

aa plus

# FROM DISTRACTED TO DEVOTED

*Building Khusyu' in Your Daily Prayers*



*with Natasha Kamaluddin*

Allah SWT says:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

**Successful** indeed  
are the believers:

الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

those who **humble**  
**themselves** in prayer;

(Surah Al-Mu'minun 23:1-2)

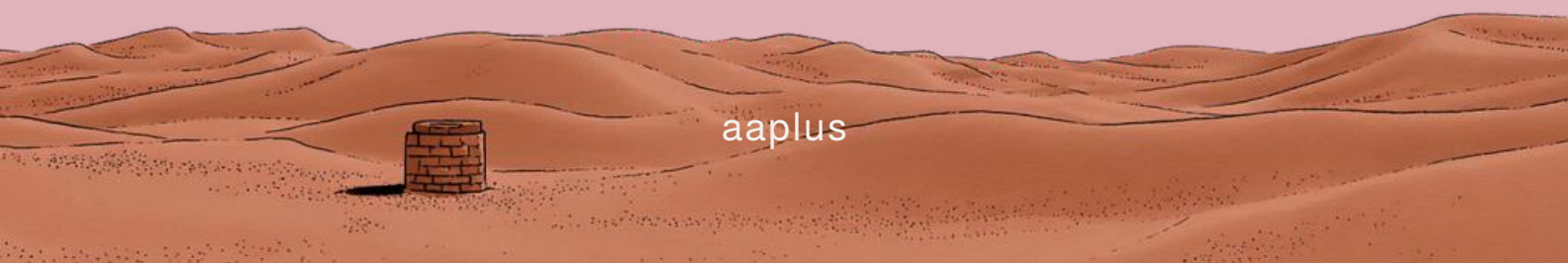


# The Humble Ones

- The Ayahs from Surah al-Mu'minun tell us that **success is by being in a state of Khusyu'**.
- It is narrated on the authority of Abu Zubair RA that he heard Jabir b. 'Abdullah RA saying, "I heard Rasulullah ﷺ observing this: **Between man and polytheism and unbelief is the abandonment of Solah.**" (Muslim)
- Rasulullah ﷺ said: 'The covenant that distinguishes between us and them is prayer; **so whoever leaves it, he has committed Kufr.**'" (Ibn Majah)
- We know the importance of prayer and how it would be the first act of worship to be judged in the Hereafter.

# A Distracted Solah

- ‘Ammar b. Yasir RA said: I heard Rasulullah ﷺ say: **A man returns after saying his prayer while a tenth part of his prayer, or a ninth part, or an eighth part, or a seventh part, or a sixth part, or a fifth part, or a third part, or half of it, is recorded for him. (Abi Dawud)**
- This tells us that it is easy to perform the ritualistic Solah, yet little of the reward is being written down.
- On top of that, we are being attacked by Syaitan who is always trying to distract us from being focused in Solah.



# The Five Levels of Prayer

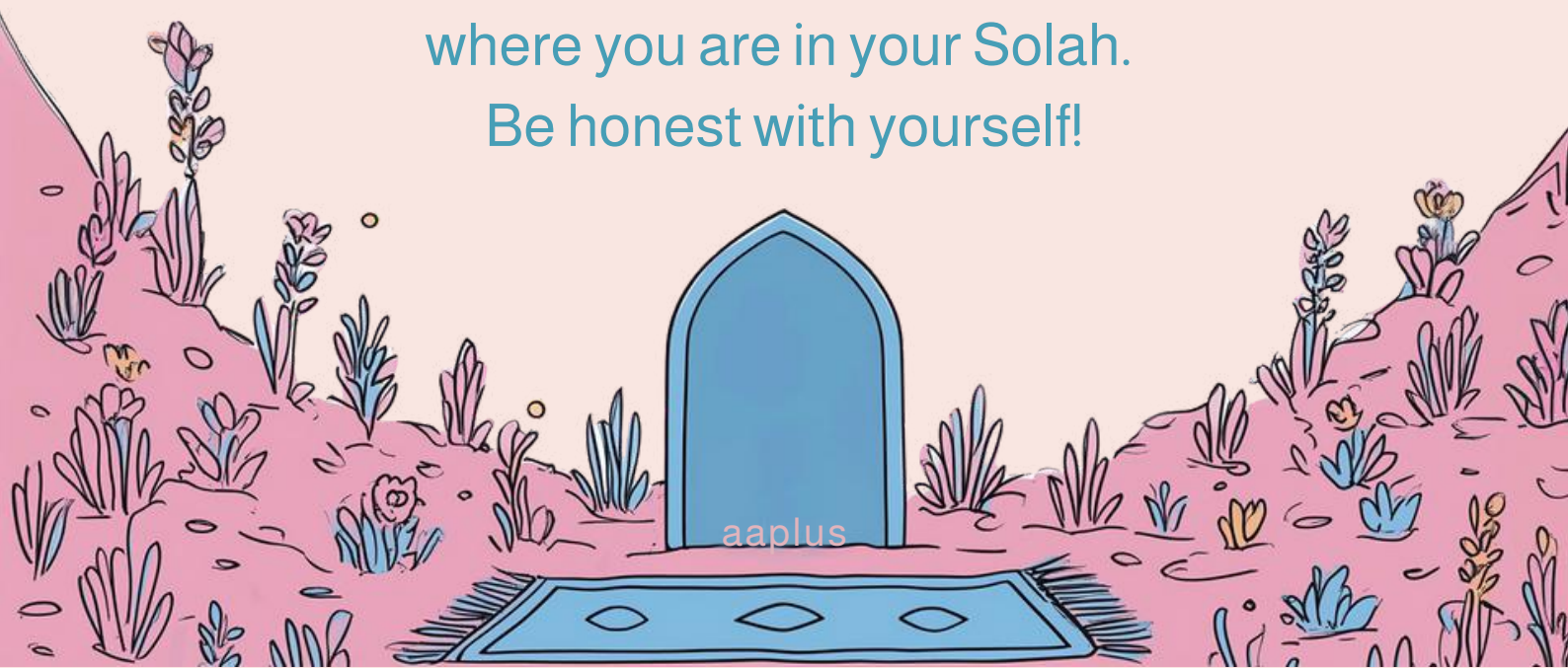
- Ibn Al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya in his book, 'The Path to Guidance' mentions FIVE levels of prayer with different outcomes:
- **The First Level (Negligent):** Those who fall short in fulfilling the mandatory requirements of the Solah. For example, they might not fulfil the obligatory steps in their Wudu'; not meeting the prayer timings, or they neglect the pillars of Solah. **This prayer is considered rushed and neglected, and is not accepted.**
- **The Second Level (Distracted):** They are those who pray the prayer in the correct timings, and with the correct form. But their heart and mind is preoccupied with worldly thoughts and the person is overcome with distractions. **They will be reckoned.**

- **The Third Level (Striving):** They are those who perform the prayer with care, and they fight against their distractions. They battle the Syaitan to protect their prayer from being stolen. They are conscious, and they are genuinely bringing themselves back to focus in Solah. **They will be forgiven.**
- **The Fourth Level (Focused):** They are fully present and attentive with their hearts engaged and engrossed in prayer. They are eager to fulfil every aspect of it perfectly.
- **The Fifth Level (Witnessing Allah):** The heart stands before Allah in awe and love, fully present, as if seeing Him.

