



NEW MUSLIM  
ACADEMY

# Offering Salah (The Daily Ritual Devotions) with **Physical Challenges**





## **Understanding the Dispensation and Mercy in Legislation of Islamic Devotions**

The daily ritual devotion—Salah—is the most important act of worship in a Muslim's life. The default rule is that it should be offered in the prescribed manner: standing, bowing, kneeling with the face on the ground, and sitting. This physical structure is part of its beauty and discipline.

Our Most Merciful Lord does not burden His servants beyond their capacity. Many people may experience situations in which performing the prescribed ritual devotion physically in its ideal form becomes either too difficult or impossible—whether temporarily due to pain, injury, or sickness or permanently due to advanced age, disability, or chronic health conditions.

Islam acknowledges these realities and provides merciful dispensations so that every believer can still maintain their devotion to God, within their ability.

## **Foundational Principle: Worship According to Ability**

The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ said:  
“Perform the prescribed ritual devotion, Salah, standing; if you cannot, then sitting; and if you cannot, then lying on your side.”

This guidance is the foundation for how Muslims with physical challenges should approach Salah. It is to be applied only as needed, and each person should do whatever they are capable of based on their ability.

### **Examples:**

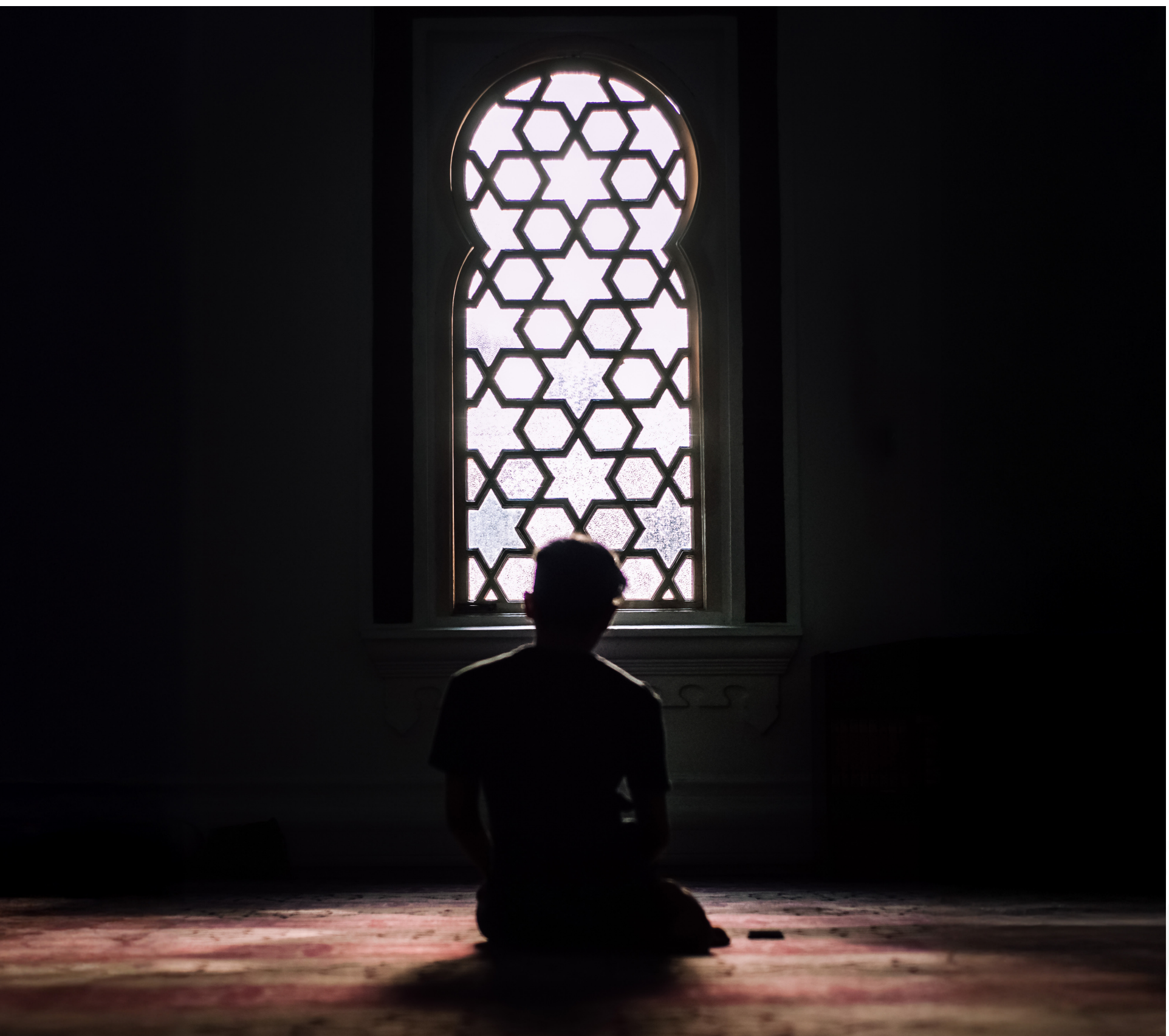
- If someone can stand but cannot bow or kneel, they should stand for the standing parts and then sit for bowing and kneeling.
- If they can bow but cannot kneel, they must bow properly and only sit when necessary.
- If someone cannot stand at all but can bow and kneel with their face on the ground from a seated position, they should sit and perform those movements.



