

## CONGREGATIONAL SALAT; A HALMARK OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ ☆  
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ☆ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

Respected Sadrans, follow brethren in Islam,

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ

I'm highly humbled and honoured to be given this opportunity to deliver a Dars on the topic: "Congregational Salat; A hallmark of the righteous" in other words "Congregational Salat; a distinguish sign of the righteous".

The verse I recited earlier on is taking from **Sura Al Baqarah; Holy Qur'an 2:22**. Its English rendering is "O ye men, worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you, that you may become righteous."

The above verse makes is absolutely clear that; real righteousness can only be obtained, through the worship of the Most High. This is further more expressed in one of the sayings of our beloved Master; Holy Prophet Mohammed (saw) that; "**Prayer is real worship**"

In line with this act of worship, **Hazrat Khalifatul Masih Rabi (ra)** addressed all Ahmadis in his sermon saying,

**“Try to offer such Salat, that pleases Allah and thereby endear you to Him.” (Khutubat-e- Tahir vol. 1 page 115)**

The Holy Messenger of Allah (saw), who happens to be the Best of all worshipers; gave an illustration, as to how Salat leads one, to righteousness in the Hadith below.

**Hazrat Jabir ibn Abdullah, (ra)** narrated that; the Messenger of Allah (saw) is reported to have said: “the similitude of the five daily prayers, is like an overflowing river, passing by the gate of one of you, in which he baths five times daily. He then asked, if such a person may have any filthiness on his body”. **(Sahih Muslim)** We all know that; the answer to the above is certainly no.

The above narration is again affirmed, in **verse 46 of Sura Al-Ankabut (Chapter 29)** that:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

Meaning: ‘Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil’. Hazrat Promised Messiah (as), reechoed the above in the following words,

**“Salat is the good deed; which dispels satanic weakness and that is what we call Prayer.” (Malfuzat vol. 2 page 679)**

It is therefore not shocking, as we read in the Holy Qur’an that:

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُصَلِّينَ ☆ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

Woe to those who pray, but are unmindful of their prayer.

**Sura Al-Maa'un:5 & 6.** The Messenger of Allah, Hazrat Mohammed Mustafa (saw) is reported to have said;

أَوَّلُ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ الصَّلَاةُ

Meaning; the first deed of which a servant would be questioned on the Day of resurrection is his Prayers,

فَإِنْ صَلَحَتْ فَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ وَ أُنْجَحَ

And if it were good, he will pass (the test) and prosper

وَ أَنْ نَقَصَتْ فَقَدْ خَابَ وَ خَسِرَ

But if it were defective, he will fail (the test) and be ruined.

This reminds us of the very reason; our beloved Huzor; Hazrat **Khalifatul Masih V** (atba) directed that; every Khadim judges his status faith; by filling Salat assessment forms. Which has now been developed into an App and a website as well.

The Holy Quran, rottenly uses the phrase **أَقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ**

Which is translated as “Observe Prayers.” However, its dipper meaning is to; “Observe Prayers, with its required conditions. Such conditions are as follows:

- 1) Properly performing ablution; as it is the key to Salat.

- 2) The making-up of one's mind or (*Niyat*) and moreover, staying focus while praying.
- 3) Observing the Salat, at its proper time and also, at its designated place too.

I will now restrain myself to this third condition, which is the value of the congregational prayer. It is worth mentioning that; all Fardh Salats or obligatory Prayers are to be offered congregationally in the mosque; except when one has a tangible reason of which one is fully sure that Allah may accept it.

**Hazrat Ali ibn Talib** <sup>(ra)</sup> is reported to have said:

لَا صَلَاةَ لِجَارِ الْمَسْجِدِ إِلَّا فِي الْمَسْجِدِ

Meaning; there is no prayer for the neighbor of a mosque, except in the mosque.

قِيلَ وَ مَنْ جَارُ الْمَسْجِدِ ☆

He was asked, "Who is the neighbor of a mosque?"

قَالَ مَنْ سَمِعَ الْأَذَانَ

He replied: "Anyone who hears the *Azan*.

I firmly believe that, neighbors of a mosque in this age is broader, as we are blessed with the technology of loudspeakers, watches, cellphones and other devices, with which one can easily track the times for Salat.

Dear brethren, we may all recall the hadith in which a visually challenged person, sought permission to stay away from congregational Salat. But, our beloved Master; who is a Mercy for All Mankind commanded him saying;

**“Tie a rope from your house to the mosque, and be present during congregational Prayers.”**

Similarly, **Hazrat Rabi’u ibn Khaitham** <sup>(ra)</sup> who happened to be a companion of the Holy Prophet, <sup>(saw)</sup> suffered from stroke; which made him partly paralyzed. Nevertheless, he would rest on shoulders of two people to attend the congregational Prayers. Some of his fellows, seeing him in such a condition advised him, to say his prayers at home. He replied;

أَسْمَعُ الْمُؤَذِّنَ يَقُولُ

But I heard the Muazzain saying;

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ

Come to Prayer,

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

Come to Success;

فَمَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يُجِيبَهُ

There for anyone who can (hear it should) respond to it,

وَلَوْ زَحْفًا أَوْ حَبْوًا

Even if he has to creep or crawl (to mosque), should do it.

