

Prayer is the main column of the religion

Written by: Sk. Omar Khadrawi

Translated by: Dr. Faheem Bukhatwa.

07 Thul-Qadah 1431h

15 September 2010 ac

In the name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

Thanks be to Allah, we seek His help and guidance. We seek His forgiveness. Through Allah and with Him we protect our selves from the worst of our deeds and the bad in us. This who is guided by Allah shall not be misguided, and this who is misguided by Allah shall find no guide. "Who ever Allah does not give them light shall have no light". I testify that there is no God other than Allah, the one who has no associates. He made us special by bringing down the book, and He honored us with the best sent messenger. He complemented His mercy upon us with the greatest faith, the faith of Islam. Allah says: **{Today I have completed for you your faith, and I have finalized upon you my mercy, and I am contented with Islam as your religion}**. With the faith of Islam He made us the best nation to come to man kind, we command the good and we deter against evil, and we believe in Allah. Allah says: **{and so We made you a nation of balance (or non extreme) so you would be a witness upon man kind and the messenger shall be a witness upon you}**.

I testify that our master and leader and our example and our beloved Muhammad is Allah's slave and messenger. He was sent by his God with the guidance and the true faith bearer of good tidings and bringer of warnings, and a preacher calling mankind to head towards Allah, and was sent as light to man kind. He taught people after ignorance, and guided them after being misguided, and he brought them out from darkness to light. Through him Allah made deaf ears hear again, and blind eyes to see again, and closed hearts to reopen, and guided them to the straight path. May Allah's peace and prayers be upon him, and may Allah's satisfaction be upon his people, family and his companions and those who propagate his call, and those who are guided by his life style until the last day. Allah says: **{for those who believed in him and supported him and stood by him and followed the light which was brought down with him, for those are the ones who are doing well}**.

Allah says: **{you who have faith, bow, prostrate and kneel down and worship your God and do the good deed so you may be successful. And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. Allah named you "Muslims" in the past [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So perform the prayers and give charity and hold fast to Allah. He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper}**22:75.

In those two verses Allah talks to the faithful and stimulates the meanings of faith within them. First Allah addresses them with this fantastic title: the faithful. Abdullah Ebn Masood said: "if you hear Allah says: [you who have faith] then listen with attention, for it will be something good He is commanding, or some evil He is deterring against".

Allah says: **{You who have faith, say not (unto the Prophet): "Pay us extra attention or extra care" (A term used by Jews which in their language was a curse, but they were happy to use against the messenger pbu) but say "Look upon us or at us" and do listen carefully. For being a disbeliever is a painful doom}**2:104.

Dear Muslims, give me your attention, your hearing and your hearts. Last Friday we talked about congregation prayers at mosques. We talked about its importance, and its advantages and about the reward of those who strive to go to the mosque and who keep up the group prayers.

Today with the help and support of Allah we talk about the act of prayer its self which is considered the main supporting column of the religion, and it is the key to paradise, and the evidence of faith, and the difference between faith and lack of faith. The messenger ppbu said: {what separates man from being an infidel is giving up the prayers}. And he also said: {The testament or pledge between us and them is Prayer. So whoever gives it up then he has become a disbeliever}.

The advice of the prophets

When Prophet Abraham asked Allah in his supplication, he asked Him to make his children to be with those who keep up the worship of prayer (Ayah 14:40). When Allah in the Koran spoke well of Ishmael He said about him: {and he used to command his people with prayer and charity, and he was with Allah in contentment} 19:55. When Allah talked to Moses in the early moments of revelations He said to him: {I have chosen you, so listen to what is being reveled to you. It is I Allah, no other god but I so, worship me, and do the prayers in my memory} 20:13-14. And when Allah made Isa (Jesus) speak when he was a baby, the first of what baby Jesus said was: {It is me, the slave of Allah, He brought me the book, and He made me a prophet. And He made me blessed wherever I am, and He advised me about prayers and charity for as long as I live} 19:30-31. And when the wise Prophet Luqman advised his son, the most important advice he gave him was: {my son, do the prayers, and command kindness and deter against evil, and be patient in the face what you are stricken with, and that is one of the tremendous matters} 31:17.

The status of Prayers

That was the status of prayers with the messengers and prophets in all faiths. In Islam prayer has an extra special status. For, prayer was the first of the worships to be imposed. The command for it came down in the city of Mecca in a way which was different from any other. For the command for all other worships was delivered on earth. Prayers was the only worship for which it was commanded directly by Allah to His messenger Muhammad ppbu on the night of the miraculous journey to the seven heavens. So in a way, prayers are the remains of the memory as a journey for each believer in Allah.