Muslim scholars have emphasized that a person should strive to pray in the ideal form to the best of their ability—even using a cane, wall, pillar, or another person’s assistance if it helps them stand. But if standing causes pain, worsens one’s condition, or is not possible, then praying seated is completely permissible.

This principle is grounded in the Quran’s teaching:

“Have reverence of Allah by applying His commands as much as you are able.” (64:16)



## Praying While Sitting

If sitting on the floor/ground is comfortable and manageable, one may use the sitting on the heels posture. If that is difficult, sitting cross-legged is acceptable. If one cannot sit on the ground, a chair or stool may be used.

### **While seated:**

- Bowing is done by slightly leaning the upper body forward.
- Kneeling with the feet on the ground is symbolized by leaning even farther, making the kneeling position lower than the bowing one.

## Praying While Lying Down

If sitting also becomes difficult, then one may pray lying on their side (preferably the right side) or on their back.

- Bowing and kneeling are indicated by gently lowering the head.
- The kneeling movement should be lower if one is able to differentiate.

## If Movement Is Not Possible

If someone is fully incapacitated—such as due to paralysis, loss of motor control, or being bedridden—they are to still perform the ritual devotion:

- by intending the movements in the heart,
- and reciting the appropriate words at each part of the prayer.

God does not hold a believer accountable for actions they are physically unable to perform. The Quran affirms this repeatedly:

“Allah does not burden a person with an obligation beyond what he can bear.” (2:286)

“God has chosen you and has not made any hardship beyond your ability in devotional matters and commands.” (22:78)

These passages form the foundation of every dispensation given in devotional matters.



## God's Grace for Those Facing Hardship

**Let the following passages bring you comfort and assurance:**

“Allah wants ease and facilitation for you and does not wish any hardship.” (2:185)

“Allah wants to lighten the burden for you; for mankind was created weak.” (4:28)

Your Lord knows your condition. He sees your struggles, your effort, and your sincerity. Nothing of your pain or limitation is lost with Him. In fact, He rewards you for your perseverance and endurance.

### **A Supplication Recommended by the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ**

It's a good and beneficial habit to repeat this beautiful supplication, recommended by the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ at the conclusion of every prescribed ritual devotion, Salah:

“O God, please help me to mention You with praise, to thank You and show appropriate gratitude, and to worship You in the best of ways.”

This supplication strengthens your heart and protects your spiritual core, even when your physical abilities change.

## Islam Is Not Meant to Burden You

Islam is a path of peace of mind, heart, and soul. Its regulations are not intended to cause stress or guilt. Rather, they are designed to guide you to inner tranquility through devotion to the Almighty.

God knows your situation better than anyone—even yourself. He does not hold your limitations against you. He only asks for what is within your capacity, nothing more.

### **As the Quran reassures:**

“Allah does not burden any person with an obligation beyond what he can bear.” (2:286)





## **Summary: You Are Not Missing Out—You Are Worshipping as God Intended**

- You pray standing if you can.
- If not, you pray sitting.
- If not, lying down.
- If even that is not possible, you pray with your intentions and your heart.

Every believer has access to Salah—no matter their physical condition—because God’s grace and mercy is greater than any hardship.

May God grant you ease, reward your endurance, strengthen your heart, and fill you with contentment regardless of your condition.



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