

# Imam Ahmed Raza Khan (R.A) and safeguarding Salah

## Importance of Salaah

---

Assalato Wasallaamo 'Alaika Yaa Rasool Allah  
Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam  
Wa 'Alaa Aalika Wa As Haabika Yaa Noor Allah  
Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam

Nahmaduhu Wanusalli 'Alaa Rasoolihil Kareem

The Blessed Holy Qur'an and the Ahadith of Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam have emphasised the need to be punctual in performing Salaah. A'ala Hazrat Imam Ahmed Raza Muhaddith e Bareilly 'Alaihir Rahmah has quoted many verses of the Qur'an and many Ahadith about safeguarding Salaah in his rulings and in his writings. We are presenting some of those here:

And those who keep watch to their prayers. They are indeed the inheritors. Who shall inherit the Paradise, they shall abide there in.

In relation to the above verses, it states in Mu'aalim Shareef Imam Baghwi Shafi'i that, "Watch their prayers means that they are continually safeguarding their Salaah and pay attention to the times of the Salaah. The Salaah is specifically mentioned to emphasise the fact that it is compulsory to safeguard it."

And those who preserve their prayers. They are, who shall be honoured in the Gardens.

In Nisaa'i Shareef, it states that, "Preserving the Salaah means to make sure that the time of the Salaah is not missed."

And those who believe in the Hereafter believe in this Book and guard their prayer.

It states in Tafseer e Kabeer, "Guarding the prayers means making sure that attention is paid to ensuring that all the pre-conditions of Salaah are observed like time, cleanliness etc, and that Salaah is performed punctually and regularly. It should be done so punctually that when it becomes times for Salaah a person should begin to get ready for Salaah and perform Salaah out of habit."

Watch over all your prayers and the middle prayer and stand before Allah with devotion.

In other words, "watch over" means the Salaah should be performed at the allocated times. The middle Prayer is the 'Asr Salaah because people are usually busy in business and in the market places at this time, and the time for performing this Salaah is quite short and therefore that is why it has been specifically mentioned.

In Madaarik Shareef, it states that the verse means that always perform the Salaah at the allocated times. In Baizaawi Shareef, it says that it means to perform the prayers at their allocated times and make this a permanent habit.

Then after them came those degenerates who wasted prayer and followed their lust then soon they will encounter a valley of the hell.

In the commentary of the above verse, Hazrat 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas Radiallaho Ta'ala Anhuma states that the people who are called degenerates in this verse are those who perform their Salaah out of it's allocated time.

A great Tabi'een (person who saw a Companion with faith and died with faith), Sayyedina Sa'eed bin Musayyab Radiallaho Ta'ala Anhu states that "wasted prayer" means not praying the Zuhr Salaah until the time arrives for 'Asr Salaah.

Then woe to those prayer performers. Who are heedless of their prayers.

It is stated in Tafseer e Jalaalain that ""Heedless of their prayers" means not performing the Salaah at the correct time." In Tafseer Mafaatihul Ghaib, it says ""Heedless" means one who does not pay attention to the actual times of the Salaah and is lazy in performing Salaah at its allocated time."

The above verse has been explained in many Ahadith and we will look at some of those Ahadith below:

HADITH 1: Imam Ahmed reports with an authentic chain of narrators a Hadith that is narrated by Hazrat Hanzalah Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu, who was one of the scribes of Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam. He states that he heard Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam say, "The person who safeguards his five daily Salaah and bows and prostrates at the correct times, and has total faith that this is from Allah Ta'ala will be entered into Paradise. Or he said Paradise is compulsory (Wajib) for him, or he said Hell is forbidden for him."

HADITH 2: Imam Malik, Dawood, Nisaa'i, Ibn Habban all report, in their Sahih, a Hadith narrated by Hazrat 'Ubaadah bin Saamit Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu that Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "Allah Ta'ala has enjoined five Salaah's in a day. The person who performs ablution well and prays them at their allocated times and bows properly with humility, Allah Ta'ala's Promise is that he will be forgiven. The person who does not do this, there is no promise from Allah Ta'ala; if He desires, He will forgive the person or He will punish him."

HADITH 3: Abu Dawood reports, through Ibnul A'raabi, a Hadith narrated by Hazrat Qatadah bin Rabi' Ansari Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu who heard Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam say, "Allah Ta'ala has said that, 'I have made Salaah compulsory on your Ummah five times a day and have promised Myself that the person who safeguards them and performs them at their correct times, I will enter him into Paradise. There is no promise for the person who does not safeguard them."

HADITH 4: Daarmi reports on the authority of Hazrat Ka'ab ibn Ajrah Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu that Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam reported a Hadith e Qudsi, in which he stated that Allah Ta'ala said, "The person who performs Salaah correctly at the correct time has a promise from Me that I will enter him into Paradise. The person who does not perform Salaah on time and does not perform Salaah correctly, there is no promise from Me. If I desire, I will place them in Hell or if I desire I will grant them Paradise."

