Class 3

'Remaining steadfast in prayers after Ramadan'

All Muslims know that they're supposed to pray five times every day, fast twenty nine or thirty days every year in Ramadan, pay zakah on their extra assets, and go for Hajj at least once in life if they can afford it.

These are four of the five pillars of Islam; the fifth is included in the definition of being a Muslim in the first place.

All Muslims know this. But how many of us implement it? How many Muslims in the world pray five times daily? A small minority.

As the devils are chained in Ramadan, almost every one of us fasts, and almost as many try to pray salat regularly. It's said that it takes twenty one days to build a new habit. If you've been praying every day in Ramadan, congratulations! You've just built the prayer habit. So let us continue and strive to do as much as we can.

Unfortunately, so many of us build the habit every Ramadan, and yet give it all up after Eid falling prey to the shayateen.

OBLIGATORY PRAYERS

Salaat (Prayer) performed genuinely with humility and submission to Allah (subhanahuwata'ala) has unlimited virtues and benefits. It is the noblest expression of faith and the surest way of thanking Allah (subhanahuwata'ala) for His unlimited favors. It is the way to obtaining Allah's mercy, generosity, kindness, blessings and a sure way to paradise. Allah (subhanahuwata'ala) says in the Qur'an: *"Prosperous indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers"* (Qur'an 23:1-2).

It is a deliverance on the Day of Judgement for those who used to observe it well. The Prophet ﷺ says: *"The first thing that the servant of Allah (subhanahuwata'ala) will be called to account for on the Day of Judgement will be the prayer; and if it was good the person's deeds will have been good, but if it was bad, the person's deeds will have been bad"*. (Reported by Imam Bukhari).

Prayer purifies the soul, refines the character and inculcates in man the excellent virtues of truthfulness, honesty and modesty. It keeps one who performs it from falsehood and from all forbidden actions as is categorically confirmed by the following verse of the Qur'an: *" Verily, prayer refrains from indecency and evil"* (Qur'an29:45).

Obligatory prayers are now the best deed to perform

In Ramadan we would perform deeds that we know are greatly rewarding, now after Ramadan to perform salah and other deeds good deeds consistently we should learn their respective rewards. We should know that the greatest type of worship is to perform that which Allah makes obligatory on His servants and to refrain from all that He forbids. Abu Hurayrah narrated that Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: *"Allah says: 'The most beloved deeds with which my slave comes nearer to me are what I have enjoined on him.'"* (Al-Bukhari).

Also in another hadeeth Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: I asked, "O Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, which deed is best?" The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, *"Prayer in its proper time…."* (Bukhari & Muslim)

Ibn Al-Qayyim said:

"Since the righteous predecessors lived their whole life in worship, it is then necessary for us to know with which type of worship they started, and which one have they given priority." He then answered: "The best acts of worship are the most pleasing to Allah in that particular time. The best act of worship during the presence of a guest is to take care of him and not to be distracted from that by other recommended acts of worship. This is also in performing one's duties towards one's wife and family. The best act of worship in the night is to be occupied with prayer, reciting the Quran, supplication and Thikr. The best thing during the time of the Athaan (i.e. the call for prayer) is to leave whatever worship one is doing and answer the Mu`aththin (i.e. the one calling the Athaan) by repeating what he says. The best thing during the time of the five obligatory prayers is to exert one's efforts in their prompt performance. The best thing when the poor is in dire need of assistance is to assist him and give that preference over supererogatory Thikr. The best thing to do when your brother is sick or dead is to visit him, attend his funeral, and give that priority over your supererogatory Thikr. And the best thing to do when you are afflicted and suffer people's harm is to be patient and not to run away from them." [End of quote]

SubhaanAllah a beautiful advice by the sheikh, this is something we generally miss out on, as one of the tricks of Shaitaan to steal from one who is busy with Ibaadah is to get us busy in something is least beneficial.

