

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

In the third condition of *bay'at* Hazrat Masih Maood (as) imposes upon us the following:

1. We should observe the five daily prayers regularly in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw)
2. We should do our best to be regular in praying *namaz* Tahajjud.
3. We should be regular in invoking blessings (*darud*) on the Holy Prophet (saw).
4. We should make it our daily routine to ask forgiveness of Allah for our sins.
5. Every day we should remember the favours of Allah upon us and we should praise Allah and glorify Him.

As an Ahmadi Muslim or an aspiring one it is incumbent upon us to pray at least five times daily and to do so on time. Some people might think it is quite easy to pray on time all the daily prayers. But in practice we see that unless and until we do not make an effort to do so we will continue to fail. For *Fajr* prayer many people sleep through it and they offer it later on or they forego it altogether. But what is expected of us is that we should wake up and offer it in its proper time and men are expected to go to the mosque to offer it. Should it be impractical to attend to the mosque one should pray at home and if possible pray with the family members all together. There are no excuses for one not to offer these prayers on time because the first thing on which we will be questioned after our death is about prayers. Those who do not offer prayer on time are being negligent. It is their duty to see to it that they remedy the situation. Just thinking that Allah understands their situation is not enough. We should do our best to pray on time. If we are having problems because of sleep we should pray to Allah and seek His help so that we may wake up and if you are sincere you will see that you will eventually wake up for prayer. In the literature we have read about a man who used to pray *Fajr* in time but one day he missed it. On that particular day during the whole day he wept and asked forgiveness of Allah for being unable to wake up for prayer. The next day someone came to wake him up for *Fajr* prayer. He asked the voice of that person who he was. He received as reply that it was Satan. The person enquired how come Satan came to wake him for prayer. He received as reply that the person has received more blessings for not offering *Fajr* prayer on time than for praying on time. He told him that because of his regrets and his asking for pardon and his additional prayers he got more blessings from Allah. So Satan came to wake him up so that he might not get more blessings for Satan is here to deprive you of blessings. So if for a genuine reason we might have missed offering a prayer on time and if we have genuine regrets for this mishap Allah who is generous can still reward us beyond what we could have expected.

To feel regrets for having been remiss in a religious duty does not come to one overnight. It is only when somebody has made up his mind that he wishes to tread a path that will lead him to Allah and he is sincere in his/her quest that he will feel regrets for not doing something that he ought to do. To some people missing the *Fajr* prayer on time is a big burden and it weighs heavily on their conscience. But to many it is no big deal as if nothing happened yet the Holy Prophet (saw) is reported to have said “Neglecting to offer prayer brings a man closer to apostasy and disbelief”. So unless and until one’s conscience is not awakened one would not feel any regrets in disobeying the commandments of Allah. The fact that we feel ill at ease at disobedience motivates us to do better in future and thus we continue to perfect ourselves with Allah’s Help. So the awakening of our conscience will be a great help in accomplishing our religious duties. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has explained this matter quite clearly in his book “The Philosophy of the teachings of Islam”. One should read the book regularly so that the wisdom of the Promised Messiah’s words might dawn upon us *insha* Allah.

As far as reading *Zohr* and *Asr* prayers on time it might appear difficult. But if you are determined you will see that you will be able to create your own opportunities to be able to read these prayers on time. One should not just get into the routine that these two prayers should be prayed jointly every day. If during weekdays one is not able to pray them on time, at least during weekends one should do so lest children grow up thinking that these prayers are to be prayed jointly. As far as *Namaz Maghrib* and *Esha* are concerned we should not be having any problems praying them separately and on time.

About the importance of prayer we learn from the Hadiths that the Holy Prophet (saw) said “The first thing for which a person would be called to account is the Prayer. If he succeeds in this account, he would be successful and will attain salvation. If that account is deficient, he will be ruined and will be a loser. If there is a shortfall in the obligatory Prayers, Allah will make it up from his *nawafil*. Similarly, all his other deeds will be accounted for.” (*Sunan-ut-Tirmadhi*.) This hadith gives us an idea why we should not fail in the observance of our prayers. The next hadith gives us an idea of the power of purification of prayers. It says: “Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) has related that he heard the Holy Prophet (saw) saying, ‘Tell me if one of you had a stream running at his door and he should take a bath in it five times every day, would any dirt be left upon him?’ He was answered, ‘No dirt would be left on him.’ The Holy Prophet (saw) observed, ‘This is the case of the five Prayers. Allah wipes out all faults in consequence of them.’ (Sahih Al-Bukhari). This is one of the earliest hadith that we learned at the *madrassa* and throughout our lives we have tried to put it into practice and we think it has served us well. The five daily prayers are opportunities that are given to us, poor humans, to get rid of our sins. We should learn to avail ourselves of these opportunities and not show any negligence in that regard.