HADITH 5: Tibraani reports, with a correct chain of narrators, that Hazrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu narrates that, "One day, Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam said to the Companions, 'Do you know what your Lord is stating?' They replied that Allah Ta'ala and His Prophet Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam know best. Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam said, 'Do you know what your Lord is stating?' Once again they replied that Allah Ta'ala and His Prophet Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam know best. Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam said, 'Your Lord says that I swear oath by My Might and My Majesty, the person who performs Salaah at its correct time, I will enter him into Paradise. The person who performs them out of their allocated time, If I desire I will be Merciful to them, or I will punish them."

HADITH 6: It is reported in Tibraani and Ausat that Hazrat Anas bin Maalik Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu narrates that Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "The Salaah of the person who performs complete ablution, bows and prostrates with humility, and performs the five Salaah at their correct times becomes bright and luminous and says, 'May Allah Ta'ala protect you just as you safeguarded me.' The Salaah of the person who does not perform ablution properly, does not bow and prostrate with humility, and performs the Salaah outside of its allocated time becomes dark and ominous and says, 'May Allah Ta'ala destroy you just as you have destroyed me' and keeps saying this until it reaches the place where Allah Ta'ala wills and then it takes the form of an old cloth and is thrown back in the face of the person."

HADITH 7: Abu Dawood narrates that Hazrat Fazaalah Zahraani Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu stated that Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam taught him rules pertaining to the religion, and one of the things he was taught was that he should safeguard his five daily prayers.

HADITH 8: Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmizi, Nisaa'i, Daarmi, all report that Hazrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu said that he asked Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam, "Which deed is most liked by Allah Ta'ala?" Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam replied, "Salaah which is performed at its correct time."

HADITH 9: Baihiqi and Shab'ul Iman report through Akrama that Commander of the Faithful, Hazrat 'Umar Faruq e A'azam Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu narrates that, "A person came to the court of Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam and asked, 'Which deed in Islam is

most beloved by Allah Ta'ala?' Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam replied, 'Performing Salaah at its allocated time. Whoever forsakes Salaah has no religion left because Salaah is a pillar of the religion.'"

HADITH 10: Tibraani reports that Hazrat Anas Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu narrates that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "The person who safeguards three things is a true friend, and the one who neglects them is truly an enemy; Salaah, Fasting, and taking a bath as soon as it becomes compulsory on you (Ghushl e Janaabat)."

HADITH 11: Hazrat Imam Malik 'Alaihir Rahmah writes in his Muwatta that Hazrat Naaf'i Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhuma narrates, "Hazrat 'Umar Faruq e A'azam Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu sent a message to his workers that I worry more about your Salaah than the work that you do. The person who safeguards their Salaah safeguards their faith, and the one who squanders his Salaah also squanders other aspects of his life."

HADITH 12: Muslim, Abu Dawood, Tirmizi, Nisaa'i, Ahmed, and Daarmi report a Hadith narrated by Hazrat Abu Dhar Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu, who stated that, "Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam placed his hand on my thigh and said 'What will become of you when you are amongst people who will perform Salaah outside of its allocated time.' I asked Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam what I should do at that time. Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, 'You pray your Salaah at its allocated time.'"

HADITH 13: Ahmed, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah report with a correct chain of narrators that 'Ubaadah bin Samaat Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu reported that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "After me there will be some rulers who rule over you who will not perform their Salaah punctually because of their work, up to the point that the time for the Salaah will pass. You make sure that you perform your Salaah on time."

HADITH 14: Bazaar reports on the authority of Hazrat Sa'ad bin Abi Waqaas Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu, who narrated that he asked Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, "Who are those people whom Allah Ta'ala is referring to in the verse "Then woe to those prayer performers?" The Beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam replied, "It is those people who perform their Salaah out of its allocated time."

Bagwi reports that "Ahmed bin 'Abdullah Saalih (with a full chain of narrators) stated that Mo'sab bin S'ad narrated from his father Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhuma that when the above question was asked to Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, he replied, 'It means not performing Salaah at its time and forsaking the allocated time.'"

HADITH 15: Abu Dawood reports in his Sunan and Tibraani reports in Mu'azzam with a chain of narrators that Hazrat Abu Darda Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu narrates that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "If a person believes in and acts upon five things he will go into Paradise:

" Safeguarding the five daily Salaah, at the correct times, along with one's ablution, bowing, and prostration.

" The other four are safeguarding Fasting (Roza), Pilgrimage (Hajj), Poor-due (Zakat) and bathing as soon as one becomes impure (Ghushl e Janaabat).

## A'ala Hazrat and Punctuality with Salaah

---

Our Beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam ordered his followers to safeguard and be punctual with their Salaah, and he showed the world in practical terms by acting upon this himself. Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam performed each Salaah with congregation, on time, with his Companions. A'ala Hazrat Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah was a true devotee and follower of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam and that is why he repeated the words that were spoken by Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, and he performed the same actions that were performed by Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam. Every step of the way, he was an embodiment of one who acts upon the sayings and teachings of Muhammad Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, and that was the reason why he never missed performing his Salaah on time, just as the following incident shows.