MERITS OF SALAH

- It prevents you from Fahsha and Munkar
- It is the best deed after the Shahadah
- It washes away your sins
- It is a light for the one who performs it Both in this life and the next
- It causes you to gain intercession of Muhammad ﷺ

- It causes you to gain the dua of the angels
- The Salah raises your status in the Sight of the Allah
- It makes Allah love you and the people love you
- Your salah is a covenant between you and Allah ta'ala
- It is the greatest form of dhikr
- It teaches you punctuality
- It teaches you community cohesion, unity
- Your Salah teaches you humility
- Your Salah teaches you brotherhood and sisterhood
- It causes you to be blessed by ALLAH
- Salah is a mercy from ALLAH to the ummah of Muhammad ﷺ
- Your Salah is a demonstration of your love to ALLAH and to his Rasool ﷺ
- It is the closest you can get to ALLAH
- The Salah is the legacy of the Prophets

REWARDS OFFERING OBLIGATORY SALAH

As mentioned in the ahadeeth above, amongst the best deed a person can do is to offer prayer at its prescribed times and for men it is more rewarding to offer them in congregation the Masjid.

Reward of Praying in Congregation

The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: *"Praying in congregation is twenty-seven times better than praying alone."* (Bukhari & Muslim.

Reward of walking to the Masjid

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *"Whoever purifies himself in his house then walks to one of the houses of Allâh in order to perform one of the duties enjoined by Allâh, for every two steps he takes, one will erase a sin and the other will raise him one degree in status".* (Sahih Muslim)

The First Row

While we are going to the Masjid if we just make it there about 5 minutes earlier we get to offer our prayers in the First Row. There are many ahadith about the virtue and rewards of praying in the first row:

- The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: *"If the people knew what (reward) there is in the call and the first row, and there was no other way to settle the matter than drawing lots, they would draw lots for it."* (Bukhari & Muslim)
- Al-Baraa' ibn 'Aazib said: "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to walk up and down the rows, wiping our shoulders and chests, and he ﷺ would say, '*Do not let your rows be ragged lest this create disharmony in your hearts,' and he ﷺ used to say, 'Allâh and the angels send blessings on the front rows.'*" (Abu Dawood &Nisaa'i, classed as Sahih by Albani)
- The Prophet ﷺ said: "*When he enters the mosque, he is in a state of prayer so long as the prayer is what is keeping him there, and the angels send blessings on any one of you so long as he remains in the place where he prayed, saying, 'O Allâh, forgive him, O Allâh, have mercy on him…'*" (Bukhari & Muslim)

Coming early to the masjid allows a person to offer other Sunnah prayers and to make du'a between the adhaan and iqaamah – a time when supplications are more likely to be accepted.

HOW MUCH OF OUR PRAYER IS ACCEPTED?

For those who are already consistent in their prayers, they should be pondering over the quality of their prayers, how much of it is actually accepted.

The Prophet ﷺ said: " *A person may offer a prayer and nothing of it is recorded for him except one tenth of it, one ninth of it, one eighth of it, one seventh of it, one sixth of it, one fifth of it, one quarter of it, one third of it, or half of it.*" (Narrated by Ahmad, Classed as Hasan)

The scholars say that this is based on how mindful we are in our prayer and how we fight against the whispers of Shaytaan.

WARNING AGAINST ABANDONING SALAH

Allah (SWT) says *"Then, there has succeeded them a posterity who have given up As-Salât (the prayers) [i.e. made their Salât (prayers) to be lost, either by not offering them or by not offering them perfectly or by not offering them in their proper fixed times, etc.] and have followed lusts. So they will be thrown in Hell. Except those who repent and believe (in the Oneness of Allâh and His Messenger Muhammad SAW), and work righteousness. Such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged in aught."* (Sura Maryam, ayat 59-60)

Here we see what is the place for those who have abandoned the prayer but Allah (swt) is the most merciful and gives us chances to repent and be saved.