*In order to know the  
gravity of the  
shortcomings in our  
prayers and where to  
work towards in  
improving our  
Khusyu', we have to  
baseline where our  
Solah is.*

Use the five-level indicators to assess  
where you are in your Solah.

Be honest with yourself!



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# Things we do outside of Solah

# Are you investing?

- **Khusyu'** is the outcome of how much we have invested in being a good slave of Allah SWT.
- These are some examples of **“investments” we can make to be a good slave of Allah SWT** - the more Ayahs of the Quran we memorise, the more Quran we recite; the more du'as and Names of Allah SWT we make and internalise; the more Athkar we make - all of these can help make our Iman stronger.
- Once our Iman is strong, we will understand that there is never any benefit for us to rush our Solah, because **we will miss out in the Akhirah, and in this world**. This is the function of Iman.

# You reap what you sow

- As you increase your investment, you will realise that **Solah is the means by which you gather the returns on your investment.**
- **Reflect:** If you're not doing any of the investments outside of Solah, **how is the beauty of Solah going to come to you?**
- **To reiterate, *Khusyu'*** is an outcome of our investments in being a good slave of Allah SWT.



# On Zikr & Quran

- If you've been reading the Quran, you know that Solah, Zikr, and Quran are often mentioned, either as a pair or all three together. For example in Surah Al-A'la or Surah Al-Ankabut below:

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ  
 إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ<sup>قُلْ</sup>  
 وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ<sup>قُلْ</sup> وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

*Recite what has been revealed to you of the **Book** and establish **prayer**. Indeed, 'genuine' prayer should deter 'one' from indecency and wickedness. The **remembrance of Allah** is 'an' even greater 'deterrent'. And Allah 'fully' knows what you 'all' do.*

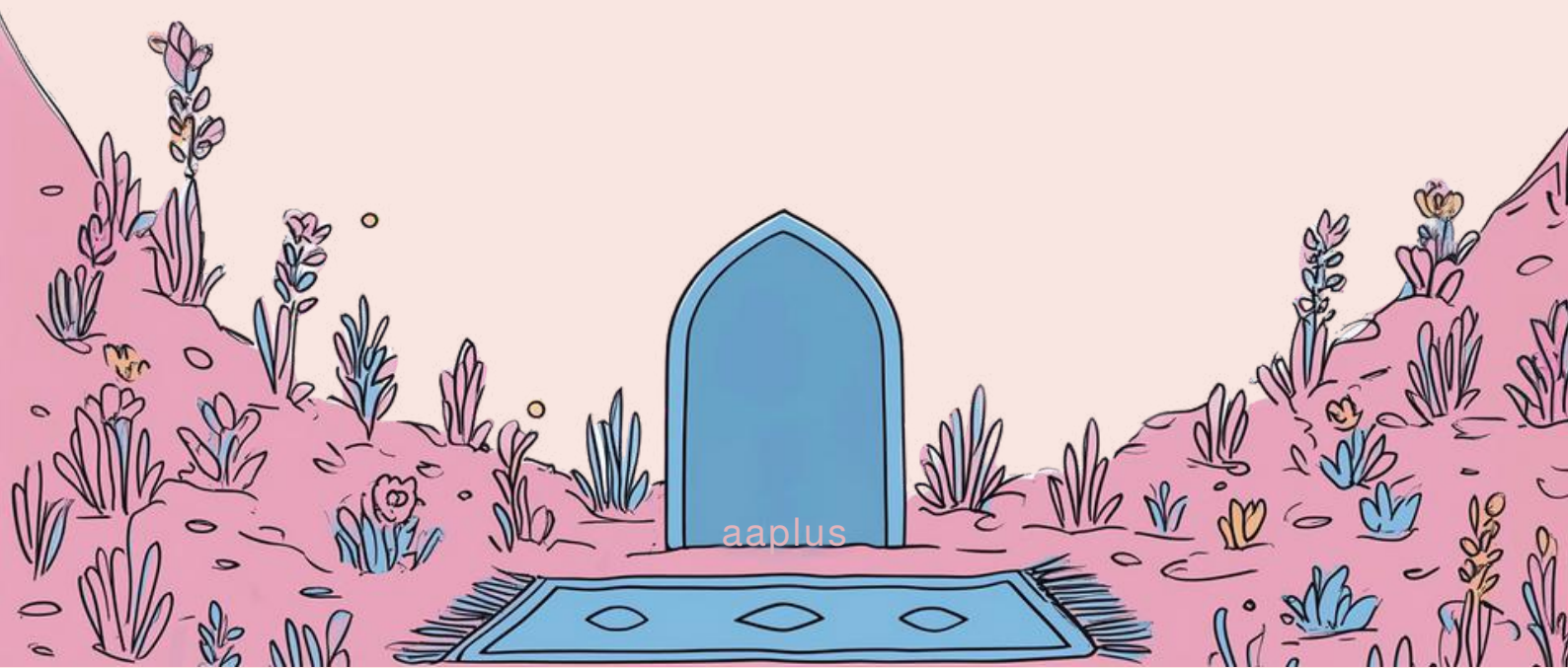
*(Surah Al-Ankabut 29:45)*

# The Wonders of Zikr

- Zikr is not just reciting the words of Athkar, but **it is the attentiveness of the heart and the remembrance of Allah.**
- **Remember: Allah reciprocates everything.** When we think of Allah, Allah thinks of us. (Bukhari)
- When you drink, it is Allah Who's quenching you, not your drink. When you take a medicine, it is Allah Who is curing you, not the medicine. When you see something wonderful, such as a miracle, you say 'Allahu Akbar'. When something bad happens, you say Alhamdulillah because you know that it is from Allah's Mercy.