In the year 1337 A.H., corresponding to 1919, even though he was ill, A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah travelled to Jabalpur at the invitation of Hazrat Maulana 'Abdus Salaam 'Alaihir Rahmah. The following is described by Hazrat Burhan e Millat 'Alaihir Rahmah: "At 4 am, A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah and this attendant left by car and headed for Bareilly railway station. I said, 'Sir, the train departs right at the time of Fajr Salaah, where will we pray our Salaah?' He smiled and replied, 'Insha Allah, on the platform.' When we got to the station, we found out that the train was going to be 40 minutes late. Prayer mats, cloths etc were laid down on the platform and many people performed the Fajr Salaah behind A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah. It was a miracle (Karaamat) of A'ala

Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah that we were all able to perform the Salaah in peace without having to rush for fear of missing our train."

Hazrat Maulana 'Abdus Salaam 'Alaihir Rahmah had come with his companions to Katni to meet and accompany A'ala Hazrat the rest of the way, and he describes the rest of the incident:

"The train reached Katni at 4 am. Arrangements were made for A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah to perform ablution and he asked, 'Where will we perform Fajr Salaah?' I said, 'In Sulaimanaabad Insha Allah, but the train only stops there for three minutes. Sir, you perform ablution, your attendant is here to serve you.' I walked towards the engine and saw that the driver was a Muslim who had just come from greeting A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah. He greeted me and shook my hand. I said to him, 'We have to perform Salaah in Sulaimanaabad.' He asked, 'How long will it take?' I replied, '12-15 minutes.' He said, 'I will delay the train.' I also met with the guard and he also assured us that we could perform our Salaah at Sulaimanaabad. The train reached Sulaimanaabad on time and the prayer mats, cloths etc were laid down on the platform. Approximately 300 people prayed Fajr Salaah behind A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah. All the other passengers on the train were watching A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah, who prayed his rosaries and incantations (Wazeefas) calmly and peacefully after the Salaah and then proceeded back onto the train."

Hazrat Burhan e Millat 'Alaihir Rahmah also noted and wrote that during his stay in Jabalpur, A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah would walk to the Mosque to perform all five daily Salaah with the congregation. In those days, Hazrat Burhan e Millat 'Alaihir Rahmah used to perform his prayers in a Mosque, which was more than 500 feet away from his home. This is not a short walk for one who is sick, frail and thin; rather it exceeds the amount that a person who is sick would be able to walk. After returning back from Jabalpur, on the 22nd Rajab 1337 A.H., A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah sent the following message to Hazrat Burhan e Millat 'Alaihir Rahmah:

"I arrived back in Bareilly safely on Monday at 8 pm. I received a great blessing from Allah Ta'ala along the way because I thought I would miss my Maghrib Salaah. The train was scheduled to arrive at Shahbahanpur at 6.33 and was only scheduled to stop there for 8 minutes. Based on that schedule, it would not be time for Maghrib Salaah yet. However, the train arrived 15 minutes late at Shahbahanpur and stayed there for over 10 minutes. All my prayers were performed peacefully and on time during the journey, Alhamdo Lillah! Many people had come to the station to welcome me back and I reached home quite late. This Faqeer first went to the Mosque and performed 'Isha Salaah with the congregation in the Mosque."

A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah travelled for his second pilgrimage at the age of 52. After the rights of Hajj were fulfilled, he became so ill that he was confined to a bed for almost two months. When he had recovered and was better, he left Makkah Mukarramah to visit the blessed resting place of Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam on 24th Safar 1334 A.H. He went to Jeddah and travelled by boat to Raabig and, from there, completed the journey to Madinah Munawwarah on camel. Now listen to what happened next in the words of A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah himself:

"Along the way, we got to Peer Shaikh and there were only a few miles left to reach our destination, but there was only a short time left for performing Fajr Salaah. The camel owners wanted to continue until we reached our destination, but the time for Fajr would have passed by that time. My companions and I got down from our camels. We had a bucket for pulling water from the well but did not have a rope, and the well was quite deep. We tied our turbans (Imama's) to the bucket, drew the water, performed ablution and, by the Grace of Allah Ta'ala, we were able to perform our Salaah on time. Now the worry was that after only just recovering from a long illness, how would I be able to walk the long distance that was left to our destination? I turned my head and was shocked to see a person whom I did not recognise who was waiting for me with a camel. I praised Allah Ta'ala and got on the camel. People asked me, 'Why did you come on this camel? Shaikh Hussain has told us very forcefully to ensure that we did not fall short at all in serving you.' We proceeded a little further and I saw that the original camel owner was waiting with the camel on which I had been riding. I asked him why he was waiting there and he said, 'When the leader of our group stopped for a rest, I thought to myself that you will have to endure difficulties if you have to walk all the way, therefore I released the camel and headed back to where you were.' All this was a great blessing from my beloved master Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam because neither have I ever met nor do I know Shaikh Hussain, neither do I know this African camel owner."