Allah (swt) says in Sura Al-Mâ'ûn *"So woe unto those performers of Salât (prayers) (hypocrites),Who delay their Salât (prayer) from their stated fixed times, Those who do good deeds only to be seen (of men),"* (Sura Al-Mâ'ûn, ayat 4 - 6)

This ayah shows us that we have to pray our Salah on its fixed timings and not delay them without a valid reason (i.e. traveling, striving in the way of Allah etc...) and how much we need to have sincerity in your prayer and do it only for Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) further warns us in the Quran *"O you who believe! Let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allâh. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers."* (Sura Al-Munaafiqoon, ayah #9)

The commentators of the Qur'aan say: "The 'remembrance of Allaah' mentioned in these Aayaat means the five daily prayers. If anyone is so busy in buying and selling, or with his daily work of earning a livelihood, or with his children, that he cannot perform prayers on time, he will be among the losers."

Informing us about the inhabitants of Hell, Allaah (SWT) says *"(The people in Hell will be asked) What has caused you to enter Hell? They will say: "We were not of those who used to offer their Salât (prayers). Nor did we feed the poor. And we used to talk falsehood (all that which Allaah hated) with vain-talkers. And we used to belie the Day of Recompense. Until there came to us that which is certain (i.e., death). So no Intercession of intercessors will benefit them.* (Sura Al-Muddaththir, ayah 42-48)

The Prophet ﷺ said *"The covenant between us and them is prayer, so if anyone abandons it he has become a disbeliever."* (Agreed upon by Ahmad, Tirmidhee and Nasaa'ee to be authentic)

In another Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, he said *"What lies between a man and disbelief is the abandonment of prayer."* (Agreed upon by Muslim, Abu Dawood and Nasaa'ee as sahih authentic)

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SUNNAH PRAYERS

Many of us who are consistent in the 5 daily prayers will start being consistent in offering Sunnah prayers in Ramadan but slack once Ramadan is over. But if we learn about their virtues and rewards we wouldn't find an excuse good enough to let go of these greatly rewarding prayers in or out of Ramadan.

Firstly, the purpose of our creation is to Worship Allah – this is clear, but if we ponder about the obligatory deeds that we need to do, it is just the five obligatory prayers that are to be done daily, apart from that we have no other strict obligations in our daily lives – so how is it that, if we were created to worship our Lord, we can simply get away with the *Salah*? Every *fardh* prayer combined does not usally exceed more than an hour of our day; even if one is to include fasting, giving *zakah*, or doing Hajj, none of those obligations are required to be fulfilled except for once a year or once in a lifetime.

So if the target is a higher place in Jannah, it is essential for us to do more than the prescribed prayers (FardSalahs).

VIRTUES OF SUNNAH PRAYERS

Allah's Pleasure

Allah says in Hadith Qudsi: *And My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (voluntary deeds) until I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My Protection, I will protect him.*" [Bukhari]

Two Rakah sunnah prayer better than the whole world

Aboo Hurairah said: "Allaah's Messenger ﷺ passed by a grave in which a person had been newly buried, and he ﷺ said: "*Two light rak`ahs, which you would regard as being something slight, and which you pray as something extra; if he- and he pointed to his grave- were able to add them to his deeds it would be more beloved to him than (having) everything in your world.*" (Classed as Sahih by Albani)

Ranks are raised and Sins are forgiven

The Prophet ﷺ said, "*Make a lot of sajdah (i.e. make a lot of prayer) because for every time you make a prostration to Allāh, your rank is raised and your sin is forgiven.*" [Muslim]

Mi'daan ibn Abi Talhah, who said: I met Thawbaan, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: Tell me of a deed that I may do, by which Allah may admit me to Paradise – or he said: Tell me of the most beloved of deeds to Allah. He remained silent. I asked him (again) and he remained silent. I asked him a third time and he said: I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about that and he ﷺ said: *"You should prostrate to Allah a great deal, for you will not perform one prostration to Allah but Allah will raise you one degree in status thereby and erase one sin for you."* (Sahih Muslim).

Rabee'ah ibn Ka'b al-Aslami (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: I used to stay overnight with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and bring him water for wudoo' and whatever he ﷺ needed. He ﷺ said to me: *"Ask."* I said: I ask to be with you in Paradise. He ﷺ said: *"Is there anything else?"* I said: That is all. He ﷺ said: *"Help me to do that for you by prostrating a great deal."* (Sahih Muslim).