*If we are  
constantly  
mindful of  
Allah, it  
becomes  
natural to do  
so in Solah.*



# Be Mindful of Allah

- **We must consistently remain mindful outside of Solah too**; as Khusyu' is not a switch that we can simply "turn on". Hence, **engage in mindfulness of Allah SWT continuously**, so that we get better at Khusyu' and are more consistent in it.
- Another factor that helps with mindfulness: **No music, no social media, nothing distracting**. There are enough studies on how they cause your brain to be addicted. It is hard to soothe and calm your brain down, so try to avoid them and not to engage in them.
- If you're memorising the Quran, it's better to protect your brain and heart from distraction, because the Quran cannot be mixed with something impure.

# Engage with Quran

- **Invest in engaging with the Quran:** If you find it hard to cry when you're reciting or reading the Quran, it's going to be harder to cry during Solah. We need to cultivate an engagement with the Quran, specifically for Solah.
- **Memorise more of the Quran:** Our minds get distracted when something has become routine. If you've recited Surah Al-Falaq from when you were six years old, you tend to rattle it off. Your mind is on autopilot, so you're more likely to be distracted. **It is vital to have a greater repertoire of Surahs of the Quran, so that you can rotate in Solah.** The more you remember, the more you need to revise, because forgetting is very easy. **Use your Solah to revise the Ayahs that you've memorised.**

# Ayahs for Your Feelings

- The more Quran you memorise, the broader your repertoire to select the Ayahs that fits what you feel that day. For example, when you feel that you want to praise Allah SWT, you may pick Surah Al-Hadid, verse 1:

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

*Whatever is in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah, for He is the Almighty, All-Wise.*

- For Kak Natasha, she picks the second passage of Surah Yasin about the three messengers, whenever she needs a reminder.



- You can also memorise Surahs or parts of Surahs that contain a Du'a, such as in the last 10 Ayahs of Surah Ali Imran and in the first 10 Ayahs of Surah Al-Kahf.
- **Understanding Arabic:** How else would you understand what you're reciting? You can set a modest objective - 'I want to learn enough Arabic for three reasons: 1) **To detect a bad translation;** 2) **To make memorisation easier;** 3) **To engage with the Quran more naturally** because you understand every phrase or every word that you're reciting.'



To summarise:

*Kusyu' requires  
investment,  
especially in the  
remembrance of  
Allah and Quran,  
because these are  
the things that  
help us to engage  
during Solah.*



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Things  
we do as  
we prepare  
for Solah

# Steps to Attain Focus

- **Be self-aware of how different locations of Solah can impact Khusyu'**. Certain places provide you with Khusyu' that other locations cannot.
- **Put your phone in silent mode** so that you don't get distracted by the notifications.
- **Settle anything that could be a distraction** to you. It can be something as trivial as an itch on your body! Or answering the door when you hear a doorbell before you begin your Solah. This is so that you don't spend worrying and wondering in Solah, thus disrupting your focus.



- We can also recite this Du'a after Wudhu':

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي  
مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

*O Allah! Make me among those who repent, and among those who purify themselves.*

*(Tirmidhi)*

- The symbolism of it is that you have just done the Wudhu', which is supposed to purify you physically. However, the real point of it is **to purify you spiritually**, which is that you ask Allah SWT to make you of the **Tawabin** (those who purify from sins) and the **Mutatakhireen** (those who have purified themselves). It's the **inner purification that comes after the physical purification**.

- **Spend at least a minute before you start Solah to think about Allah SWT only.**  
This helps you get into the zone, In Sha Allah.
- Some useful things to be thinking about: things that you feel grateful for, when you felt the Rahmah (Mercy) of Allah on you, so that you can express your gratitude for it in Solah.
- **Have conviction that Allah SWT would never make obeying Him bad for you.** If it takes you 20 minutes to do your Solah properly, this is better than rushing your Solah in 5 minutes so that you can finish your worldly tasks in the other 15 minutes. Eventually, **Allah SWT is the One in control and Who puts Barakah in your deeds.**

*You are about  
to have an  
audience with  
the King of  
Kings, who  
controls  
everything  
and everyone.*

So there's no way that spending 15 extra  
minutes is going to be bad for you.