Subhan Allah! This is what is called enthusiasm and eagerness to perform Salaah. Just the thought of missing the Salaah at its allocated time makes one restless and uneasy. If the Salaah is prayed on time, the heart feels content and peaceful and the soul gets new life. Even after being severely ill for months and being very weak, he did not care about all the problems and was prepared to leave the group and put up with any and all difficulties, but was not willing to give up performing Salaah on time. A true lover and devotee of Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam considers this a great blessing and thanks Allah Ta'ala for granting him this great gift. Undoubtedly, the thing that is loved greatly by Allah Ta'ala is a great thing and for a "true believer", that will indeed be a great gift and a great blessing.

May be we sacrificed on the zest and passion for acting upon the Sunnahs of Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam that A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah possessed; upon returning home after spending one and a quarter months away, instead of rushing home to meet his children and family, first of all he goes to the House of Allah Ta'ala. His thought was that 'I do not want to miss the congregation

amidst all the excitement of seeing my children again.' This is called safeguarding Salaah, and this is called having enthusiasm and passion for prostrating and worshipping Allah Ta'ala correctly.

## Salaah Whilst Sick

---

No matter what illness you have, nor how weak and frail you are, Salaah is not forgiven and must be prayed. If you are of sound mind and intellect, then it must be prayed punctually except in a very few specific instances where it is forgiven. However, in order to perform it, it is allowed for a person to lean on a stick if he is unable to stand; or perform it sitting down if he not even able to do that; or lean against something if he is unable to sit upright; he is even allowed to perform it lying down and perform the various actions with signs and gestures if he is unable to perform Salaah by any of the methods described above. The point is, Salaah must be performed, no matter how sick, weak, or feeble a person may be. Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "Perform Salaah by standing, if you do not have the strength then perform it sitting down. If you do not even have the strength for that, then perform it lying down with signs and gestures."

Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam's habit was also that he would perform Salaah whilst seated when he was ill and weak. A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah's life was a living picture of the orders and commands of Sayyidina Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam. When he was healthy, he would stand whilst praying his Salaah and would remain busy in trying to please the Lord. When he was weaker, he would stand and use the support of a stick to help him stand and would use the stick to help him bow and prostrate. He would do whatever needed to be done but he never missed his Salaah.

A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah wrote a letter dated 4 Rabi 'ul Aakhir 1334 A.H. in which he wrote, "I have been a victim of backaches and bladder infection for the last year and a half, and stand, bow, and prostrate in Salaah with the help of a stick. But, Alhamdo Lillah, Allah Ta'ala has granted me steadfastness on the religion in such a way that even though the pain is increasing day by day, the supreme and excellent Protection of Allah Ta'ala is over me. All praise if for Allah Ta'ala who is Lord of all the worlds."

One day, whilst A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah was in Jabalpur, Hazrat 'Abdus Salaam said, "Jabalpur is very fortunate in that your health has remained excellent here. In Bareilly Shareef, sometimes you have to use the aid of a stick whilst standing, bowing and prostrating in Salaah, but here I have not seen you need the help or support of a stick."

A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah writes the following about his final illness before he passed away - "Along with this illness, I am suffering from a cold and extreme coughing, and the viscosity of the phlegm is such that I have to make many attempts before finally being able to release it. The cough is continuous, and the constant jerking in order to remove the phlegm is causing extreme pain in the chest and ribs. In twenty-two (22) days, my biceps have become one and a half inches smaller than before due to dehydration caused by this illness; in twenty-two days, the top of my thighs have become the same size that my biceps used to be. I am also still suffering from extreme constipation, and severe flatulence... and going to the Mosque is out of the question. Fifteen days prior to this, the illness of diarrhoea had made me very weak. A stool on which I could pray Salaah was placed right beside the couch, but it is with great difficulty that I am able to move from the couch to the stool. Alhamdo Lillah, up to now, I am still praying the Farz and Waajib and the Sunnah of Fajr whilst standing with the help of a stick. However, only I know of the pain that I am experiencing at that time. The state of my pulse is (such) that it stops four times every minute. A state of breathlessness and uneasiness remains for a short time and then, by the Grace of Allah Ta'ala, the pulse starts again."

The rules and laws of Islam state that if a person is able to stand, bow, and prostrate with the help of a stick, he is not able to pray his compulsory (Farz & Waajib) Salaah whilst seated. Neither does he have permission to perform his bowing and prostration with signs and gestures. This is why A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah withstood great pain and difficulty, but did not fall short in performing the worship that is the coolness of the eyes of his Master and Beloved Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam; this kind of obedience to the Sunnah of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam is not evident in this day and age. Let us read one more example of the infatuation that our Imam had with Salaah and attempt to instil love for Salaah in our hearts also.

