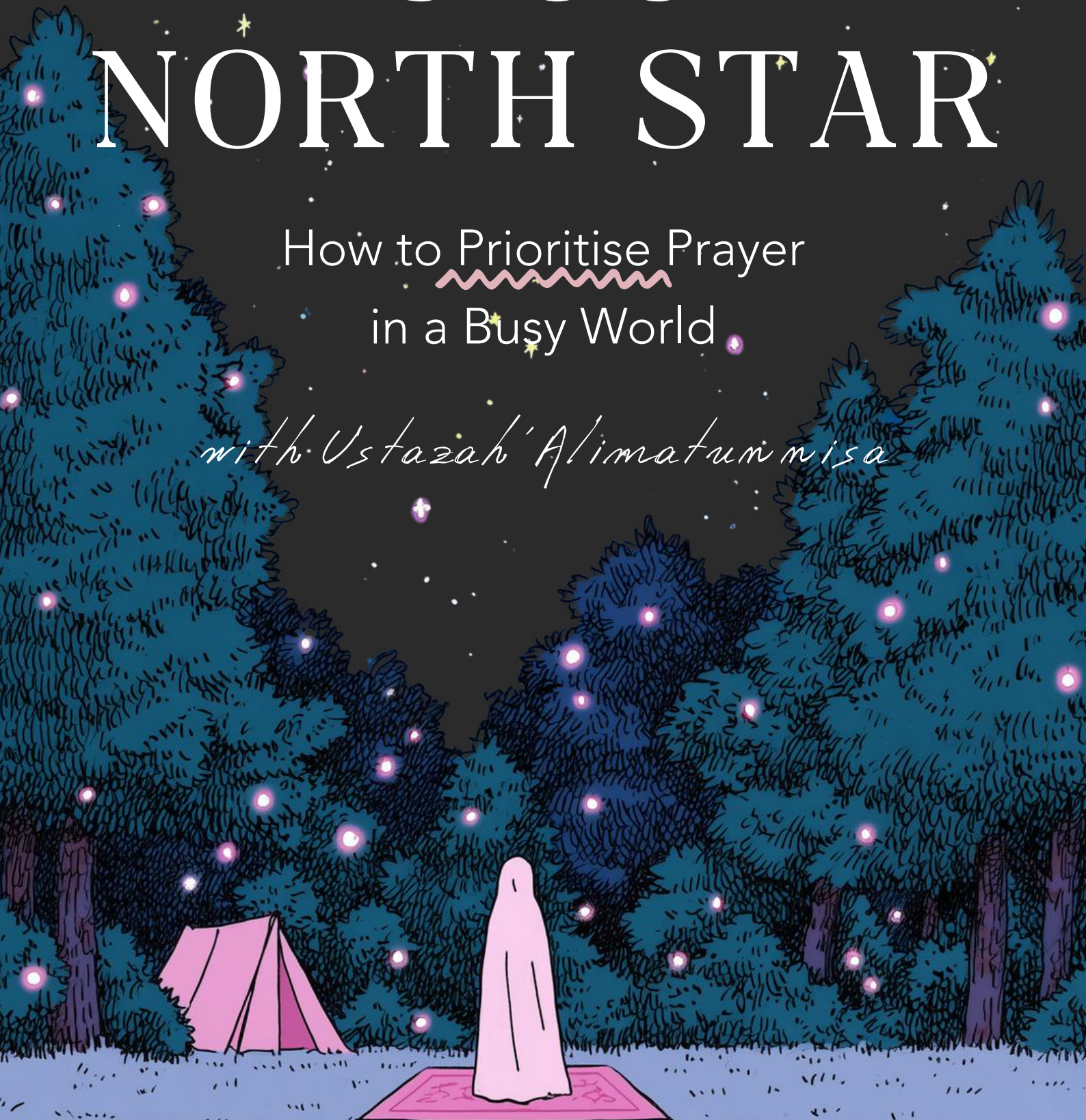


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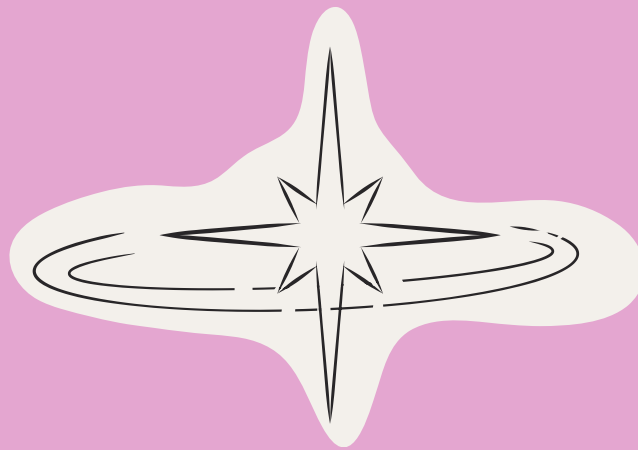
SOLAH AS OUR NORTH STAR

How to Prioritise Prayer
in a Busy World

with Ustazah Alimatussalam



What is a North Star?



- It's a way of navigation, mainly to help sailors in the sea; they look to the stars to find their way in the middle of the ocean.
- The North Star is the only star that doesn't change its location. **It's constantly in its place, helping sailors realign when they are lost and unsure where to go.**

Solah: The North Star to Our Souls

- This is what Solah is to us - it is **our main source of direction, which we have to hold on to in difficulty and in ease**.
- **When people are in difficulty**, they would remember Allah SWT. They would want to find the source of comfort and help.
- It's a bigger challenge for people to focus and prioritise Solah during times of ease. They don't feel the need and desire to pour their hearts out to Allah SWT or to make du'a. In these times, **they are actually in a situation of test**.



- When the companions and Rasulallah ﷺ returned from the Battle of Badr (where they came out victorious), Rasulallah ﷺ told them that **they are now heading to a bigger jihad.**
- When asked to clarify, Rasulallah ﷺ spoke about the **Jihad of the Nafs** - the temptation to get closer to Dunya is easier and stronger when we are in ease. This is what we want to be careful of in times of ease.

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In conclusion:

When you
don't feel a
need to do
Solah, *that is*
when you have
to give your
time to Solah.

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**“Take advantage of
five before five:**

your youth
before your old age,

your health
before your illness,

your riches