The verdict for who give up the prayers

This compulsory ritual has sanctity. How could someone who never bowed or knelt to Allah in his or her life, how they could claim to be Muslims. Today we see many Muslims with names like Muhammad, and Ahmed and Hussain and Abd-Allah and Omar and Ali but they do not pray. They know nothing of Islam except its name. And they recognize nothing of the Koran except the shape of the script, and some don't even recognize that. And some know mosques except by hearing about them sometimes. Many would reach their mid-age or even advanced age without bending over kneeling to Allah, and his forehead never touched the ground. They are rightfully or not counted amongst the nation of the one and half billion Muslims. What a disappointment. Where do those stand from Islam and where does Islam stand from them? Every piece of food they eat curses them, because they take Allah's grace and mercy and they do not give it its due thanks. How will they behave when they shall be brought to hell fire. What will their answer be when they will be asked by the people of the right, what brought you into such a trouble? They will say, "We weren't with those who used to pray, and we didn't use to feed the poor"

Slaves of Allah, listen with me to the Islamic ruling about the Muslim who does not do his or her prayer.

1) The scholars have agreed that who ever denies the prayer, and denies that it is compulsory then he or she is an unbeliever. Because they would be classified with those who associate others with Allah.

2) If the Muslim does not do the prayers and looks at it as a demeaning act and ridicules the act of prayer and those who pray then he or she is an unbeliever, who has given up Islam after being a Muslim. Allah says: {and if you call to prayer they take it fun and ridicule, that is because they are people lacking in sanity}5:58.

3) While this who does not do the prayers intentionally out of being lazy, then this is where the scholars differ.

- a) Some like Imam Ahmed, say that such a person is an unbeliever, and is not a Muslim as long as he or she does not do the prayers, or does not give Allah His right in the compulsory worship. The messenger ppbu said: {between a man and being an unbeliever and one who associates others with Allah is giving up prayers}.
- b) While Imam Shafeee and Imam Malik say that this who stops praying is a disobedient sinner and is exposing himself to be stamped or sealed as an unbeliever by Allah. Their reason is that he or she would be committing the biggest sin in Islam. They say to offer him the chance to repent or else get punished.
- c) Abu- Hanifa says this who does not pray is a sinner with guilt. The Muslim authority should punish him by imprisoning until they start praying.

How to keep up the prayers

Pay attention in order not to be like those who waste prayers. Do not be amongst the unbelievers and those who give up Islam. And don't be amongst the sinners who don't do their prayers. The messenger ppbu said: {whoever keeps up his or her prayer worship then it will for him or her be light and evidence, and a savior on the day of resurrection. And who does not keep it shall have no light, and no evidence and no savior, and on the day of resurrection he or she will be grouped with Karoon (*a distant cousin of prophet Moses who was abusing the children of Israel working for Faro*), and Faro (*ruler of Egypt*) and Haman (*the first minister to Faro of Egypt*) and Abi-Khalaf. The scholar Ebn-al-Qayem said: whoever gets distracted off prayer by his empire or what he owns then he will be grouped with Faro, and whoever gets distracted off prayer by his position or job then he will be grouped with Haman, and whoever gets distracted off prayer by his riches and money then he will be grouped with Ebn Khalaf.

No excuses for not doing the prayers

Slaves of Allah, let it be clearly known that no one has an excuse for not doing their prayers, not under any condition and at any time or place. Regardless whether one is traveling or residing, in sickness and in health in peace and in war. One who is sick is commanded to do prayers in how ever way he or she can. The messenger ppbu said: **{do you prayers standing up, and if you can not then do it setting down and if unable then laying down on your side}**. The only one exempted from doing prayers is this who is unconscious or who can make no sense of what is said. But anyone who is conscious, aware and knows what is going on even if he or she were bed ridden and may not be able to move still has to do their prayers. He or she can just by slightly moving the head or the eyebrows or moving the tongue.

Because worship of prayer is the second foundation in Islam it is so important that it can not be left out for a Muslim as long as the Muslim is sane and on conscious even during military battle. Allah explains that in the case of emergencies prayers can be performed while mounted or riding a horse or otherwise, or while standing or walking. And all the requirements and conditions for doing the prayer like the *wado* or the pre-prayer wash and the *tahara* (purity by shower) wash. If there is no water then *Tayamem* (*the wash without water*) can be done. Or prayer can even be performed without the two *taharas* (purity).

Prayers times and prayers on time

Dear brothers in faith, prayers must be performed as it is meant to and on its specified times and before it becomes over due. Many warning have been directed at those who are distracted off doing the prayers. Allah says: {sever warnings to those who are distracted off their prayers} 107:4-5. Some explained that to mean those whose life matters keeps them off prayers until the prayer time has passed. Indicating that they still do the prayer but after its prescribed time. Then you could imagine the position of this who does not pray at all. Allah says: {there will be others after them who will miss their prayers and sought after their whims and desires, and they shall find Ghai} 19:59-60. *Ghai* in this verse is said to be a name of a very deep valley in hell. Ebn Masood explained “miss their prayers” in this verse not to mean left it all together but rather doing the prayer after its due time. Another scholar said missing the prayer refers to this that does not do Duhr (noon) prayer until Asr (afternoon) prayer approaches and only does a prayer when the time of the next prayer approaches. Whoever dies insisting on this style of prayer without repenting then Allah promises them that valley in hell.

