

## The Importance of Performing Salaah (Prayer) with congregation (Jamaat)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Salaah is obligatory upon every mature Muslim male and female. Whether a Muslim is black, white, rich or poor, literate or illiterate, Salaah is Fardh upon him or her five times a day. Salaah is not Maaf at any time. Salaah is a pillar of religion, recognition of faith and the key to Jannah. Salaah is the Sunnah of the Ambiya, coolness of the eyes of the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and the Me'raj of the Believers.

Salaah is the greatest of all Ibaadah and the most important obligation. It washes away sins and builds good deeds. It saves one from Hell and guides one towards Paradise. By reading Salaah, one gains the Pleasure of Almighty Allah and the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), love of Angels, safety from calamities, good health, healthy life, Barakah in sustenance and blessings in all aspects of life. The grave of the Namaazi will be enlightened with Noor. On the Day of Reckoning, he shall rise close to the Prophets, Saints, Martyrs and Pious Ones.

If a child is seven years of age, he should be taught to read Salaah, and when he or she reaches the age of ten years, they should be warned and shunned if they do not comply. Laziness in Salaah is a sign of hypocrisy. To leave out Salaah completely is a sign of Kufr and to refute or make a mockery of it is Kufr. A non-Namaazi is disliked by Almighty Allah and His Rasool (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). There is great torment for him in the grave. His grave will be cramped and reckoning will be harsh. He will rise with Qaroon, Firawn, Hamaan and Ubayy ibn Khalf. No other good deed of his will be accepted.

Salaah should be read sincerely with congregation in the masjid. To leave out the Jamaah without reason is a major sin. To read Salaah in Jamaah is 27 times more excellent than reading alone. In Jummah and in Eidain, the Jamaah is a pre-condition without which there is no Salaah. In Taraweeh, congregational prayers is Sunnat-e-Kifaayah. To read Witr Salaah with Jamaah in Ramadaan is Mustahab (desirable). Congregation for Nafil and Sunnah is Makrooh. For women to be present in any congregational prayer is disallowed.

For Jamaah, the Imam has to be present. The Imam should be a Sunni - Sahihul Aqeedah. He should know the laws pertaining to Salaah and he should recite the Quran correctly. Salaah behind open sinners, clean shaven persons, those who do not keep a Shar'i beard, etc. is Makrooh-e-Tahreemi and Waajib to repeat. In other words, Namaaz read behind such persons should be repeated.

Salaah read behind hypocrites, misled persons, Dushman (Enemy)-e-Rasool, non-Mazhabites, insulters of the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) in any way, be it by saying that he is mixed in the sand (Ma'azallah), he does not possess sufficient knowledge (Ma'azallah), he is an ordinary human being like us (Ma'azallah), he is unaware of the happenings in this world (Ma'azallah), he is not the Final Messenger (Ma'azallah), etc. - all these statements lead a person out of Islam and Namaaz behind such persons is totally forbidden since there is no Namaaz behind such a persons. Namaaz is not just any worldly transaction, but it is for Allah. Thus, one should not read Salaah behind just anyone, but should be satisfied with the Imam's character and Aqeedah.

After Namaaz, it is of great blessing to make Du'a. The Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said that Dua is the crux and soul of Ibaadah. To lift up your hands after Azaan and Namaaz to make Dua for the Believers is loved by Almighty Allah, a Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), a practice of the Sahaba and a means of mercy and reward. To shake hands, and make Salaam to one another after Namaaz is also permitted.

Remember: Only stand for Salaah after hearing "Hayya alas Salaah" and "Hayya alal Falah" in the Iqaamah. To stand before this is Makrooh and to follow the proper practice of sitting is Mustahab (desirable) and a sign of the Ahle Sunnah.

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