before your poverty,

your free time
before your work,

and your life
before your death.”

(Shu'ab al-Imaan lil-Bayhaqī 10250)

Youth and Time

- Rasulullah ﷺ is telling us to prioritise our Ibadah and Akhirah, especially when we don't feel like it.
- Someone in their youth would feel like they have their whole life in their hands and everything seems easy and beautiful etc. They feel like there's a whole life ahead of them with many years ahead. They wouldn't be prioritising their Solah. When asked when they would prioritise Solah, they would respond 'later when they are older'.
- **Reflect:** How sure are we that we will get older or that we will live till tomorrow?



Food as a Fuel

- When we speak about prioritising Solah, we mean taking Solah as something we would do when we are in ease and in difficulty.
- We should take Solah as the **fuel and oxygen that we need in order to survive.**
- Think about how many times we eat in a day. Some may eat one meal while others eat two or three meals. How long do we spend thinking about and preparing food every day? We would need at least an hour, including the after-meal cleanup.
- We also might have a responsibility to prioritise the meal of our loved ones, for their survival, if we are mothers and caretakers.

Prioritise our Soul

- What if we prioritise Solah the same way we prioritise food? What if we think about Solah as much as we think about food and how it needs to be prepared for ourselves and our loved ones?
- As our body needs nourishment from food, **our soul needs its nourishment from Solah.**
- All human beings - believers and non-believers - would become empty vessels if they live without Solah. They do not have nourishment for their souls and are constantly in survival mode. Empty vessels make the loudest noise; they have no meaning.