Once, Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah was at one of his residences. There used to be many outbreaks of colic at that time. One day, he was alone and he states, "The pain started at the time of Zuhr Salaah, and somehow I managed to perform ablution. It was impossible for me to stand for prayer, but I supplicated to Allah Ta'ala and I asked Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam to help me, as Allah Ta'ala listens to the cries of those who are helpless. I made the intention to perform the Sunnah prayers, and the pain completely disappeared. As soon as I finished the four rak'ats of Sunnah, the pain was as intense as before. I stood up immediately and made intention for the four rak'ats of Farz; the pain disappeared. Once again, as soon as I completed the four rak'ats, the pain was extremely severe. I performed the Sunnahs after the Farz and once again, whilst I was in prayer there was no pain, but as soon as



I turned my head to complete the prayers, the pain would return with the same intensity as before. Once I had completed my prayers, I said, 'Now you (the pain) can stay until it is time for 'Asr prayers.' I laid down on the bed and was tossing and turning, but the pain would not allow me to be comfortable, no matter which way I slept or turned."

Either the pain was completely removed at the time of prayers, or A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah was so absorbed and engrossed in prayers that he did not feel any pain. In either case, Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah's acceptance in the Court of Allah Ta'ala and his devotion and eagerness for obtaining closeness to Allah Ta'ala are clearly evident. Someone has said so beautifully and eloquently:

"If the love is true, all the graces and favours are yours."

## Imam Ahmed Raza and Safeguarding Congregational Prayers

---

The great Mujaddid, Imam of Ahle Sunnat, A'ala Hazrat Sayyidina Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah was extremely punctual in performing Salaah with the congregation. Even when he was extremely ill, he performed prayers with the congregation until it was physically impossible and he strongly disliked it when anyone missed the congregational prayers without a valid Islamic reason. Not only this, but if a person was punctual with his Fasting and his Salaah but he missed the congregational prayers, A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah would scold and show contempt for such a person. We see an example of this in one of the religious rulings (Fatwa) that he gave to a person who performed the Zuhr, 'Asr, and Maghrib prayers with the congregation, but would perform the Fajr and 'Isha prayers at home. The reason the person gave for performing the morning and late night prayers at home was that the incantations (Wazeefas) that he used to pray after the Salaah were quite lengthy. A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah stated, "It is compulsory (Wajib) to perform all five prayers with the congregation in the Mosque, and it is a sin to miss any of the congregational prayers without a valid Islamic reason. Reciting incantations is not a valid reason for missing the congregational prayers. Pray the congregational prayer in the Mosque and then recite the incantations or recite the Qur'an at home, otherwise the previously mentioned example you have stated is transgression and is a major sin. (He ended the ruling with) The incantations and recitation that keeps you away from the congregational prayers are an unlawful sin. Allah Ta'ala knows best."

In the same way, in relation to one who performs Salaah alone and leaves the Mosque before the call to prayer (Adhaan) and the congregation, he provided a detailed answer from the books of Jurisprudence and also quoted the following Hadith: "Ibn Majah reports that Ameer ul Mo'mineen Hazrat 'Uthmaan Radiallaho Ta'ala 'Anhu narrated that Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "The person who is present in the Mosque when the Adhaan is called, then leaves before the congregational prayer without any reason, and has no intention of returning, is a hypocrite."

In a similar manner, a question was asked to A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah about two people. The first would perform 'Isha Salaah before the Adhaan and Jama'at and the reason he gave was that he feared he would not be able to get up for the pre-dawn prayer (Tahajjud) if he waited and prayed with the congregation. The second person would pray the Zuhr Salaah at the earliest time on his own (before the congregational time) and would then take a siesta (afternoon nap). His reason was also that if he did not take that afternoon nap he feared that he would not be able to get up to pray the Tahajjud prayer. A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah wrote a very detailed ruling (Fatwa) with many proofs about such people and at one point writes:

"The correct answer to the above mentioned question and issue is that this kind of a question is useless and futile. The people mentioned are performing the Sunnah of Tahajjud, and this is becoming a means of them missing the congregation, which is Wajib. The people mentioned should realise that the Sunnah acts must be performed whilst safeguarding the Wajib acts, not forsaking them. Allah Ta'ala states in the Holy Qur'an, 'Undoubtedly, the prayer forbids one from indecency and evil things.' (After this, he mentions a Hadith) in which Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam said, 'Perform Tahajjud Salaah regularly and hold onto it firmly because this (standing in Salaah during the night) instils a habit for doing goodness and earning rewards. It is a means for attaining closeness to Allah Ta'ala, staying away from sins, is compensations for sins, and keeps illnesses at bay.'

Therefore, to blame Tahajjud for missing the congregational Salaah is against the commands of the Qur'an and Ahadith. If this action is looked at through the eyes of Islamic law and rules, then it is evident that the blame belongs to the person himself. He has made the decision himself to perform Tahajjud and take an afternoon nap, so why is he making that an excuse for forsaking an order of Islam? If he states that we are told to pray Tahajjud and to take an afternoon nap by Rasool Allah Sallallaho 'Alaihi Wasallam through his blessed words and actions, then show me where does he show us or tell us to do these things and miss our congregational prayers?

Do the Qur'an and Hadith teach us to do these things and miss our congregational prayers? Did our pious predecessors stand in the night like this and miss their congregational prayers?