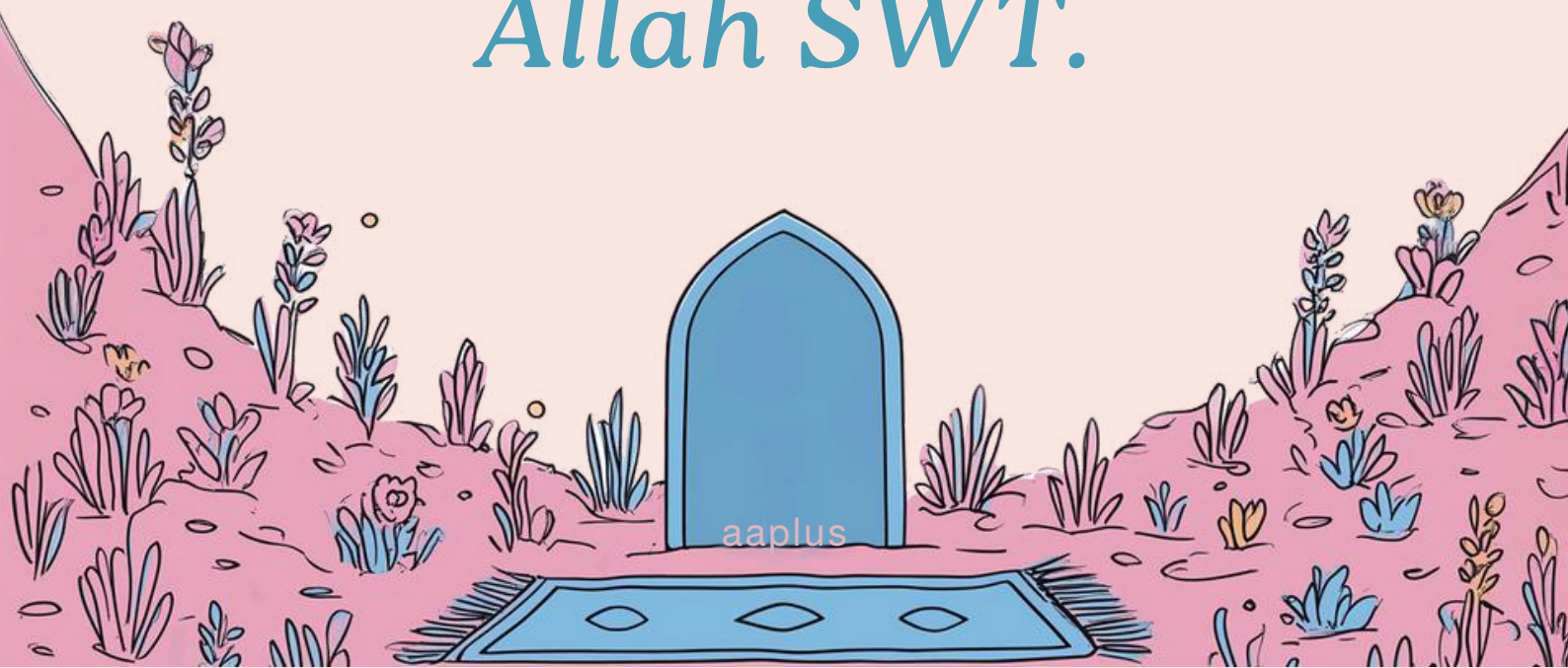


# What is Solah to me?

- **It is important to ask yourself, 'What is Solah to me?'** To some, it is just about compliance. Using that terminology already conveys that it's just a chore to you; you want to get it over and done with.
- To others, it may be a major obligation. They understand that it's the most important obligation of a Muslim; they're scared of abandoning it because they know that the consequences of abandoning it is major. They hope that they get rewarded for it.
- If we really want Khusyu', Solah has to be a meeting with the One you love most, where you naturally want to take your time, to enjoy yourself.

- You want to take your time because you don't want this time to end. You're sad when Solah ends because you're spending time with the One you love. You genuinely want to be there, and there is nowhere else that you want to be.
- You look forward to meeting the One who has protected you, brought you back when you were lost, given you everything good in your life, Who has been merciful to you, and Who has given you miracles. Your heart is overflowing with gratitude and love.
- At the same time, you feel guilty because of your shortcomings; about all the times you did Solah without Khusyu'. But then you remember that **He is the Most Merciful and He's allowing you to make repentance and to make right.**

*If you can  
approach Solah  
with the feeling  
of overwhelming  
gratitude and  
love, you will  
naturally be  
brimming with  
this love and be  
engaged with  
Allah SWT.*



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# Things we do during Solah

# Allah SW is Greater

- As we start Solah with Takbiratul Ihram, we raise our hands up and say 'Allahu Akbar'.
- Allahu Akbar means 'Allah is Greater'. Allah is greater than everything; He is greater than our laundry; He is greater than us finishing our work; He is greater than us watching TV.
- The scholars say it is important that we don't immediately lie - **if we say Allahu Akbar, and immediately think about what to do after Solah, you're not giving truth to the 'Allahu Akbar'**. 'Allahu Akbar' means there is nothing greater and we're going to be focused on Allah.

# Takbiratul Ihram

- When we put our hands up, the symbolism is we're putting everything behind us, and also glorifying the One in front of us. It's dual - **glorifying the One in front of us and putting everything behind us.**
- Next, we will recite the Dua Iftitah. There are many versions you can select from and one example is:

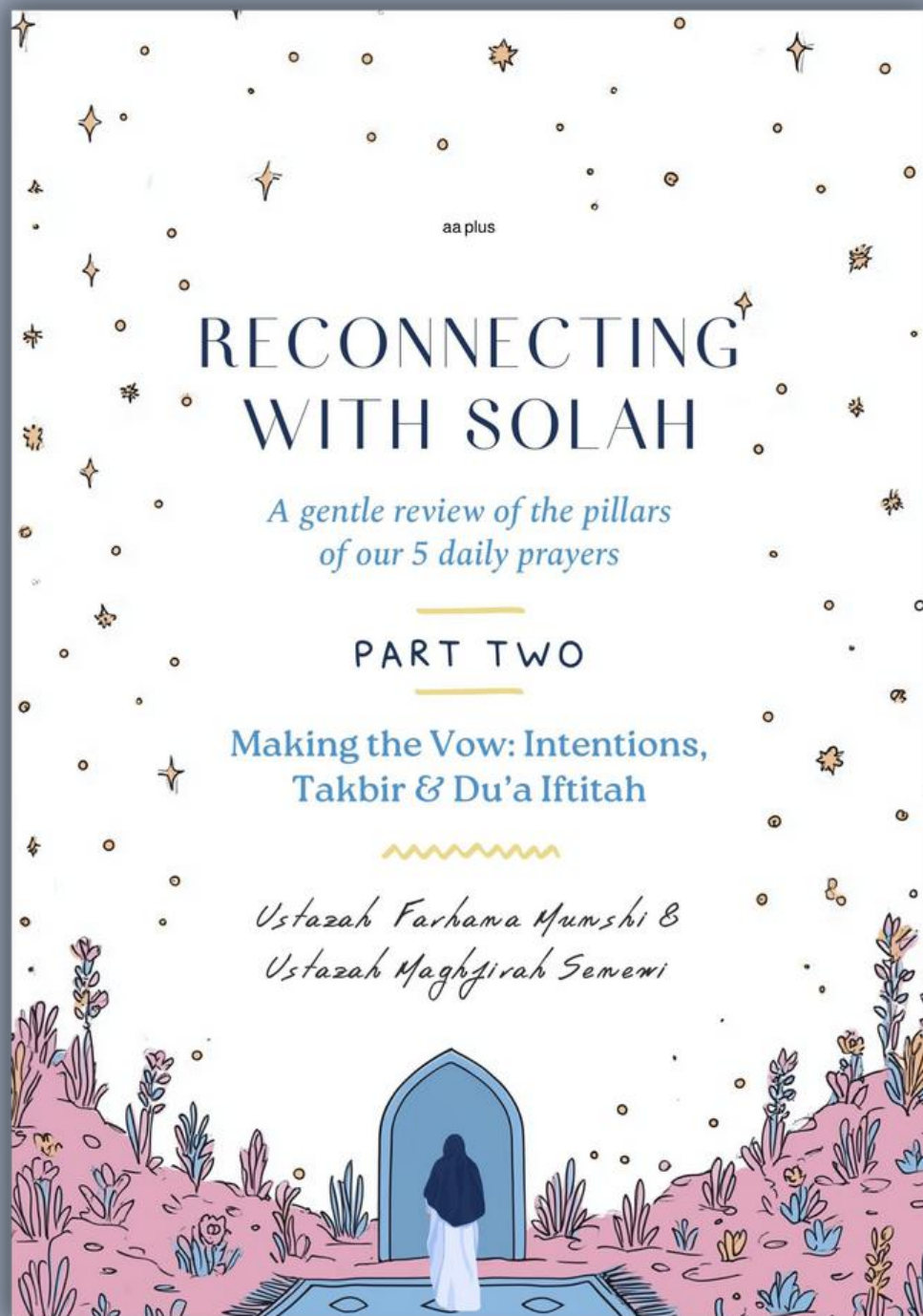
سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ  
اسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