The Desire for More

- When we rush for career growth, more profits or for more dunya, we need to ask what we will do with all of them.
- The more we have, the more we may think of them as our goal. We may want the promotion because we believe it is what we need. We believe that once we have it, we'll be happy, but instead we still feel unhappy and empty, leading us to seek more.
- **When the desire for the Dunya is strong, we will keep wanting more**, but there is no stopping there. There is no end goal, because **the purpose of life is not in the right place.**



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When our
direction is on
Allah SWT,
everything in life
will *fall into*
place, and we
will *feel content*.



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The First Obligation

- Where do we get that redirection from?
It comes from Solah, of course.
- **Look at the Pillars of Islam:** Except for Shahada and Solah, the rest of the pillars, such as Zakah, Fasting, and Pilgrimage, came way later in Islam and in the Prophet ﷺ's Prophethood.
- Solah was commanded from the very beginning. It came to the Muslims even when they were the weakest in number in the community.
- **Solah was an obligation from the very start.** Additionally, the night prayer was an obligation for the very first generation of Muslims.

- **The First Muslims:** At the Muslim's weakest point in terms of their number, **their belief was the strongest**. Allah SWT made it mandatory for them to wake up in the middle of the night for Solah, despite them still praying in secrecy.
- After that, the night prayer becomes Sunnah for all Muslims but stays Wajib for Rasulullah ﷺ (which he ﷺ never missed, of course!)
- **Conclusion: Solah saved the early generation. It gives them the utmost strength to stand their ground from the very beginning.**



The First Martyrs

- At the very start, Allah SWT did not allow the Muslims to retaliate. They were told to accept whatever the Mushrikeen (polytheists) of the Quraysh did to them.
- The family of Yasir was the first martyrs. Sayyidina Bilal ibn Rabah RA was also tortured by his master until he almost died, before Sayyidina Abu Bakr RA bought his freedom.
- When Rasulullah ﷺ saw the master of Sayyidina Yasir RA and Sayyidina Sumayya RA torturing them, he ﷺ said to them, **'Have patience, O family of Yasir, for the Jannah is promised unto all of you.'**



The Ruling of Solah

- The permission of jihad or fighting back had not yet been sent down to the Muslims, yet they remained patient. So what gave them that strength? It was the Solah.
- **Solah fuelled their patience and strength**, and was the **number one fuel for their Iman (faith)** from the very beginning.
- Look at how the Shariah (Rulings) of Solah came: When the verses of fasting and Zakah were sent down, the Muslims started to fast and pay Zakah. **But how did Allah SWT send down the Shariah of Solah?** Did it come in verses of the Quran like how the verses of fasting was revealed?

(Answer next page!)



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Timestamp: 20:52

Allah SWT
elevated Sayyidina
Muhammad ﷺ on
his most beautiful
journey of *Mi'raj*,
raising him to receive
the commandment of
the five daily prayers.

(Goosebumps!)



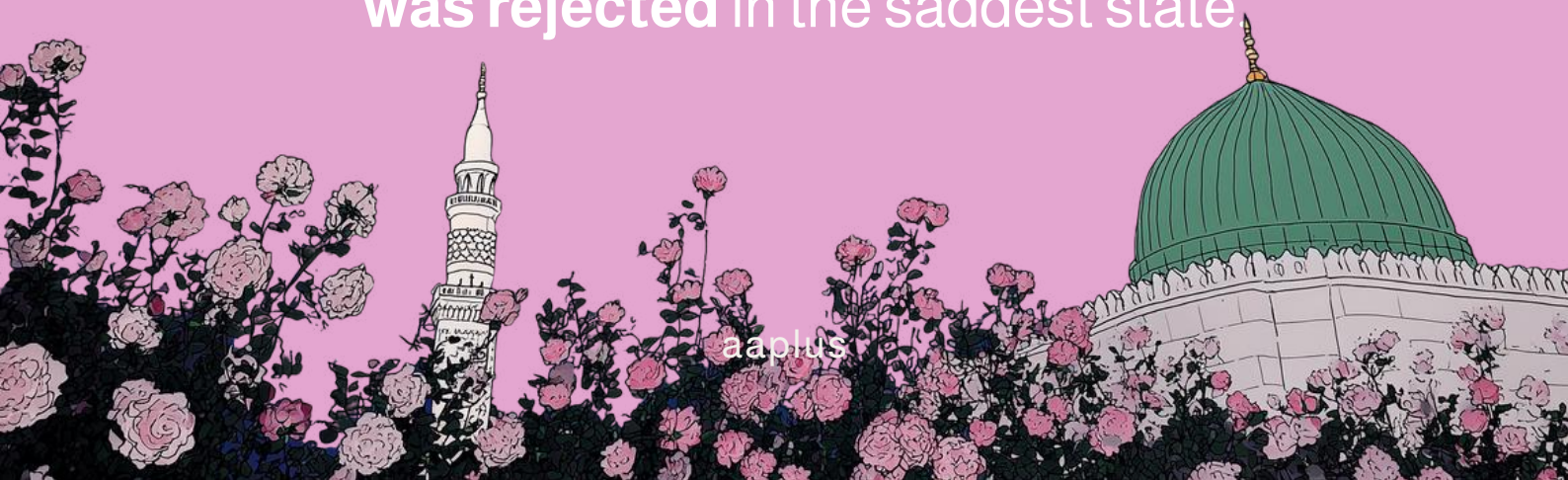
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The Year of Sadness