O Bedouin I fear you will not reach the Ka'aba  
Because the road you are on goes to Turkey

If you want to perform Sunnah acts then perform them as Sunnah, but it is not correct that compulsory (Wajib) acts are forsaken for Sunnah acts. Please listen carefully, even if the truth is bitter and not what you want to hear. The one who whispers in our ears has taught you to present this excuse to various Scholars so that those who are inclined towards standing in the night will give you the order to miss the congregational prayers, and those who insist on congregational prayers will give you the order to miss the pre-dawn prayer because 'The person who is in a predicament should choose the easier of the two options.' In any case, the order to miss one of them has been given by many other Scholars, but May Allah Ta'ala Protect! This attendant and slave of the Qur'an and Hadith will not give you the order to give up a compulsory act, nor will he give you an order to give up the practice and habit of praying the pre-dawn prayer, because doing so would be against the words of our beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, who has said, 'O slave of Allah Ta'ala! Do not be like the person who used to stand for prayer in the night and then gave it up.' (A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah then quoted some Ahadith about Tahajjud Salaah) in which he states that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, 'Some of you think that Tahajjud is only completed if you wake up in the night and pray Salaah until the morning; this is not the case. Tahajjud means to wake after sleeping for some time and to perform Salaah.' Tibraani has narrated this on the authority of Hajaaj bin 'Umar Radiallahu Ta'ala 'Anhu with an authentic chain of narrators.

Imam Malik has quoted in his Muwatta and Abu Dawood in Nisaa'i that Mother of Believers Hazrat 'Aisha Siddiqua Radiallahu Ta'ala 'Anha narrates that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, 'Everyone who intends to perform the pre-dawn (Tahajjud) prayer, but then sleep overcomes him, Allah Ta'ala grants him the reward for performing the Salaah and the sleep is charity for him.'

A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah quotes a Hadith in relation to those who hear the Adhaan being called from the Mosque but do not go to the Mosque to join in the congregational prayers, which is narrated by Hazrat Mu'aadh bin Anas Radiallahu Ta'ala 'Anhu. In the hadith, the actions of the person who hears the call for the prayer and does not go to the Mosque have been called cruel, hypocrisy and infidelity. Tibraani has quoted that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "It is very pitiful, wretched and very unfortunate if a believer hears the call to prayer and does not come to the Mosque for prayer." Additionally, it states that if a person hears the call to prayer (Adhaan), but waits for the second call (Iqaamah) before entering the Mosque, then he is a sinner. In Mujtaba's Kitaabus Shahadah, it states that the testimony of a person who hears the Adhaan but remains in his house until the Iqaamah is said is not acceptable.

Therefore, the above narrations prove that those who hear the call to prayer (either the first or second), yet still do not come to the Mosque for prayers are described as wretched, cruel and hypocrites. Is the Iqaamah calling only to that congregation and saying join only this congregation? Is it allowed to join any congregation? Do the words "Come for Salaah" and "Come for Success" mean that come here if you desire or pray on your own if you want? Maybe the words "Salaah is starting" means that this Salaah has started and you should start your own Salaah somewhere else, may Allah Ta'ala Protect. This is not the case; rather, the call to prayer is calling towards that particular congregation, and staying absent from it results in one being called wretched, cruel and a hypocrite. It is therefore obvious and evident, that where the order is specifically given in the blessed Ahadith and traditions to attend the congregation, the same order would be given against one who does not attend then.

If one does not attend the congregations after knowing all of this, the wrath of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam is illustrated in the following incident:

Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam used to come out of his blessed home and come into the Mosque to lead Salaah. One day, when he came to lead 'Isha Salaah he saw that there were many people missing, and not as many people as normal were present for the congregational prayer. The signs of anger and wrath were visible on the blessed face of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam and he said, "I swear by Allah that I want to order the Mu'azzin to say the Iqaamah, and then tell someone else to lead the prayer. Then I want to take lit torches (of fire) and burn down the houses of those people who heard the call to prayer but did not leave their homes to come to the Mosque."

After this, A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah presented a narration from Bukhari Shareef in which Hazrat Abu Hurairah Radiallahu Ta'ala 'Anhu narrates that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "There are no Salaah's which are heavier (more difficult to pray) on the hypocrites than Fajr and 'Isha prayers. If they were to realise the reward and blessings of them, they would come crawling on their hands and knees to pray them. I want to order the Mu'azzin to say the Iqaamah, and then tell someone else to lead the prayer. Then I want to take lit torches (of fire) and throw them on those people who heard the call to prayer but did not leave their homes

to come to the Mosque."

A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah goes on to say that this Hadith proves beyond a doubt that not entering the Mosque until the second call (Iqaamah) is made is such a despicable sin that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam expressed a desire to burn down the houses of and destroy the people who commit this act. Scholars state that the fact that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said that he would order to call the Iqaamah first and then order someone else to lead the prayer is so that the non-attendance of those who did not come would be explicitly proven.

