

Cultivating young Hearts on the Fertile soils of Islam

شروط الصلاة

The Conditions of the Prayer

Lesson 1

The word **الشَّرْط** in the Arabic language means **العلامة** (sign/symbol). A proof for this meaning is Allah's statement:

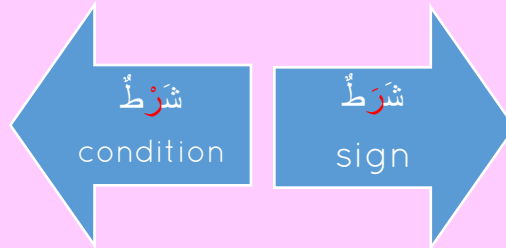
فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً ^طفَقَدْ جَاءَ **أَشْرَاطُهَا** فَأَنَّى لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ
ذِكْرُهُمْ ^{١٨}

Do they then await (anything) other than the Hour, that it should come upon them suddenly? But some of its **signs** have already come.

[Muhammad 18]

¹ Compiled by Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennett.

The word **أَشْرَاطٌ** is a synonymy for **عَلَامَاتٌ**. We have to be careful with the words **شَرَطٌ** and the word **شَرْطٌ**. As you can see, both words share the same base letters **ش ر ط** but the vowels (**حَرَكَاتٌ**) are different. It is the difference in the vowels that creates a difference in meaning:



The word **الشَّرْطُ**, when used by the scholars of Islamic principles, is

مَا يَلْزَمُ مِنْ عَدَمِهِ الْعَدَمُ

That which necessitates, due to its non-existence, the complete absence [of the thing].

This scholarly definition of the word **شَرْطٌ** is going to be quite difficult to understand, but that does not stop us from committing the Arabic to memory and then revisiting this definition when our minds are capable of grasping its meaning.

Let us take an example of what we mean by a condition of the prayer (**شَرْطٌ** (الصَّلَاةِ)). The act of wudhu (**الْوُضُوءُ**) is something we must perform before we pray to Allah. If we were to pray to Allah without performing wudhu, our prayer would be invalid because wudhu is a condition for the validity² of our prayer. In other words, **no wudhu = no prayer** even if you pray the prayer!

So the Arabic phrase **شُرُوطُ الصَّلَاةِ** means **the conditions that are required to be fulfilled before we pray to Allah**. The word **شُرُوطٌ** is the plural form of **شَرْطٌ**.

If you have studied the basics of the Arabic language, you will know that the

² The word *validity* means something that is acceptable

phrase **شُرُوطُ الصَّلَاةِ** is a **مُضَافٌ وَمُضَافٌ إِلَيْهِ**.³

The word **شُرُوط** means that we are talking about things that must happen before we pray to Allah. This is different to things that must happen during the time we are praying to Allah. These are called **أَرْكَانُ الصَّلَاةِ** (the pillars of the prayer). We will study **أَرْكَانُ الصَّلَاةِ** in detail in the future insha Allah. The pillars of the prayer are similar to the conditions in the sense that the prayer remains invalid without them, but they do differ in the following ways:

1. The **شُرُوط** take place before the prayer, but the **أَرْكَانُ** are a part of the prayer.
2. The **شُرُوط** must be present prior to the prayer and throughout the duration of the prayer. The **أَرْكَانُ**, however, change from pillar to pillar: from standing to bowing; rising from bowing; to prostration; from prostration to standing and so on.
3. The **أَرْكَانُ** are parts of the prayer, unlike its **شُرُوط**. Covering the 'awrah, which is a condition, is not an actual part of the prayer, but it is a requirement during the prayer.

Before we study the **شُرُوط** that are specifically linked to the prayer, it is important that we learn that there are other **شُرُوط** that are connected to all acts of worship (**عِبَادَة**) in general. They are three in number:

1. **الإِسْلَام** - and this means that the person performing the act of worship must be a **Muslim**.
2. **العُقْل** - this means that the **Muslim** performing the act of worship must be **sane** and not crazy.
3. **التَّمْيِيز** - this means that the **Muslim** who is **sane** must be of a **discerning age**.⁴

³ In English we call this a genitive phrase. A popular example of a **مُضَافٌ وَمُضَافٌ إِلَيْهِ** that we all should know is **كِتَابُ اللَّهِ**, which means 'the Book of Allah'.

⁴

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the meaning of the term **الشَّرْط** in the Arabic language?
2. What would be a good example for a condition of the prayer?
3. What does the phrase **شُرُوطُ الصَّلَاةِ** mean?
4. Can you mention some of the differences between **أَرْكَانُ الصَّلَاةِ** (the pillars of the prayer) and **شُرُوطُ الصَّلَاةِ** (the conditions of the prayer)?
5. What are the other conditions that are connected to all acts of worship?