

The Importance of salaah in jamaa'ah

Q: Salaah-98: What is the ruling concerning performing salaah in Jamaa'ah? While most people are negligent of performing salaah, those who do perform their salaah perform it at home and attach no importance to performing their salaah in Jamaa'ah. Please explain with references from the Qur'aan, Ahadeeth and reliable books of jurisprudence.

Answer: The Ahadeeth cite great virtues for performing salaah in Jamaa'ah and emphasise it tremendously. The Qur'aan states: "Bow with those who bow" meaning "Perform salaah with those who perform salaah" i.e. in Jamaa'aha.

Rasulullaah SAW. said that salaah performed in Jamaa'ah is twenty-seven times superior than salaah performed individually.

Rasulullaah SAW. also said, "The salaah of a person with another is better than his salaah by himself, his salaah with two people is better than his salaah with one person and the more they are, the more Allaah loves them.

Another Hadith states, "Whoever performs Isha in Jamaa'ah shall receive the reward of half the night in Ibaadah and whoever performs both Isha and Fajr in Jamaa'ah shall receive the reward of the entire night in Ibaadah.

It is for this reason that Rasulullaah SAW. never missed salaah in Jamaa'ah and even when he could not walk when he was ill, he came to Masjid with the support of two of the Sahabah RADI. In fact, Rasulullaah SAW. even said that he would like to appoint someone to lead the salaah and then get some youngsters to collect firewood to set alight the houses of all those who performed their salaah at home without any excuse.'

Rasulullaah SAW. also said, "When there are three persons in a village or a desert and they fail to perform salaah in Jamaa'ah, Shaytaan gets the upper hand over them. You must therefore ensure that you always perform salaah in Jamaa'ah. Rasulullaah SAW. also made it clear that when a person hears the Adhaan and, with no excuse, does not go to the Masjid, his salaah (performed at home) will not be accepted. When the Sahabah RADI. asked what excuse was valid, Rasulullaah SAW. replied, "Fear (for harm to one's life, family, property) or severe illness.

Rasulullaah SAW. also warned, "Stop missing salaah in Jamaa'ah otherwise Allaah shall set a seal on your hearts, after which you will become of the negligent ones."6 Another narration quotes Rasulullaah SAW. as saying, "It is better for a person to have molten lead poured into his ears rather than hearing the Adhaan and then failing to respond to it.

There is also a Hadith that tells us that from three persons whom Allaah curses, one is he who hears the Adhaan and then fails to go to the Masjid. Rasulullaah SAW. also said, "It is open injustice, Kufr and hypocrisy for a person to hear Allaah's caller (the Mu'adhin) calling him towards salaah and success and then not to respond.

Abu Dawood (Vol.1 Pg.88) also quotes a Hadith like the one cited earlier in which Rasulullaah SAW. expressed the wish to actually burn down the houses of those who performed their salaah at home without any excuse.

Imagine if the mercy to mankind wishes to punish such people in this manner, what terrible punishment must be awaiting them in the Aakhirah!

Dear brothers and sisters who are not performing their salaah! Please pay heed to this act that will secure your salvation in the Aakhirah because the first thing you will need to account for on the Day of Qiyaamah will be your salaah.

'The eminent Sahabi Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood RADI. says, "No Sahabi RADI. ever missed salaah in Jamaa'ah. It was only those people who were known to be Munaafiqeen who did so. In fact, even those who were critically ill would join the Jamaa'ah with the support of two others. Amongst the guidelines to salvation that Rasulullaah SAW. showed us was to go to the Masjid for salaah whenever the Adhaan is called out. The Muslim who wishes to meet Allaah on the Day of Qiyaamah should perform the five salaahs in Jamaa'ah because amongst the advices that your Nabi SAW. gave was that if you perform your salaah at home like the Munaafiqeen do, you will have definitely left the way of your Nabi W and as soon as you do that, you will go astray.

It was because of this emphasis that when the governor of Makkah Hadhrat Ataab bin Usayd RADI. heard about the demise of Rasulullaah SAW. he addressed the people saying, "If I hear of any of you coming to the Masjid without performing salaah, I shall have him executed.

Hadhrat Abu Dharr RADI. said, "By Allaah! I know of nothing more important for the Ummah of Muhammad SAW. than salaah in Jamaa'ah.

Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi RAH. writes: "Allaah's purpose for placing this Ummah on earth is for the Kalimah of Allaah to reign supreme and so that there remains no religion superior to Islaam. This can however not be imagined unless the custom of this Ummah is for those in the cities, those in the countryside and all the higher and lower ranking people to gather collectively for that which is the greatest of the hallmarks of Islaam (salaah). It is for this reason that the Jumu'ah salaah and salaah in Jamaa'ah has been ordained. These have been strongly encouraged and stern warnings have been sounded for neglecting them.

An American specialist sociologist and psychologist writes that according to all historians, the amazing success that Islaam achieved in overwhelming the world is due to the powerful unity that it generated in its ranks. However, he says, none can fathom how this was possible. He then adds that there is nevertheless no doubt about the fact that a great contributing factor was salaah (in Jamaa'ah). Regardless of whether they are in the barren area or elsewhere, Muslims gather five times a day for their salaah. There is no doubt, he says, that the strength of Islaam is attributed to the emphasis Islaam places on the five salaahs in Jamaa'ah.

The gist of it all is that the importance of salaah in Jamaa'ah cannot be over emphasised and that it lends to strength of Islaam. It is also a hallmark of Islaam. The Sahabah RADI. left their businesses and trades when they heard the Adhaan and proceeded to the Masjid. The person

who habitually misses his salaah in Jamaa'ah is a grave sinner and his neighbours will also be sinful if they do not advise him. In fact, it is Waajib (compulsory) to wage military Jihaad against a community that forsakes performing salaah in Jamaa'ah even if they perform their salaah at home.

When people missed their salaah in Jamaa'ah in the past, they actually mourned for seven days and if they missed the first Takbeer of a salaah they mourned for three days.

Hadhrat Maymoon bin Mahraan RAH. once came to the Masjid only to be informed that the Jamaa'ah was over. He sighed, "Innaa Lillaahi wa Innaa Ilayhi Raaji'oon! This salaah in Jamaa'ah is more beloved to me than rulership over all of Iraq.

Muslims must therefore ensure that they neither miss any salaah in Jamaa'ah nor the first Takbeer. One must also try to stand in the first Saff and as close to the Imaam as possible. Standing in the first Saff carries more rewards than standing in the second and the second more than the third and so forth. A Hadith states that Allaah's mercy descends directly upon the Imaam and then on those on his right in the first Saff, followed by those on the left and then in the same manner upon those in the second Saff and all the Saffs thereafter.

Another Hadith states that the person directly behind the Imaam receives the reward of a hundred salaahs, the one on his right receives the reward of seventy-five salaahs, the one on his left receives the reward of fifty salaahs and those in other rows receive the reward of twenty-five salaahs.

May Allaah grant all Muslims the ability to perform their salaahs in Jamaa'ah. Aameen,

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