*Glorious You are O Allah, and with Your praise, and blessed is Your Name, and exalted is Your majesty, and none has the right to be worshipped but You.'*

*(Tirmidhi)*

- **Reciting Du'a Iftitah completes your trio of Takbir** because you just said Allahu Akbar (Takbiratul Ihram), then you say Subhanallah (Du'a Iftitah), and you're going to say Alhamdulillah when you say your Fatiha. Ma Sha Allah.
- There are many Du'as from the Sunnah that we can rotate to get over the feeling of routine.
- Sometimes we fall into the trap of rushing through 'A'udhu Billah' and 'Bismillah'. When you rush it, you are setting yourself up to rush through Fatiha and the subsequent Surah you're going to recite.
- **Take your time and intentionally slow yourself** because that will remind you to also slow down when you recite the Al-Fatiha.

*We expanded on the Takbiratul  
Ihram and Du'a Iftitah in the  
following session!*



[Click here to revisit the Class!](#)

# Surah Al-Fatiha

- **To engage in Al-Fatiha, it must mean something to us.** For example, Kak Natasha wants the reward of the Du'a in the last Ayah of Surah Al-Fatiha to be answered.
- Allah said in a Hadith Qudsi that the Fatiha is split into two - the first part for Him and the second part for His slave, and His slave will get what he asks.
- **Guidance:** Those whom Allah guides, none can misguide, and those that Allah leads to misguidance, then no one can guide.



- There are many ways to engage with Al-Fatiha. It may depend on your day or mood at the moment. When we recite the first part of Al-Fatiha, our heart brims with gratitude because we have many things to be thankful for.
- In Fajr prayer, we can thank Allah for waking us up that morning to have another day to worship Him. As we move throughout the day, there are other things to say Alhamdulillah for.
- Once we say ‘Alhamdulillah Rabbil Alamin’, our heart should be full of gratitude, and we’re thanking Allah SWT for the many countless things
- ‘Alhamdulillah Rabbil Alamin’ is the ultimate praise due to Allah. **We are so incompetent and incapable of praising and glorifying Him properly so He taught and gave us this simple but powerful phrase!**



*Despite  
everything that  
Allah SWT has  
done for us and  
despite  
everything that  
He deserved,  
He made it  
simple for us to  
praise Him.*

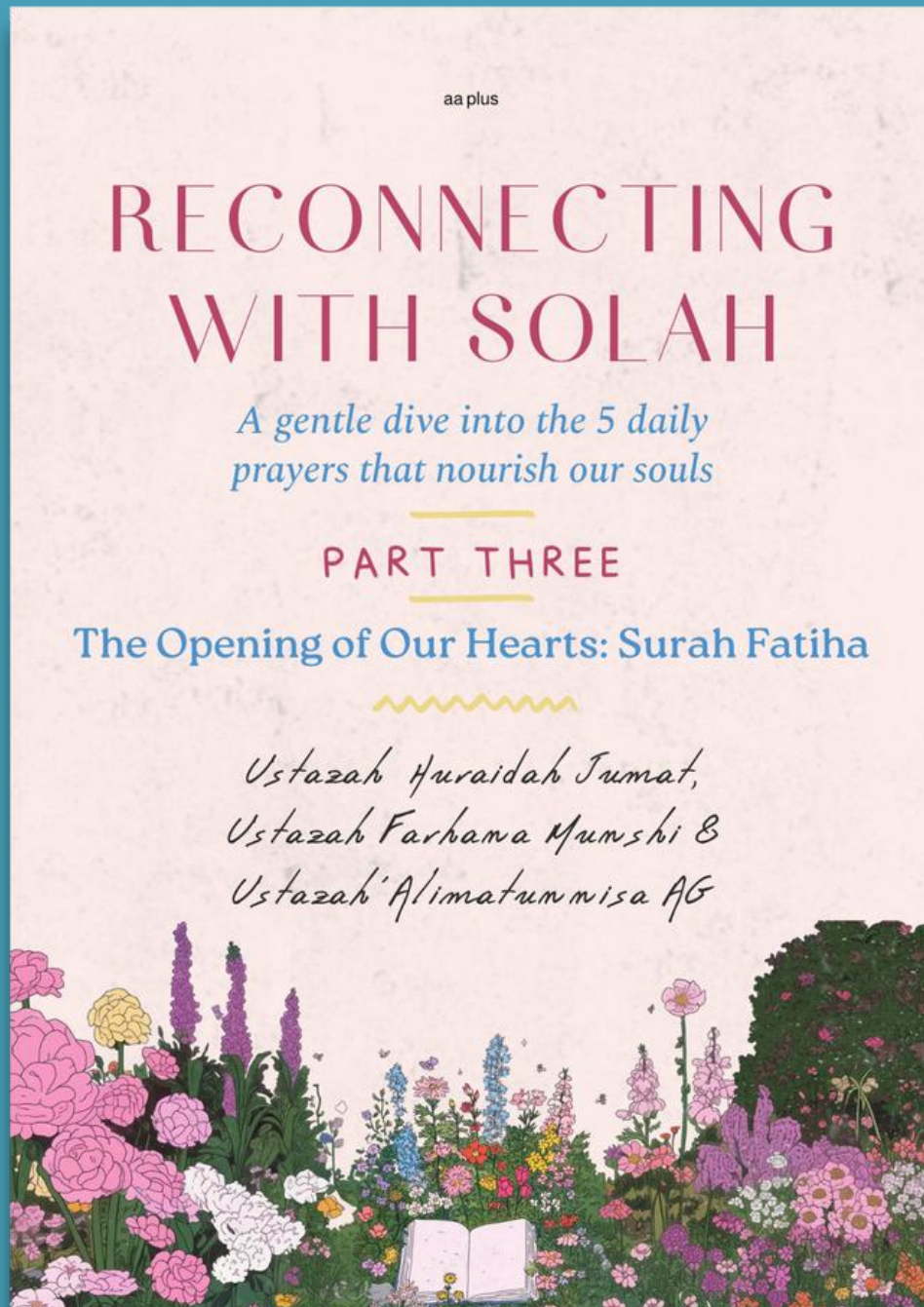


- Then you come to ‘Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim’. It's easy to engage with this Ayah because our lives are full of His mercy. We can think of one mercy and engage with the name Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim.
- Sometimes, we are used to reciting Surahs that we have memorised and made routine, we forget that we are reciting something from the Heavens. **We're reciting something divine.**
- The transition Ayah - ‘Iyyaka na'budu waiyyaka nasta'in’ - is **our promise to worship Allah alone and to only seek help from Him.**
- ‘Ihdina sirata'l mustaqim’ is a **guidance for us** (plural) including our family and everyone.