Advising us in *Kishti Nuh* Hazrat Masih Maood (as) says:

“So all ye people who count yourselves as members of my Jama‘at, in heaven you shall be counted members of my following only when you truly begin to advance on the paths of righteousness. Offer your five daily Obligatory Prayers with such concentration and awe of mind as though you were seeing God in front of you. Observe the days of fasting for the sake of God in full sincerity. All among you who are liable for *Zakat* should never fail to discharge this important obligation. And those upon whom the pilgrimage to Mecca has become obligatory, without any obstacles standing in the way, should duly undertake that blessed journey. Do all good deeds with the proper care they deserve, forsaking evil from a real repulsion arising from the heart. Be very sure that no action, whatsoever, can take you to God if it is devoid of righteousness. The root of everything good is *taqwa* [righteousness]; in whatever action this root is not lost, that action will never be devoid or futile.”

Soon the Holy month of Ramadan will be upon us. We will be getting plenty of opportunities to improve the way we pray. We should *incha* Allah avail ourselves of this unique opportunity to set our affairs right with Allah and keep improving ever after. May Allah grant to each one amongst us such opportunities. Explaining further what is prayer the Promised Messiah says:

“What is the Prayer? It is the supplication made humbly in the form of *tasbih* [glorification] and *tahmid* [praise of God], *taqdis* [proclaiming His holiness], *istighfar* [seeking His forgiveness] and *durud* [calling down His blessings on the Holy Prophet (saw)]. When you are occupied with the Prayer, do not confine yourselves only to the prescribed Prayers like heedless people whose Prayer is all formality and has no reality behind it. When you observe the Prayer, besides the prescribed supplications taught by the Holy Qur’an and the Holy Prophet, you should set forth your supplications in your respective vernaculars so that your hearts may be moved by your humility and your earnestness.” (*Kashti-e-Nuh, Ruhani Khaza’in*, vol. 19, pp. 68–69)

This is a short extract. But if we reflect upon it we will see that it opens upon us the door to deriving maximum benefits from our prayers. We learn that if we show humility to Allah we cannot rush through the prayers. We need to do it in a very calm way forcing ourselves to be aware that we are seeing Allah or at least that He sees us. Unless and until such a spirit is created in our prayers they would not amount to much. The Promised Messiah further says:

“The Prayer is so powerful that the heavens incline towards the human with it. The one who does full justice to Prayers feels that he has died; his soul has melted and fallen at the threshold of Allah... A house in which Prayer is offered in this manner will never

face destruction. It is said in *hadith* that if Prayer had been ordained to the people of Noah, they would not have been ruined. *Hajj* is obligatory but with certain prerequisites; so is fasting and *Zakat*. But the obligation to offer Prayer has no prerequisites. All other obligations are discharged once a year, but the Prayer is ordained five times a day. As long as the Prayer is not performed in accordance with all its requirements, it does not earn the blessings that it carries. Such allegiance [without discharging these obligations] in not of any benefit. (*Malfuzat*, new edition, vol. 3, p. 627)

The Promised Messiah (as) says further:

“Prayer is obligatory on every Muslim. It is narrated in *hadith* that some people accepted Islam and submitted, ‘O Prophet of Allah, please release us from the obligation of Prayer because we are traders. Because we tend to cattle, sometimes we are not sure about the cleanliness of our clothes. Moreover, we do not have the time.’ The Holy Prophet (saw) said, ‘Take heed, if there is no Prayer, there is nothing. Faith without worship is no faith at all.’

What is Prayer? To submit your weaknesses before God and to seek their solutions from Him. At times, to stand straight before him in awe of His Grandeur—ready to carry out His commands. At times, to prostrate before Him in complete submission. To beg from him all that you need. That is Prayer. To praise Him like a beggar, to move His Mercy by narrating His Greatness and Grandeur, and then asking. A ‘faith’ that does not have this [type of Prayer] is no faith at all.

A man is needy at all times to seek Allah’s pleasure and beg for His Grace. Only through His Grace can we accomplish anything. O Allah, grant us the ability to belong entirely to You to stay firmly upon the path of Your pleasure and thereby earn Your pleasure. Prayer means love of God, fear of God, to always keep Him in mind—and that is what faith is. So anyone who wants to be freed from the obligation of Prayer cannot accomplish anything more than the animals— eating, drinking, and sleeping. This certainly is not faith. This is the way of the disbelievers. The popular saying, ‘the moment of heedlessness is the moment of disbelief’ is undoubtedly true and correct.’ (*Al-Hakam*, vol. 7, March 31, 1903, p. 8)

We will end with a prayer that Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has taught us in order to cultivate concentration in prayer. It is as follows:

“Allah the Almighty! Thou knowest how blind and sightless I am, and at the moment I am like the dead. I know that in a little while I shall be called and shall present myself before Thee and no one will be able to stop me. But my heart is blind and unenlightened. Do Thou cause to descend upon it such a flame of light that thereby it may be inspired with Thy love and

devotion. Do Thou bestow upon me such grace that I shall not be raised up sightless and blind.”

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) says:

“When he supplicates in this manner and persists in the supplication, he will see that a time will arrive when something will descend upon him while he is engaged in such a Prayer that will melt his heart. (*Malfuzat*, new edition, vol. 2, p. 616)

May Allah join all of us with that group of people whose heart are ever inclined to Him in all circumstances of life. Ameen