Dear servants of Allah, I will urge anyone who is still uncertain as to how; congregational Salat leads to righteousness to ponder over these ***ahadith***.

**Hazrat Abu Huraira** <sup>(ra)</sup> relates that, the Messenger of God <sup>(saw)</sup> is reported to have said: “a person’s prayer in congregation is twenty seven times greater in reward, than his Prayer in his house or at the marketplace. This is because, if a person performs ablution well and then comes to the mosque, with no purpose but to preform prayers there, he will not make a step but his status is raised a degree (ten times) and his sin (ten) is taken off. When he concludes his prayers, the Angles would pray for him, as long as he remains in the mosque saying: **“O! God have mercy on him, O! God forgive him.”** *(Bukhari & Muslim)*

Again, **Hazrat Ibn Mas’ud**, <sup>(ra)</sup> narrated that: The Messenger of God <sup>(saw)</sup> taught us the ways of guidance **(Sunnah)**; “and among the ways of guidance **(Sunnah)** is the preforming Prayers at the mosque; where the Azan is said”. He added, if you neglect the Sunnah of the Prophet <sup>(saw)</sup>; you will fall into misguidance. **Hazrat Ibn Masud** <sup>(ra)</sup> then testified that and I said, **“In our days; you will not find anyone missing prayers in congregation, except the known hypocrites.”** *(Muslim)*

I will now relate to you, some faith inspiring incidents about, some righteous companions of our Noble Messenger of Allah; Hazrat Mohammed (saw).

It is reported that, once **Hazrat Umar (ra)** went to his date farm and on his return noticed that; the congregational Asr prayer had been said. He felt as a great misfortune had afflicted him so he said:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَ إِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Surely, we belong to Allah, and to him shall we return.

فَاتْتَنِي صَلَاةُ الْعَصْرِ فِي الْجَمَاعَةِ

Have I missed the congregational Asr Salat’?

أَشْهَدُكُمْ أَنَّ حَائِطِي عَلَى الْمَسَاكِينِ صَدَقَةٌ

(Guess what) He called on those around saying: ‘Bear me witness that; I give out this date farm of my as charity to the poor,

لِيَكُونَ كَفَّارَةً لِمَا صَنَعْتُ عَمْرُ

so that it may serve as an atonement of what I Umar has done’.

At another time, it is reported that, **Hazrat Hatim Asuam (ra)** also missed a congregational Salat, and **Hazrat Abu Ishaq Bukhari (ra)** was the only person offered him condolences, (for such a lost). The former said: “if a child of mine had died,

more than ten thousand people would have offered me condolences. He again said:

لَا نَّ مُصِيبَةَ الدِّينِ عِنْدَ النَّاسِ أَهْوَنُ مِنْ مُصِيبَةِ الدُّنْيَا

Indeed, the misfortune in the matters of faith, is less in the sight of people than a worldly misfortune.

Respected Servants of Allah, we should note that, the losses or the misfortunes for missing a congregational Salat, can hardly be repaid. This brings to mind a story about, Hazrat ***Ubaidullah bin Umar Al Qawāiri (ra)***.

This servant of Allah, made it a point not to miss congregational Salat. More especially the Isha Salat. But once he had a guest and he remained in his company until late. He went out, looking for any mosque, in the city of Basra where he could catch the congregational Isha Salat, but to no avail. The people had all prayed and gone home. He returned home saying “it is reported in the tradition that; a congregational prayer is twenty seven times more excellent than individual prayer”. So he offered that missed Isha Salat a twenty seven times and then slept. He saw in his dream that night that, he was racing alongside with a group of Muslims on horses, but he was falling behind them. He kicked his horse to catch up but still remained behind. At a point, one of the riders ahead



turned towards him and said, ‘do not do not urge your horse, for you will not be able to catch up with us.’ He replied ‘why not?’ And the former replied,

لَا نَأْتِيكَ فِي صَلَاتِنَا فِي جَمَاعَةٍ وَأَنْتَ صَلَّيْتَ وَحْدَكَ

Meaning, ‘we prayed the evening prayer in congregation, while you prayed it alone.’ **Hazrat Ubaidullah** <sup>(ra)</sup> added that, he learned a lesson and was deeply grieved.

I would now conclude my Dars, with a quote of Huzor’s sermon,

**“Every Ahmadi, who has accepted the Promised Messiah (as), and thereby counts himself to be one of the believers, should pay special attention to these matters. Firstly, strive to offer the Prayers regularly. As far as possible; try to offer the prayer in congregation. Then adorn these (obligatory) Prayers with voluntary Prayers.” (Khutubat-e-Masroor vol 5 page 148-151)**

And finally, a prayer, of our Beloved Prophet Mohammed <sup>(saw)</sup> which is,

اللَّهُمَّ اعْنِي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

Meaning, ‘O my Lord, help me so that I can properly perform Thy remembrance and Thy thanksgiving, and that I may worship Thee in the best possible manner. *Amen*