- We come to the Ayah - 'Sirata'l lazina an'amta 'alaihim' (the Path of those You have blessed). We know from the tafsir of Surah An-Nisa that this refers to the Prophets, the martyrs, the Siddiqin (the truthful) and the Solihin (the righteous).
- We are asking Allah to put us in the same category with those who have done great things, gone through a lot and sacrificed everything. But **we don't have a choice** because we don't want to be in the last two categories of people - those who are lost or those who are in Allah's anger.
- In conclusion, **a good tafsir of Al-Fatihah will help you to become engaged in Solah.**



*Want a more elaborate  
discussion on Fatiha?  
Reconnect with the Opening  
Surah in this Class:*

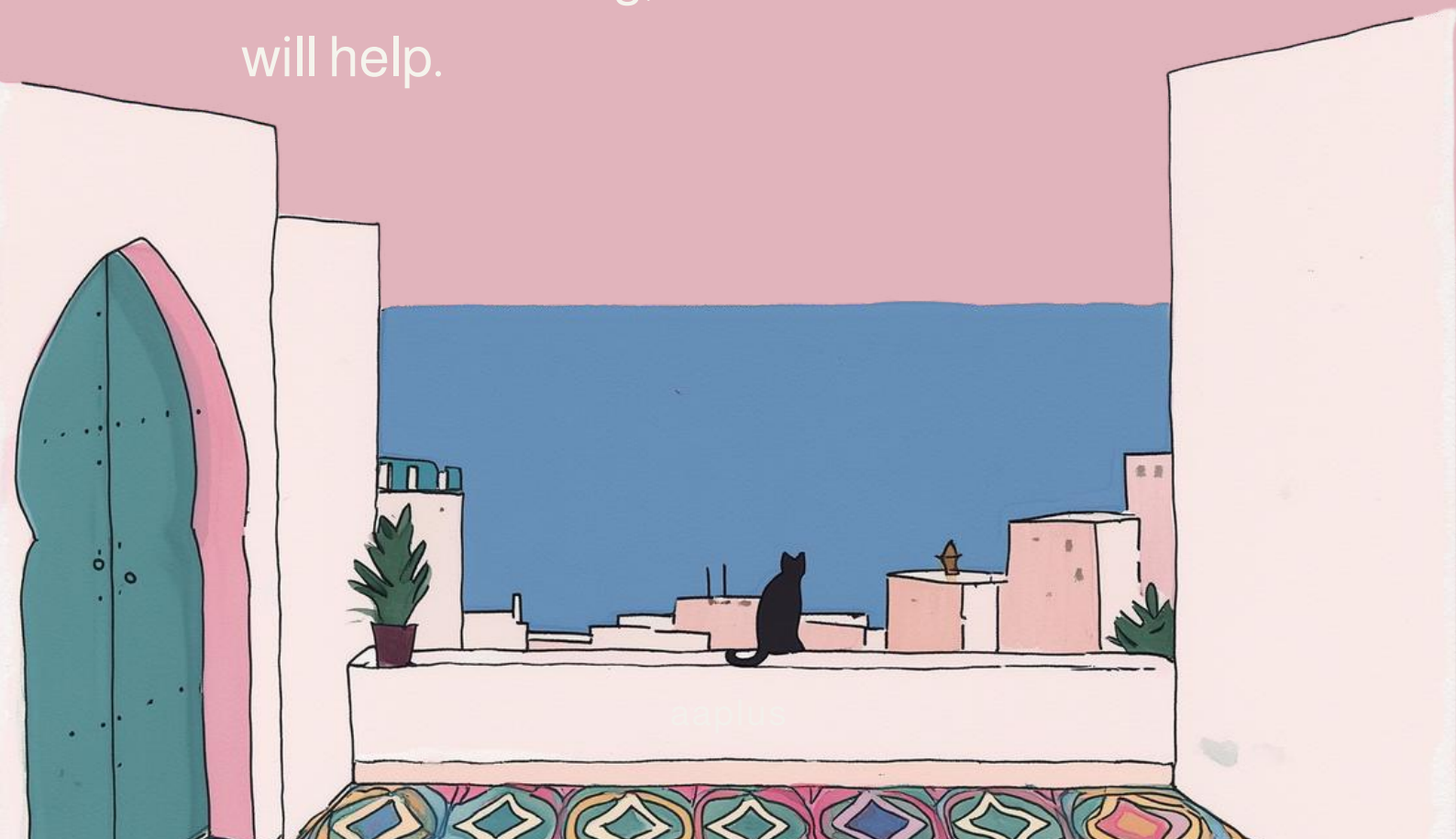


[Click here to revisit the Class!](#)

# How to be Focused

- One of the practices to help us stay focused is our mindset - what we tell ourselves. Among the things that people tell themselves continuously is that Allah is watching. **We make ourselves highly conscious that Allah is watching**, and we're not going to do anything or think of anything that we're not supposed to.
- Another way to stay focused is to seek to understand that **we are being judged**. For example, we are going to be marked for our Solah just as we are getting scored for exams.
- **Thinking of death** also helps with our focus. We may think as our Solah being our last Solah, or we can remind ourselves that there is nothing more important; **this moment in Solah is what matters most**.

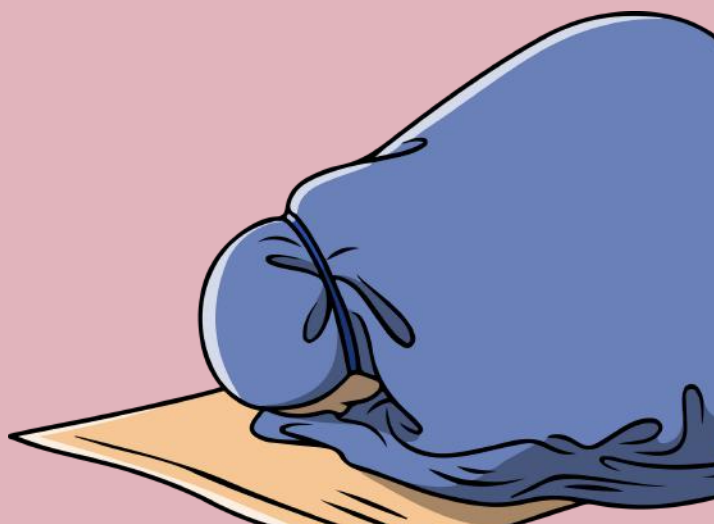
- We should remind ourselves that **we are in a meeting with the One who loves us most.** We don't want our Solah to be a letdown in that relationship, because if we love Allah the most, we don't want our Solah and how we do it to be a poor reflection of how much Allah means to us. This narrative helps bring us back to focus, In Sha Allah.
- Engaging the Quran is better than continuously whispering to yourself that Allah is watching, but sometimes a bit of both will help.