- All the other Shariah were sent immediately, but Solah was sent to Rasulullah ﷺ as if offered on a gold platter, a gift.
- It came in the **Year of Sadness**, when the movement of the da'wah was not strong - there were many rejections:

a. **Rasulullah ﷺ lost two of his main supporters** in the da'wah - his wife, Sayyidatina Khadija, RA and his uncle, Abu Talib.

b. **He went to Ta'if to call people to Islam and to worship Allah SWT, but was rejected** in the saddest state



- It was also a year when there were few victories or progress in the Da'wah of Islam.
- Some people claimed Isra' and Miraj was a dream (and dreams of significant meaning were common at that time). However, Rasulullah ﷺ told them that he physically ascended that night; **the Mi'raj happened spiritually and physically.**
- He ﷺ went up through the layers of seven skies, even to a place where Sayyidina Jibreel himself, the archangel of all of the angels, was not allowed.
- **At the highest place possible**, where Allah SWT brought the body of Rasulullah ﷺ up, **He sent down the commandments of the five daily prayers.**

solah as our north star.

Timestamp: 24:22

When you perform
Solah, this is what
you're giving yourself:

*Your Solah is
your Mi'raj.*

It can bring you
upwards and lift you
up high.



The Attahiyat

- Scholars of Tafsir mentioned in their books that the conversation of Rasulullah ﷺ and Allah SWT at that highest level, is locked in the Solah through the recitation in Attahiyat/Tashahud:

التَّحِيَّاتُ الْمُبَارَكَاتُ الصَّلَوَاتُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلَّهِ

**All greetings, blessings, and goodness
are for Allah**

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

**Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy
of Allah and His blessings**

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ

**Peace be upon us and upon the righteous
slaves of Allah**

- If we consider ourselves as **ibadillahi salihin** (the pious servants of Allah SWT), **remember that Rasulallah ﷺ remembers us and had given salam to us in front of Allah in the Sidrat al-Muntaha** (Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary), right before the Sharia of Solah was given to Rasulallah ﷺ. SubhanAllah.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ،
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ،