Allah says: {you who have faith do not let you moneys (riches) or children distract you from remembering Allah, and whoever does that then they are the losers} 63:9. Scholars explained “remembering Allah” in this verse by the five daily prayers. The messenger ppbu said: {The first thing every slave is judged for on the day of resurrection of all his or her deeds is the prayers. And if that goes well then he or she has won and succeeded, and if it goes bad then he or she has lost and failed}.

The society's responsibility in the matter of prayers

It is a responsibility of every husband towards his wife and his family and people. Allah says: {**and command your people to do their prayers and to do it continuously. We do not ask you for provisions, we provide you with provisions, and (the good)** end is for the God fearing} 20:132. This means command your sons and daughters to pray. Get them used it at young age so they will grow up loving to do good and loving the prayers. The messenger ppbu said: {order (or teach) your children to pray when they are seven years old and punish them for it when they are ten}.

Some parents all they care about when dealing with their children is that they go to school, and provide them with all their physical and financial needs. They give them pocket money and sometimes more than they actually need. But, they do not care whether the child prays or not, or whether is following the straight path or is deviating. What good are all the degrees and qualifications your son or daughter will hold if they will end up in hell? Would you like for that to be final destination of your child? Ending up in the fire? Allah says: {you who have faith protect your selves and your family from a fire which is fueled by people and rocks} 66:6.

The entire society is responsible in the eyes of Allah in commending prayers. The Muslim society must commend its individuals to keep up prayers, and commend the good and deter against evil just as Allah has ordered. If for example you go into business with another Muslim then go and ask whether he or she is of the people of prayers. If one asks for the hand of your daughter for marriage, ask if he does keep up the prayers. Our ancestors used to call prayers the name: “The Scale”. They used to evaluate people and men through this scale, the scale of prayers. If they needed to ask about someone's

faith, morals and general life they first used to ask about his prayers. Whether the people of the mosque know him? Does he attend Fajr (Dawn) prayers? Does he keep up the congregation prayers? If we do that with those whom we enter into marriage, or business relationships with then we would help those who do not pray to respect the rituals of the faith and take up more the Islamic morals.

Finally dear brothers and sisters, we must keep up the prayers when the prayer call is made. Allah has legislated through our prophet the deeds of guidance, and if we leave our prophet's teachings we shall be misguided. The messenger ppbu said: **{the ritual of Prayers is main column of this faith}**. Prayers are power for the soul and power for the body, and power for the will and determination, and power for the good morals, and power for society. It is a spiritual power because it gives you contact with Allah. Through prayers you enter to Allah without going through a door, and you stand before him without a barrier, and talk to Allah without an interpreter. And you converse with Allah with closeness rather than through long distances, and you ask for His help and you would asking a powerful and honored and loved one rather than a weak selfish one, and when you ask him for anything you are asking the most Generous. Allah said through His messenger: **{I have split the ritual of prayer between Me and my slave. When he says: "All thanks be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds" (Reading Al-Fatiha Chapter during the prayer) Allah says: My slave has thanked me. And when he says: "the Most Gracious the Most Merciful", Allah says: my slave has complemented me. And when he says: "The Lord of the day of judgment", Allah says: my slave has glorified me. And when he says: "It is You we worship and it is You we ask for help", Allah says: this is between Me and my slave. And when he says: "Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom you have bestowed your mercies on, not those who have anger upon them and neither the path of the misguided.", Allah says: This is for my slave, and my slave is granted what he asked}**.

The last advice our messenger ppbu on his death gave was: "the Prayers and what you owned" meaning take extreme care of them.

Duaa:

We ask Allah to unite our word on guidance, and our hearts on God fearing, and our resolve on doing good deeds.

O Allah, make this day of ours be better than our yesterday, and make our tomorrow be better than this day of hours. And grant us good endings in all matters, and save us from the shame of this worldly life and from the punishment of the next life.

O Allah, make the word of Islam the highest, and make the work of the enemies of Islam be the lowest.

O Allah, through us bring the higher the word of Islam, and through us bring higher the banner of the Koran. And increase in our hearts the love of faith, and make us hate sinning, and disobedience and disbelief. Allah, with your grace and mercy make us with those who are guided.

O Allah, peace and prayers upon your slave and your prophet and your messenger Muhammad, and his people, his family, his companions and all those followed them with perfection and kindness till the Day of Judgment. Allah says: {Allah and His angels say prayers upon the prophet, you who have faith say prayers upon him and greet him with peace}

Slaves of Allah: {Allah commands justice kindness and perfection, and providing for the near ones, and He deters against indecency and evil and oppression. He is giving you lessons and advice so you may remember}. Remember Allah, the Great the Dignified and He shall remember you. And give due thanks to Him for all His mercies and shall provide you with more. Remembering Allah in its self is fantastic, and Allah knows what you do.