A'ala Hazrat Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah did not only stress the importance of attending the Mosque regularly and praying with the congregation with his tongue and in his writings, rather, he acted upon this himself very strictly and punctually. If we study his life and his actions, a shining example of the lives of the blessed Companions is presented before us, and we will see and feel the light of guidance that he obtained from the teachings of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam glowing brightly in him. In his latter years, he was extremely busy in his religious work, lots of issues were before him, he was sick, his strength was leaving him, he was extremely weak and it was very difficult for him to walk even a short distance; yet even in this state of illnesses and difficulties, his steadfastness and dedication was such that he was prepared to withstand all these problems and struggles and walk towards the Pleasure of his Lord, and he says:

I accept I am weak but O cruel heart  
Do not get tired on the path to His Pleasure

The path to His Pleasure is the path to the Mosque, where his true obedience to Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam was taking him. Let us read a little about that true obedience in the words of A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah himself:

"It has been four months less five days that my eyes have been afflicted with various ailments and infections, and infirmity is now permanent. My eyes remain moist almost all of the time. I was not able to read or write anything at first for months, and now the state is that if I look down at something for more than a few minutes my eyes get very heavy, and weakness sets in. For five months, all the questions / issues that needed responding to have been answered verbally and all articles that are needed are given verbally and others write them down. On the evening of 12th Rabi ul Awwal, I was afflicted with an illness that I have never had before, and may Allah Ta'ala not afflict anyone with this illness. My bowels did not move for 75 hours and neither was I able to pass water. Allah Ta'ala's blessings forever rain down on us, and I consider weakness and feebleness as a favour from the Lord. It is the ninth day that I have had a fever and the weakness and frailty has got worse. My experience has been that everyday, when I walk to the Mosque and walk back, the fever gets worse. For some days now, I have been forced to sit on a chair and four people carry me to the Mosque and bring me back home. I go at Zuhr time and come back after Maghrib Salaah. I request you to supplicate for me."

We see from his letter how keen and enthusiastic A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah was to follow in the Sunnah of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam. He was a true devotee and was always in a frenzied state in his zest to follow the blessed Sunnahs of our Beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam. He was weak and his body did not possess any strength, but he was restless to join in the congregational prayers because he knew that Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam did not accept staying away from the congregation under any circumstances. Therefore, he would sit on a chair and use the help of others and be carried to the Mosque, even though his state was that coming and going was very troubling and painful for him. All this was done with keenness and enthusiasm because the Companions of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam would use the help and support of two men to help them get to the Mosque, and even Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam himself came to the Mosque like this. Without a doubt, this act of A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah was a desire to copy the actions of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam and his blessed Companions. However, this did not emulate the Sunnah of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, which was to use the support of two people and walk to the Mosque. Therefore, on occasions, A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah would use the support of two men and would walk to the Mosque so that he could act upon that blessed action of his beloved. There is much more pleasure and contentment that a devotee and lover feels in copying exactly the actions of his beloved, as opposed to simply acting upon the teachings.

A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah passed away on 25th Safar 1340 A.H. He was ill for months before that and was so ill that he did not have the strength to get up and move around. In this instance, Islamic law allows a person to perform his Salaah at home, A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah was so punctual in performing his prayers with the congregation that he would use the support of four men and be carried on a chair to the Mosque. As long as it was humanly possible for him to do so, he attended the Mosque for Salaah in this manner.

Allahu Akbar! What enthusiasm he had for performing his prayers with the congregation. Undoubtedly, in order to invite the Mercy of Allah Ta'ala and the graces of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam and make them rain down on us, it is absolutely necessary for us to obey the orders and commands of Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam.



Hazrat Allama Muhammad Ahmed A'azmi Misbahi states that, "I have written in the commentary of 'Jumalun Noor Fee Nahyin Nisaa 'An Ziyaaratil Qaboor' on the authority of my respected teacher, Huzoor Hafiz e Millat Maulana Shah 'Abdul 'Aziz Muradabaadi 'Alaihir Rahmah (1312-1394 A.H.):

'One time, there was no one available to take A'ala Hazrat Imam Ahmed Raza Khan 'Alaihir Rahmah to the Mosque. The time for the congregation arrived and he was very worried and anxious. Somehow, he dragged himself on his own to the Mosque and performed his Salaah with the congregation. In this day and age of missing and not attending the congregational prayers in spite of good health and wellness, this incident is a great example and a lesson for us all."

If Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah wanted, he could have prayed his Salaah at home in a congregation with his students. However, he was more concerned with the pleasure of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam and ignored his own troubles and pains and proceeded to the Mosque. The reason for this is that love and devotion requires one to make sacrifices, to give evidence and proof of that love, and desires to please the beloved at all times. O Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah, may we be sacrificed on your status and exalted stature; the evidence and testimony of love and devotion to Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam that you provided leaves no room for debate or doubt. If we start to spend our lives according to the example and teachings that were provided by A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah, then I have no doubt that all those with false beliefs will be defeated and the status of the Ahle Sunnah will be elevated, Insha Allah.

May Allah Ta'ala enable us all to emulate the actions of A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah and act upon the teachings that he has provided with his actions and his deeds, Aameen.

