

## CLASS 3

## SINS TAKEN LIGHTLY DURING WORSHIP

**Neglecting Prayers**

This is a catastrophic mistake that people commit, people who neglect Salah are from either of the below categories: -

1. Abandon Salah because they don't believe in it being mandatory or think its important to offer.
2. They neglect Salah completely out of heedlessness, laziness or the likes
3. They pray some and miss some.

The first and second categories i.e. those who abandon Salah altogether for whatever reason are considered to be committing an act of Kufr and are out of the pale of Islam as was the opinion of the Sahabah. The evidence is taken from the Quran and Sunnah.

*“But if they repent [by rejecting Shirk (polytheism) and accept Islamic Monotheism], perform As-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat) and give Zakaat, then they are your brethren in religion.”* (al-Tawbah 9:11)

The evidence derived from this aayah is that Allaah defined three things that the Mushrikeen have to do in order to eliminate the differences between them us: they should repent from shirk, they should perform prayer, and they should pay zakaah. If they repent from shirk but they do not perform the prayer or pay zakaah, then they are not our brethren in faith; if they perform the prayer but do not pay zakaah, then they are not our brethren in faith. Brotherhood in religion cannot be effaced except when a person goes out of the religion completely; it cannot be effaced by fisq (immoral conduct) or lesser types of kufr.

The evidence of the Sunnah that proves that the one who neglects the prayer is a kaafir includes the hadeeth of the Prophet ﷺ: *“Between a man and shirk and kufr there stands his neglect of the prayer.”* (Narrated by Muslim)

So it is clear that the person who neglects the prayer with no excuse is a kaafir who is beyond the pale of Islam, on the basis of this evidence. This is the correct view according to Imaam Ahmad, and it is one of the two opinions narrated from al-Shaafa’l, Ibn Qayyim, was of the same view, This was also the view of the majority of the Sahaabah, indeed many narrated that there was consensus among the Sahaabah on this point. ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Shaqeeq said: the companions of the Prophet ﷺ did not think that neglecting any deed made a person a kaafir, apart from neglecting the prayer. Ibn Hazm (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: We have narrated from ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allaah be pleased with him), Mu’aadh ibn Jabal, Ibn Mas’ood, a number of the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them), and from Ibn al-Mubaarak, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ishaq ibn Raahawayh (may Allaah have mercy on them) and from other Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them), a total of seventeen, that the one who deliberately and knowingly does not offer an obligatory prayer until the time for it has ended becomes a kaafir and apostate.

Then there is the case of the other major part of the Ummah which has people who pray some and leave some, about them Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

As for the one who does not pray sometimes and does not make them up and does not intend to make them up, or he misses some of the obligatory parts of the prayer and does not make them up or intend to make them up, many of our companions ruled that he becomes a kaafir thereby... Then when he prays again he becomes a believer, as is indicated by the words of the Prophet ﷺ: *“Whoever misses ‘Asr prayer deliberately, his good deeds will be lost.”* And he ﷺ said: *“Whoever misses a prayer deliberately is no longer under the protection of Allaah.”* End quote.

He also said: If he prays after stopping praying, he comes back to Islam from apostasy, and his prayer is valid, unlike the one who was originally a kaafir, whose prayer is not valid until after he says the Shahaadatayn, because the kufr of the former is due to failing to do something, and if he does it he comes back to Islam. In the case where a person’s kufr results from rejecting (some of the obligations of Islam), if he then accepts and affirms the obligation, then he rejoins Islam.

If it is said that in cases other than this, the apostate’s return to Islam is not valid unless he utters the Shahaadatayn, no matter what form his apostasy took, the answer is that it is because he denied something, so he must speak words of affirmation, starting with the Shahaadatayn, which implies accepting everything else. But in this case (the one who does not pray), he accepts that it is obligatory, so all he needs to do is to do it in order to rejoin Islam. End quote.

### Lack of composure in prayer

Now the ones who pray suffer from this problem, Shaytaan makes them steal from their prayers. One of the worst forms of theft or cheating is cheating in prayer. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“The worst type of thief is the one who steals from his prayer.”* The people asked, *“O Messenger of Allaah, how can a person steal from his prayer?”* He said: *“By not doing rukoo’ and sujood properly.”* (Imaam Ahmad).

This lack of composure and failure to pause in rukoo’ and sujood and to stand up straight after rukoo’ or sit up properly between sujoods may be observed in many of those who pray, and hardly any mosque is free of examples of people who do not have the proper composure in prayer. Correct composure is one of the pillars of prayer, without which prayer is invalid. This is a serious matter. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“A man’s prayer is not good enough until his back is straight in rukoo’ and sujood.”* (Abu Dawud).