Compensates for anything lacking in obligatory Salah

Prophet ﷺ said: *The first of his deeds for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayer. If it is good, then he will have succeeded and prospered, but if it is lacking, then he will have lost and failed.*

If anything is lacking from his obligatory prayer, Allah, will say: Look and see, does My slave have any voluntary prayers, which could make up for what is lacking from his obligatory prayer? Then all of his deeds will be dealt with in a similar manner. (at-Tirmidhi, classed as Sahih)

REWARDS OF SOME SUNNAH PRAYERS

12 Sunan Rawatib

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Allaah will build a house in Heaven for whoever is diligent in observing 12 Sunnah Rak'aat (as follows):

4 Rak'aat before and 2 after the Dhuhr (Midday) Prayer, 2 after the Maghrib (Sunset Prayer), 2 after the Ishaa (Evening) Prayer and 2 before the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer."

[Hadith sahih narrated by at-Tirmidhi No. 379 and by others. Hadith No. 6183 in Sahih al-Jaami].

If we think about it, most of us who are consistent in our obligatory prayers, also offer the two rak'aat of sunnah for Fajr, Dhuhr, Maghrib and Isha more often than not. So it is usually the four rak'aat before Dhuhr that is neglected.

Think about it – just four extra rak'aat, in addition to the sunnah prayers that many of us already offer, and Allah will build a house for us in Jannah! How much easier can the glorious Deen of Allâh be?

Two Rakahs before Fajr

Aisha radhiyallahu 'anha narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said : *"The two rakaats before dawn (fajr) prayer are better than the world and all that it contains."* (Sahih Muslim).

Aisha radhiyallahu 'anha narrated that *the Prophet ﷺ was never more regular and strict in offering any Nawafil than the two rakaats (sunnah before) dawn (fajr) prayer.* (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

He ﷺ would not leave these two rakahs even while he was travelling.

It is Sunnah to recite Surah Kaafiroon in the first Rakah and Surah Ikhlas in the second Rakah of this Sunah prayer. (Reported in Sahih Muslim)

Similarly *it is Sunnah to recite the same in the Two Rakahs Sunnah after Maghrib* (Reported by Ibn Majah&Tirmidhi)

Four Rakahs before & Four after Zohr

Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: *The Prophet ﷺ never omitted four Rak`ah supererogatory prayer before Zuhr prayers.* [Al-Bukhari].

Umm Habibah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*Whoever observes the practice of performing four Rak`ah before Zuhr prayer and four after the Zuhr prayer, Allah will shield him against the Fire (of Hell).* [Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

`Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: *If the Prophet ﷺ could not perform four Rak`ah before Zuhr prayer, he would perform them after it (i.e., after the obligatory prayer).* [At-Tirmidhi].

Four Rakahs before Asr

Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, *"May Allah have mercy on a man who performs four Rak`ah before the `Asr prayer."* [Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

Offering Sunnah Prayers at Home

Zaid bin Thabit (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, *"O people! perform your (voluntary) Salat (prayers) in your homes because the best Salat of a man is the one he performs at home, except the obligatory Salat."* [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, *"Observe part of the [Nawafil (voluntary)] Salat (prayers) in your homes. Do not turn your homes into graves."* [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*When you have finished your (Fard) Salat (prayer) in the mosque, you should observe some of your (Sunnah and Nawafil) Salat at home; Allah will bless your homes because of your Salat (in your homes).*" [Muslim]

Salat al Duha

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"In a human (body) there are 360 joints and man must make a charity for each one."* The people said: "Who can do that, O Messenger of Allâh ﷺ ?" He ﷺ responded: *"One may cover the mucus that one finds in the mosque or remove something harmful from the road. If one could not do that, he could pray two rak'at of duha and that will be sufficient for him."* (Ahmad & Abu Dawood; classed as Sahih by Albani)

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: *"My close friend [the Prophet ﷺ] advised me to do three things which I will never give up until I die: fasting three days each month,* praying Duha*, and sleeping after praying Witr."* (Bukhari & Muslim)

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