**I bear witness that there is no god but Allah,
and I bear witness that Muhammad is the
Messenger of Allah**

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

**O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad
and upon the family of Muhammad.**

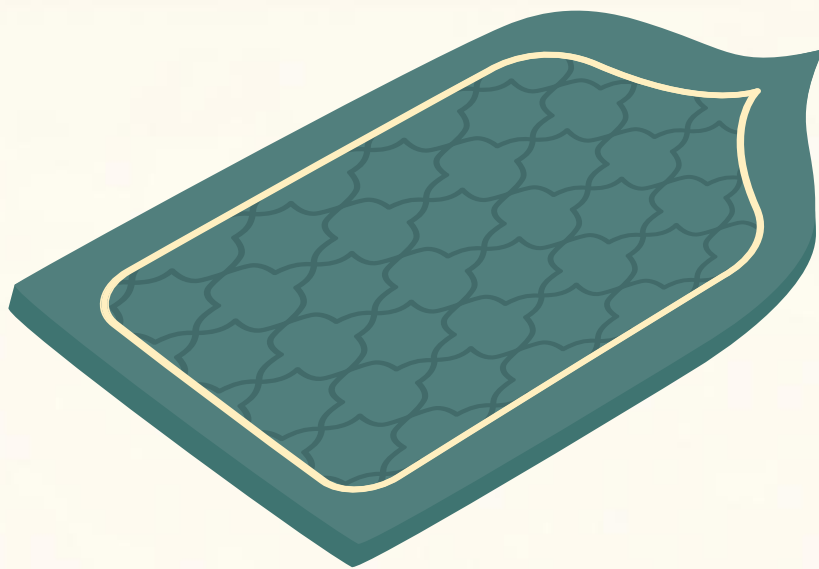
When We Prioritise Solah

- Rasulullah ﷺ had to 'negotiate' for the Solah to be performed for the current 5 times a day from 50 times a day. This was after Prophet Musa AS told him ﷺ that his Ummah wouldn't be able to sustain the 50 prayers in a day.
- When we prioritise Solah, we rise up, but if we neglect them, it means we are still at the bottom. We are nobody. We are all in so much need. We are all miskin and faqir in front of Allah SWT. But with Allah SWT, the One who has everything, we can be the richest and strongest in the world.
- We are strong when we are with Allah SWT but without Him, we are nothing. So without the Salah, without your mi'raj, where are you?

salah as our north star

Reflect.

**Without the
Salah which is
our Mi'raj,
*where are we?***



How is our Solah?

- If someone who does Solah is being lifted upwards, in their status and spiritual state, etc., **what about the one who does not prioritise their prayer?**
- Think about the times when we have lost our prayers. Where are we? How low are we? We may even be lower than dirt. ./

May Allah SWT make us among those who are always in Mi'raj, In Sha Allah.

Amin.



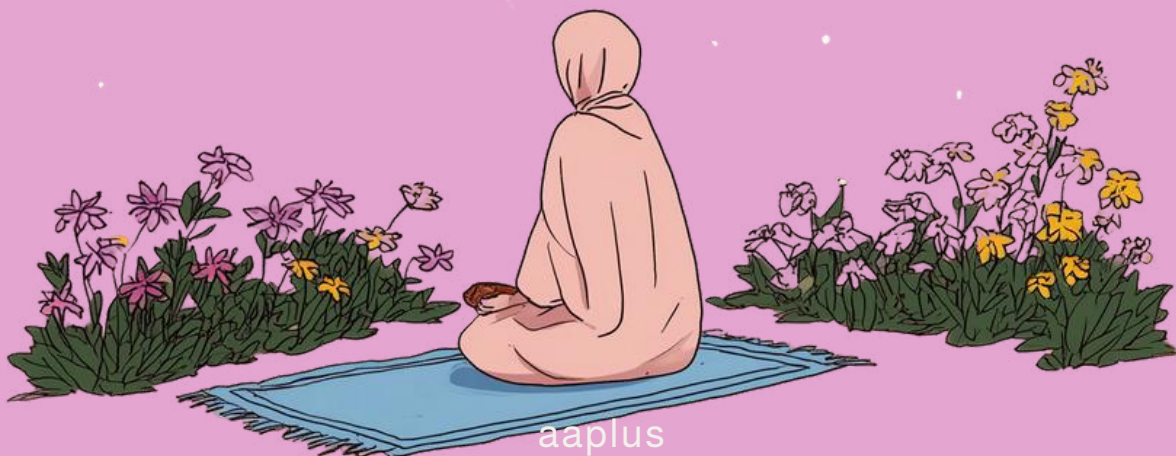
A Love Call



- **Solah gives us a spiritual boost.** If you want closeness to Allah SWT, Solah. If you have problems in your life and you're unsure what to do, Solah. If you are in ease and everything is great and you are happy, Solah.
- **Solah is a live meeting with Allah SWT;** He calls us five times a day. If someone who loves you deeply calls you five times a day, you would melt in front of them knowing how much they love you.
- But we're talking about **Allah SWT whose Love is beyond any love that a human being can give us.**