There is no doubt that lacking the proper composure is bad, and the person who is guilty of this deserves to be reprimanded and threatened with punishment. Abu ‘Abdullaah al-Ash’ari reported that the Prophet ﷺ led his Companions in prayer, then he sat with a group of them. A man came in and started to pray, but made his movements rapid like a chicken pecking the ground. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“Do you see this? Whoever dies having done this has died outside of the community of Muhammad, and his prayer is like a crow pecking blood. The person who bows then pecks in his sujood is like a hungry man who eats no more than one or two dates - what good will that do him?”* (Reported by Ibn Khuzaymah in his Saheeh 1/332; see also al-Albaani, Sifat Salaat al-Nabi (The Prophet’s Prayer described), 131).

Zayd ibn Wahb said: "Hudhayfah saw a man who was not performing rukoo' and sujud properly. He said: 'You have not prayed, and if you were to die, you would die on a way other than that revealed by Allaah to Muhammad ﷺ.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari). Once a person is aware of this ruling, if he fails to perform prayer with the proper composure, he should repeat it and repent to Allaah for what is past; he does not need to repeat all of his previous prayers, as is indicated by the hadeeth "Repeat your prayer, for you have not prayed."

### Fidgeting and making unnecessary movements in prayer

Another way the Shaytaan makes us make our prayers go waste. Hardly any of the people who pray are free from this problem, because they are not following the command of Allaah (interpretation of the meaning): *"... And stand before Allaah with obedience"* [al-Baqarah 2:238]; and they fail to understand the words of Allaah (interpretation of the meaning): *"Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their salaah with all solemnity and full submissiveness."* [al-Mu'minoon 23:1-2]

When the Prophet ﷺ was asked about smoothing the earth before prostrating, he said, *"Do not wipe it when you are praying; if you have to, then just smooth the gravel once."* (Reported by Abu Dawud). The scholars mentioned that continuous, excessive, unnecessary movement invalidates one's prayer. How can those fidgets stand before Allaah, looking at their watches, straightening their clothes, putting their fingers in their noses, looking to the right and the left and up to the sky, and not fearing that Allaah may take away their sight or Shaytaan may steal their prayer??

### Walking in front of someone who is praying

It is not permissible to walk across in front of someone who is praying, and it is a great sin, as the Prophet ﷺ said (approximate translation of meaning is):

*"If the one crossing in front of a praying person knew what sin is upon him, it would be better for him to wait forty than walk across."* Abu Al-Nadhr (one of the narrators of the hadith) said: I don't know whether he said forth days, months, or years. (Bukhari)

Imam Al-Bukhari (R) has named the chapter in which he brings the hadith as follows: Chapter on the sin of walking across in front of a praying person.

When the praying person is the leader in the prayer or praying alone, and he has a sutrah( some object like a peice of wood) in front of him, then walking across in between him and his sutrah is not permitted. However, if he is praying without a sutrah, it is not permissible to walk across in between him and his place of prostration.

And he ﷺ enjoined the one who is praying facing something to screen him from the people not to let anyone walk in front of him; rather he should stop him. He ﷺ said: *"If one of you prays facing something to screen him from the people, if someone wants to walk in front of him, let him push him away, and if he insists then let him fight him, for he is no more than a devil."* (Bukhari)

## Showing off in worship

Among the conditions for any good deed to be acceptable are that it should be free of any kind of showing off and within the framework of the Sunnah. The person who performs acts of worship, like praying, in order to be seen by other people is a mushrik and his deed is unacceptable. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *“Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allaah, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for prayer, they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allaah but little.”* [al-Nisaa’ 4:142]

Similarly, the person who does a good deed so that news of it will reach other people has also fallen into the sin of shirk. The threat of punishment for the one who does this was reported in the hadeeth narrated by Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him and his father), in which the Prophet ﷺ said: *“Whoever does things to be seen and heard by others, Allaah will cause him to be seen and heard as an example to others.”* (Reported by Muslim, 4/2289). Whoever does any act of worship for the sake of Allaah and other people, his deeds will be unacceptable, as is stated in the hadeeth qudsi: *“I am so self-sufficient that I am in no need of having an associate. Thus he who does a deed for someone else’s sake as well as Mine will have that deed renounced by Me to him who he associated with Me.”* (Reported by Muslim, no. 2985).

It may happen that a person starts to do a deed for the sake of Allaah, then the urge to show off comes over him. If he resists that impulse his deed will still be acceptable, but if he submits willingly to it, then in the opinion of most of the scholars his deed will be unacceptable.