# In the Ruku'

- Then, we move towards ruku'. The scholars say that as we move through the different positions in Solah, our sins fall off. As we bow down, we think of our sins falling off and that we are bowing down to the Majesty of Allah. Afterall, He has commanded us to bow.
- As we stand up from Ruku' and we say, 'Sami Allahu liman Hamidah' (Allah hears the one who praises Him), we remind ourselves that it is an invitation from Allah. He hears us when we praise Him.
- Then we say, 'Rabbana wa lakal Hamd' (Our Lord, praise be for You only). We've praised Him so in this phrase, **there's beautiful continuity**. Allah reminds us that He hears our praise, and then we praise Him.

- Now comes the pinnacle of Solah - the Sujud, where you are lowering yourself to the closest place you will ever be to Allah, and this should make you excited. In this place, you will glorify Him and make du'a.
- By making Sujud, **you are accepting an invitation to be in your closest position to Allah**. The mind-blowing thing is that after this, **you sit**.
- When you are standing, you are in a state of attentiveness. When you bow, it is an act of humility and respect. In Sujud, you are bowing in a spirit of humility. However, **Allah grants us the opportunity to sit before Him, the King of Kings**, and you can choose to recite any Adhkars at this position.



اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي، وَارْحَمْنِي،  
وَاهْدِنِي، وَاجْبُرْنِي،  
وَعَافِنِي، وَارْزُقْنِي، وَارْفَعْنِي

*O Allah forgive me, have mercy  
on me, guide me, support me,  
protect me, provide for me and  
elevate me.*

*(Sunan Ibn Majah)*



# Du'a Between Two Sujud

- First, you're invited to humble yourself, and then Allah gives you the honour of sitting in front of Him and reciting this du'a. As per etiquette, when you finish reciting your du'a, you glorify Allah again by making sujud again.
- For Kak Natasha, she feels unworthy making the Du'a asking for Allah to raise us - warfaqni - because we have not done enough. We have not done enough for our brothers and sisters in Gaza and all those who are suffering, so can we ask for Allah for elevation? But Allah is the One prescribing this Du'a to us. Subhan'Allah!



- Allah gives us so much not because of who we are, but because of who He is. He did not restrict this du'a to Rasulullah ﷺ alone. All of us can recite it because He gives from His Generosity.
- Our striving is part of our efforts; however, we often err. Yet, Allah continues to send us reminders. Despite our frequent transgressions, Allah still gives us, conceals our sins and grants us the chance to repent.
- Then you come to the Tahiyyat. We are sad because we know we're coming to the end of our meeting with the One that we love.



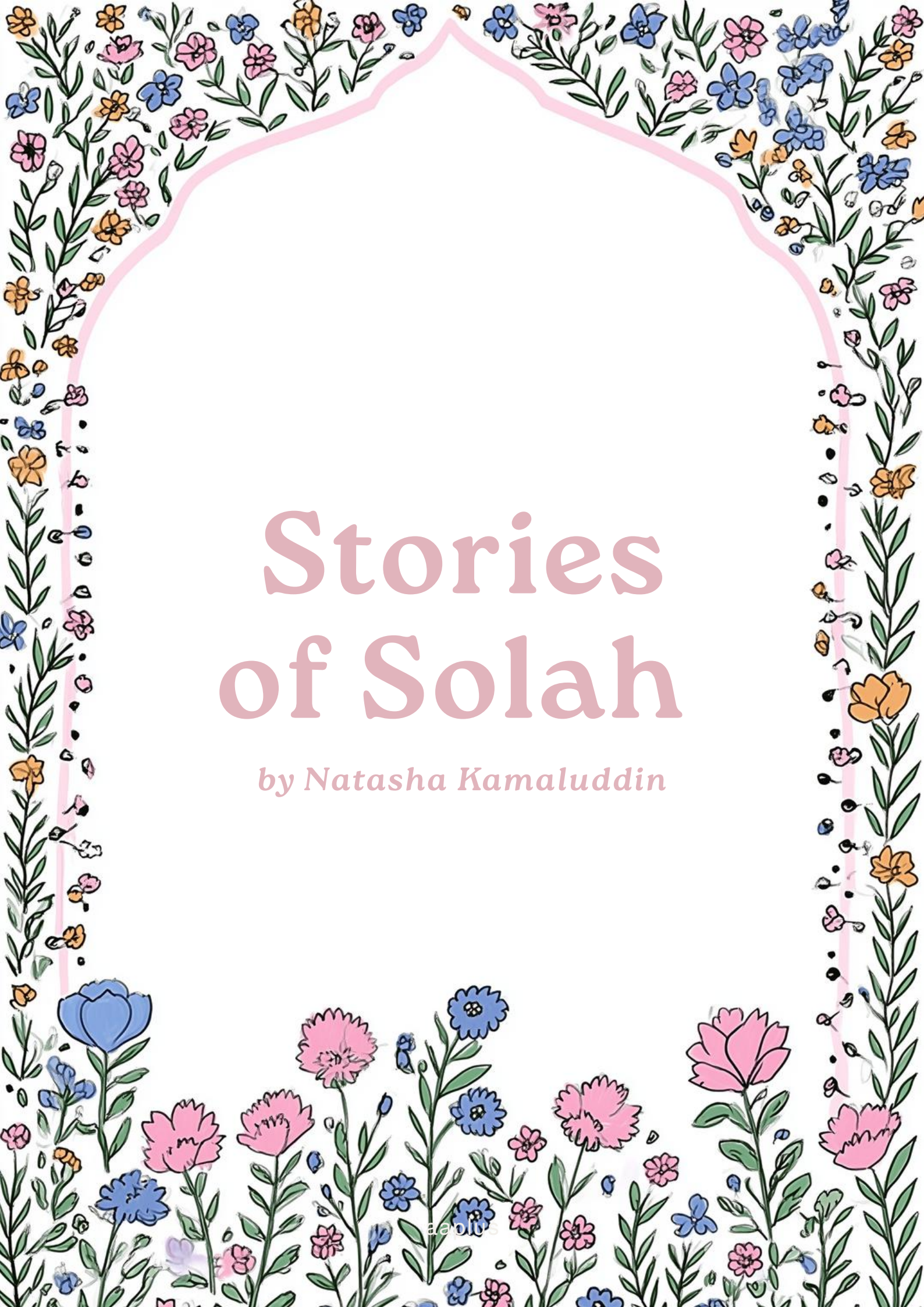


- Next, we say the Salawat Ibrahimiyah, where we are reminded of the journey and sacrifice of two of the greatest messengers.
- And then you have **one of the best times to make du'a - which is after your Tashahud and before you make the Salam.** Make it a routine to make Du'a and mean it. Subsequently, the meeting concludes, and you express Salam.
- After Solah, even if you don't have time, recite at least one Athkar, which is the du'a taught to Muadh ibn Jabal:

اللَّهُمَّ اَعِنِّي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

*O Allah, help me to remember You, to thank You, and to worship You in the best of manners*

(Abu Dawud)

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# Stories of Solah

*by Natasha Kamaluddin*

# #1: Story of Consistency

- If someone can persist in wrongdoing despite doing Solah, they must take a hard look at their life and check if they are really having Khusyu' in Solah. This is because **Khusyu' in Solah should be transformative to one's character.**
- Upon returning from Hajj, Kak Nat was able to establish a routine of the sunnah prayers that she would do every day. Allah made it easy for her to continue the good habits that had been established during her Hajj.
- When she retired, she started writing books, which took three months to finish. She was offered with job offers upon completion of her book, signalling that her break from work is over.



وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا  
بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ قُلُّ وَإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ  
لَأَتِيَةٌ فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ

*And We have not created the  
heavens and earth and that  
between them except in truth. And  
indeed, the Hour is coming; so  
forgive with gracious forgiveness.*

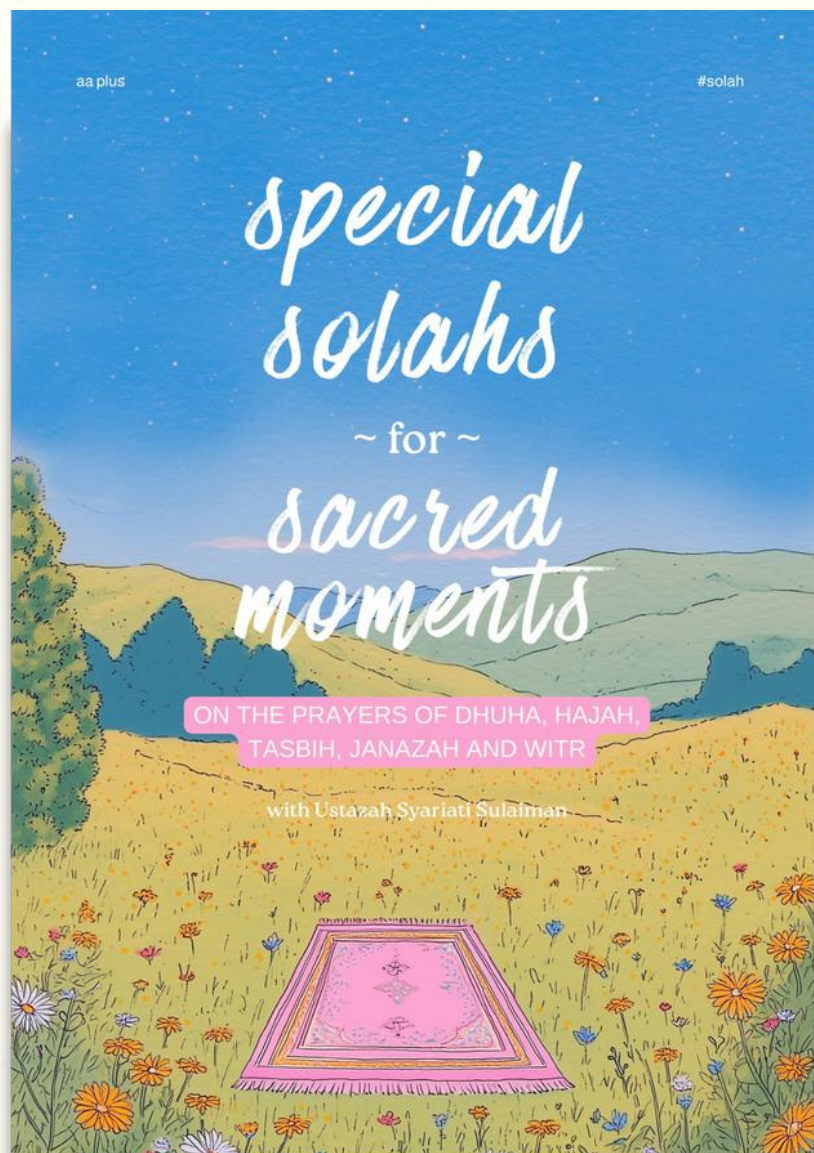
(Surah Al-Hijr 15:85)



# Lessons on Istiqamah

- *Once you have started on your Istiqamah (consistency), you should always be doing more and of a higher quality. Never give something up just because it's not mandatory.*
- *Solah serves as a shield, whether it's Sunnah or Wajib. You don't know how much of that shield was required for yourself.*
- *If you have started to establish Sunnah prayers, only move forward and do them better. Have longer Quran recitation etc.*

PS: You can choose from any  
of the five Sunnah prayers  
in this Class to be consistent  
in, In Sha Allah!



[Click here to revisit the Class!](#)

aa plus

## #2: Story of Miracles

- On her way to return to Malaysia from visiting her son in London, Kak Nat went to the airport early since there had been news of public transport interruption.
- She took her time to hang out in the airport, to read a book. When the drop-off counter for the luggage opened, she made her way there **while making du'a for Allah to make her journey easy**. (Earlier in the day, she had listened to a lecture by Sheikh Ammar Shukri who taught her to ask Allah for everything, even for your shoelace not to break.)
- Upon entering the arrival terminal, there was chaos due to a cyber attack. Nothing was working - signages, counters etc.



- Kak Nate shared that she felt very overwhelmed and grateful that Allah answered her du'a for her journey to be smooth.
- She is aware that Allah did not make this happen just to make her special. But the fact is, if it had just been a normal, smooth journey, **she wouldn't have felt that experience was a miracle.**
- Because everybody suffered, and she had an easy journey, she really felt special.





# Lessons on Coincidences

*Allah sends us miracles,  
but we tend to write them  
off as coincidences. We  
don't see them for what  
they are, because if we  
did, we could bring the  
feelings of gratitude and  
love to our prayer.*