do not be of those who have doubt. And the word of your Lord has been completed with truth and justice, there is no changing His words. He is the Hearer, the Knower. And if you obey the majority of those on earth they will lead you astray; that is because they follow conjecture, and that is because they only guess.

[*al quran*, 6:114-116]

It is hoped that this article will serve to expose the truth.

### **IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER:**

This article reflects my personal understanding, as of May 10th, 2005. Seeking knowledge is a continual process and I will try to improve my understanding of the signs within 'the reading' and out with it, unless The God wills otherwise. All information in this article is correct to the best of my knowledge only and thus should not be taken as a fact. One should seek knowledge and verify: 17:36, 20:114, 35:28, 49:6, 58:11. If The God willed, the outcome of this article will be beneficial.

All feedback is welcome.

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**(at)** = @ with no spaces

### References

['The Arabic English Lexicon' by Edward W. Lane](#)

['Dictionary of the Holy Quran' by Abdul Mannan Omar](#)

[Concordance of The Quran by Hanna E. Kassis](#)

[What is the meaning of al masjid al haram?](#)

The argument in this article initially began as a thread on a forum, which can be found [here](#).

NB: The title/noun "*Muslim*" (with capital 'M') was used in this article to ease understanding, however, the author strongly rejects the primary signification of the word *muslim* is as a title/noun. It is a description first & foremost, then a title/noun.

Another article:

### **Does *salat* = prayer?**

Translating *salat* as 'prayer' in the following verses does not fit. Translators such as Yusuf Ali (and others) recognised this and ammended their translation accordingly.

[2:157] , [2:238] , [9:5] , [11:87] , [24:41] , [4:102 and 33:56] , [9:99] , [9:103] , [19:31]

To those will be *salawat* from their Lord and a mercy, they are the guided ones. [2:157]

**Does the Lord pray for people?** (*salawat* = plural of *salat*)



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Preserve the *salawat*, and the *wusta* (commonly translated as 'middle') *salat*, and stand/persist devoutly to GOD. [2:238]

**Why would God mention to preserve the prayers, and then say "... and the middle prayer" ?** Surely, the first comment includes the middle prayer? Is there something special about the middle prayer? Does this have any support from al quran?  
[\[additional inconsistencies with this verse\]](#)

The most accurate translation of 2:238 is as follows, followed by a short explanation:

Preserve/guard on the orations/bonds, and the most balanced oration/bond, and stand/persist to/for The God in obedience. [2:238]

The context prior to 2:238 discusses formal/public orations/vows/bonds. The core meaning of these orations/vows, as implied by the root, are to go/turn towards in a close/positive manner. This view is given further weight by the use of "QaNiTeena/obedience" at the end of the ayat/sign. And the reference of "the most balanced oration/bond" (i.e. al quran) provides a perfect link for 2:239.

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So when the sacred months are passed, then you may kill those who have set-up partners wherever you find them, and take them, and surround them, and stand against them at every point. If they repent, and uphold the *salat*, and contribute to the *zakat*, then you shall leave them alone. GOD is forgiving, Merciful. [9:5]

**Is God saying here that the unbelievers must perform prayers if they are going to be forgiven by the people?** The essential point of prayer is that one believes in a higher being! Therefore why force them into praying if they are idolaters? If so, this would contradict 2:256 "no compulsion in the system/religion".

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They said: 'oh Shuaib, does your *salat* instruct you that we leave what our fathers served, or that we do with our money as we please?. You then are the compassionate, the sane!'. [11:87]

**Receiving instruction/ laws through prayer?** How does Shuaib's "prayer" affect the spending of others?

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Do you not see that everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies GOD, even the birds assembled (with wings expanded)? Each knows its *salat* and its glorification. And GOD is fully aware of everything they do. [24:41]

**Do birds pray?** Do they have a special prayer? If so, does this have any support in al quran?

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And from the Nomads are those who believe in God and the last day, and he looks upon what he spends to make him closer to God, and the *salawat* to the messenger. It indeed makes them closer. God will admit them in His mercy; God is Forgiving, Merciful. [9:99]

**How does looking upon what one spends make one closer to the prayers of the messenger?**

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Take from their money a charity to purify them and better them with it, and *salla* them. Your *salat* is a tranquility for them, and God is Hearer, Knowledgeable. [9:103]

**How can one's *salat* be a tranquillity/ assurance for someone else?**

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So she pointed to him (Jesus). They said: "How can we talk to someone who is a child in a cradle?" He (Jesus) said: "I am God's servant, He has given me the scripture and made me a prophet". "And

He made me blessed wherever I was, and He enjoined me with the *salat* and the *zakat* as long as I am alive" [19:29-31]

**Did Jesus perform the prayer as long as he was alive?** Does this mean as a baby he did the 'wudu' (the traditional sequence of washing), bowed and prostrated as is traditionally done?

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In each of these examples, are you having to force your opinion on the verse?

Well known translators (e.g. Yusuf Ali) have used different words depending on context, see the following for one example:

Yu-sal-lu means prayer in Chapter 4 Verse 102 but not in Chapter 33 Verse 56. Same word, different translation.

Are you sure *salat*=prayer? Definitely not in all occurrences.