

Friday Khutbah – 29/11/2013.

The position of *Salat* and the importance of establishing it

Salat is the second most important pillar of Islam after the *Shahada*, and the most important practical rite. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The head of the matter is Islam; its pillar is *Salat* and the peak of its hump is *Jihad*.”

It is the first act of worship of Allah to be legislated. It was made an obligation in the third year before *Hijra* during the journey of *Al-Isra wal Miraj*. It is the last thing that the Prophet ﷺ counselled his *Ummah* before his death advising them to guard it carefully

It is the first thing that a person will be questioned about on the Day of Judgement. If it is sound and correct; then he will succeed. If it is corrupt, then he will be a loser.

Observing it regularly is the sign of truthfulness and Iman, while being negligent about it is the sign of let-down and loss. Whoever observes it carefully it will be light, proof and salvation for him on the Day of Judgement, and whoever does not observe it regularly will have no light, proof or salvation and will be with *Qaroun*, *Firoun* and *Haman* on the Day of Judgement.

The *Khalifah Umar Ibn al-Khattab*, may Allah be pleased with him, wrote to his governors, saying: ‘The most important of your affairs in my view is the prayer. Whoever protects and observes it carefully is protecting his *Deen*, and whoever is negligent about it, will be even more negligent about other things.’

Despite the position *Salat* and its importance in Islam, the neglect of *Salat* has become widespread among many Muslims so much so that the words of Allah regarding the followers of previous prophets have come to be true in their case. Allah (*subhanahu wa ta’aala*) says: “There has come after them a later generation who neglected *Salat* and followed their desires. But they will meet evil.”

One type of neglect of prayer is to abandon it completely or to pray at some times and not at other times or to pray some of the prayers but not all of the five. Doing so is one of the major wrong actions (*Kabayir*.) whoever does so has no share in Islam. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The covenant between us and them is *Salat*; whoever abandons it becomes an unbeliever.”

It is not about this type of neglect of prayer that I want to talk to you today, for the assumption is that you observe your prayers regularly *al-Hamdulil-lah*, and so this does not apply to you.

The type of neglect of prayer that I want to talk to today is the failure to perform the prayer properly. This is something which is very common and widespread in this *masjid* and in other mosques. One such neglect is the failure to observe tranquillity in prayer.

One who fails to observe tranquillity in *Salat* prays, but his prayer is incorrect and unacceptable because he performs it in a very fast way that resembles the pecking of the crow.

Imam al-Bukhari narrated the *Hadith* from Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that a man entered the *Masjid* and prayed then he came to greet the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ returned the greeting and said to him: ‘Go back and pray because you have not prayed.’ He

went and prayed and then came to greet the Prophet ﷺ. He said to him: “Go back and pray because you have not prayed.” He did this three times. The man said: “By the One Who sent you with truth! I do not know how to do it any better than this, so teach me. He said: “When you want to pray, perform *takbir* then read what you know of the Qur’an, then perform *ruku’* with tranquillity in *ruku’*, then raise you back until it straighten upright, then prostrate with tranquillity in *sujud*, then raise your body from prostration with tranquillity in your *julus* (*sitting*), then prostrate again with tranquillity in your *sujud* – then do the same in the whole of your prayer.’

According to the *Hadith* tranquillity in *ruku’* and in raising the body from *ruku’* by standing upright is *wajib*. Also tranquillity in *sujud* and in *julus* between the two *sajdas* is *wajib*.

In his words ﷺ to the man: Go back and pray because you have not prayed is an indication that the prayer which is pecked and performed without tranquillity is invalid.

So, the intended purpose is not just the performance of prayer in any way but the objective is the establishment of prayer. Allah did not command us just to pray in any way but to establish prayer. The Qur’anic verses which command us to pray always call upon us to establish the prayer. Allah (*subhanahu wa ta’ala*) says in the third verse of the second Qur’anic *surah* describing the qualities of *al-Mutaqeen* “Those who believe in the Unseen, and establish prayer, and spend of that We have provided for them.”

Establishment of *salat* is different from just praying in any way.

i) The first aspect of the establishment of prayers is the observance of the time of the prayers. Prayer on time is the best action of a Muslim. When the Prophet ﷺ was asked about the most beloved act to Allah, he answered: Prayer on time....”

ii) The second factor in the realisation of the establishment of *salat* is to perform the pillars of *salat* properly. Whoever prays but does not do the *ruku’* and *sujud* properly and does not observe tranquillity, is like one who does not pray. Rasulullah ﷺ described him as being the worst thief. He said ﷺ “The worst thief is one who steals his prayer. They said: How does he steal his prayer. He said: “He does not complete its *ruku’* or *sujud*.”

The third important factor in the establishment of *salat* is the presence of the heart and *khushu’* or humility in prayer. The *musalli* worshipper should try his best to pull together his thoughts, drive away thoughts that are not related to the prayer and concentrate on his prayer. Many people pray with their bodies and not with their hearts, the body is in the place of prayer but the heart is wandering in the valleys of the world. There is no *khushu’* in his heart because his heart is away thinking about everything – even things which do not concern him and there is no benefit for him in them.

When a servant of Allah stands before Allah for prayer, he/she stands in the greatest position and the nearest to Allah – and most teasing to *Shaytan*. *Shaytan* envies him and tries to do everything possible to distract him from this position. He first tries to stop him from praying at all by making him underestimate the importance of prayer and thus abandons it. If he fails, he comes to him during his prayer and makes him remember things which he would not have thought of them outside his prayer. He just wants to make his heart busy and distracted from his creator.

Servants of Allah: Prayer which is performed correctly and properly fulfilling all the requirements ascend to Allah supplicates to the one who performs it saying: may Allah preserve you as you have preserved me. As for the prayer which one prays without fulfilling the requirements, it says to the one who does it: May Allah neglect you as you have neglected me.

Have *taqwa* servants of Allah! Exalt this prayer as Allah has exalted it, establish it as commanded and pray as your Prophet ﷺ used to pray because he said: Pray as you have seen me praying.”

It is the duty of every Muslim to know how his Prophet ﷺ used to pray so that he follows him prays in the correct way. Worship is incorrect and is unacceptable until one has the knowledge to do it correctly.