A Romantic Ibadah

- If you suddenly wake up in the middle of the night or during Fajr, without the help of an alarm, don't go back to sleep. **That first waking up is actually Allah SWT waking you up.** Once you go back to sleep, it's your Nafs taking over. You would have to deal with the snooze and difficulties of waking up.
- Anse Tamara Gray once said, **"Tahajjud is a romantic Ibadah."** Unlike Hajj with its difficulties and challenges, Tahajjud is the opposite. It's an ibadah where you feel relaxed, and it's only you and Allah SWT.



A Live Meeting with Allah SWT

- Before the world wakes up, before the birds start chirping, and the sun appears, we are ready. **We have done our dhikr before the sun does.**
- Don't treat Solah as homework or an assignment that you submit. Solah is not ticking off each prayer like a checklist and then presenting them to Allah SWT in Akhirah.
- Remember: Solah is a live meeting. Just like you prepare yourself before a Zoom meeting where you turn your camera on, show your presence, etc, **you prepare yourself to face Allah SWT.**

A Date with Allah

- During Fajr, before you do anything else, or speak to anyone else, Allah SWT is calling us to speak to him first. It's a mandatory date with Allah SWT.
- Lesson from Ustazah 'Alima's friend: **Dress up for your date with Allah SWT.** It puts you a different mood to see Allah SWT, where now you want to spend the whole time in Solah.
- You can put on Atr and a nice prayer mat to help you with Khushu in prayer but if you are someone who is easily distracted, you don't have to do it.



Show Up for Solah

- The live meeting with Allah SWT can happen at different times of the day. You show up in both less busy and busier times. Even if it has to be quick. Because **when you show up for Solah, you are realigning yourself.**
- During the busyness of the day, with all the work that you are doing, the deadlines and responsibilities that you have, you go to Allah SWT. The whole world will pause for you when you do for Allah SWT.



solah as our north star.

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Remember:
You don't need
time to do Solah.
*You gain time
when you do
Solah.*

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A Week's Challenge

- Challenge yourself for three continuous days or a whole week to pray within the 15-minute window after Athan. See how much Barakah you will gain! Your time will stretch and your day will feel longer.
- Especially for those who struggle with having enough time, you will see yourself gaining more time because you prioritise the Solah, SubhanAllah.

***Are you up for the
Challenge, Champs?***

United As One

- Solah redirect and realigns us to our purpose in life. Like the North Star, **it points us in the direction of the Qiblah, the Kaaba.**
- Allah SWT made it mandatory for every Muslim to face this one direction. It's a symbol that we are all united in worshipping the one God - Allah SWT.
- When we prioritise and direct our faith to Allah SWT, everything in our lives will fall into its place.



Lessons from The Sailors

- The flotilla was at sea for around 30 days. We hear stories of their experience with the weather and how their boats required repairs, etc.
- This is how a sailor's life is - unpredictable. There are uncertainties in front of them; they don't know when the next repair or the next problem will arrive. For some, they don't know when their next meal is.
- The sea is full of uncertainties, yet despite problems with weather and communication breakdown, **they rely on the stars for guidance and direction.**



A Non-Negotiable

- Regardless of the uncertainties and seasons in your life, **the direction stays the same.**
- Solah is that one thing that you would never drop, even when you are dying. If one cannot pray while standing, one can pray while sitting. If one can't pray while sitting, one can pray while lying down. If one cannot bring her hands up while praying in lying position, she can pray with her eyes.
- **No one else can do Solah on your behalf;** you're going to do it in whatever state you are in. If you missed it due to illness, you pray Qada'. It's non-negotiable because **Solah is the oxygen** to our lives.

solah as our north star.

Timestamp: 46:30

Final Reminder:

Without
Solah, we
are *empty*
vessels.

Remember this as we
navigate through life.

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