## Imam Ahmed Raza and Fundamentals of Salaah

---

Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah & the Fundamentals of Salaah

Allah Ta'ala says, "Undoubtedly, the prayer forbids one from indecency and evil things."

Allah Ta'ala has mentioned the benefits of Salaah explicitly in the Holy Qur'an: they keep one away from indecency and evil things. However, nowadays we see many people who perform Salaah yet also lie, breach trust, break promises, utter profanities and useless words, and spend their time listening to music and singing songs. What is missing in the people who perform Salaah that is depriving them of obtaining the full benefits of Salaah? Let us look for those shortcomings in the blessed words of our beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam.

"The Salaah is deficient in which the performer of Salaah does not keep his back straight whilst bowing and prostrating."

One time, Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam asked the people what they thought of drunks, adulterers and thieves. The people answered, "Allah Ta'ala and Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam know best." Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam said, "These are all obviously great sins and are the cause of punishment, and the worst kind of stealing is stealing from Salaah." People asked, "Yaa Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, how does one steal from Salaah?" The Beloved of Allah Ta'ala replied, "Not bowing and prostrating correctly."

The consequences for those who perform Salaah like this has been mentioned by Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, who said, "Allah Ta'ala does not Look (as befits His Glorious Status) towards the Salaah of one who does not straighten his back between bowing and prostrating."

Hazrat Huzaifa Radiallahu Ta'ala 'Anhu saw a person performing Salaah but was not bowing and prostrating correctly. When he had finished his Salaah, Hazrat Huzaifa Radiallahu Ta'ala 'Anhu said to him, "You have not prayed Salaah, and if you die in this state, your death will not be on the faith that Allah Ta'ala granted and was preached by Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam."

At one stage, Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam states, "The person who performs ablution thoroughly for Salaah, prays the Salaah's on time, and bows and prostrates correctly, Allah Ta'ala has promised that He will forgive that person. But there is no

promise from Allah Ta'ala for the person who does not do this; if He wishes, He will forgive him or He will embroil him in punishment."

We realise which things are necessary for Salaah to be performed correctly and for it to be accepted by Allah Ta'ala. Until these things are performed correctly, we will not profit from or gain any benefit from the Salaah.

Let us now look at and study how careful Imam Ahmed Raza Khan 'Alaihir Rahmah was in safeguarding and ensuring that each act of Salaah was performed perfectly and correctly.

A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah was so careful in observing and performing each part of Salaah meticulously and was so knowledgeable in the rules and regulations of each gesture that not only the general public, but most Scholars are not able to understand or comprehend them totally. Hazrat Maulana Shah Khwaja Muhammad Hussain Chishti Nizami Meerthi Ajmeri states:

'I sat in seclusion (I'tekaaf) in A'ala Hazrat's Mosque on the 20th of Ramadhan, and A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah also was in seclusion. One day, before the seclusion began, A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah came to the Mosque for 'Asr Salaah, led the Salaah and then left. I went and sat in my designated place in the Mosque. After a short while a person asked me, 'Do you still have to pray your Salaah?' I replied, 'I have prayed my Salaah behind A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah.' He said, 'But he (A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah) is praying right now.' I did not believe it because I thought that if the Salaah was invalidated for some reason, his memory is not such that he would have forgotten to tell me or discussed it with me. The person said, 'Look over there, see, he is praying his Salaah.' I got up and looked and saw that he was in fact performing Salaah. I was shocked and stepped forward and stood there and waited. After he had completed his Salaah, I said, 'Sir I have not understood your actions.' A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah replied, 'After Tashahud in the final sitting position ('Qaida e Akhirah'), because of my breathing my belt broke (This was a specific kind of belt that was worn over the kurta). Due to the fact that Salaah is considered complete after reciting Tashahud, I went home, put on another belt, repeated my Salaah, and did not say anything to you or any of the other people who had prayed their Salaah behind me because the Salaah was not affected.'

This is such an incident that most people do not understand it. One pious person heard about this incident from me and was amazed at the magnificence and grandeur of it, and his name was Shaikh Hazrat Khwaja Shah Peer 'Abdul Hameed Baghdadi. He came to Baroda and, one day, he led the Maghrib Salaah in the Jaamia Mosque there. I had never before seen the effect that his recitation of the Qur'an had; it was amazing. I enquired afterwards as to who this pious person was and went to meet him at the place where he was staying. The following incident about his miracle of the Qur'an is worth mentioning. He said to me, 'One time, I went to a place in Iran where there is a very old temple of the fire worshippers. The people there put my name forward to have a debate with the fire worshippers. I suggested that we should ask the one whom they worship (the fire) as to who it supports. The people thought that I was making a threat and therefore the people announced my name and one of the worshippers' names and publicised a time and date on which a debate would take place between the two of us. On the appointed day, a great crowd gathered at the temple. I asked the fire worshipper to walk with me inside the temple and into the fire. He started to panic and hesitated and would not move forward. I thought that if I also stopped then people would think that I was only making idle threats and did not have the confidence to act upon my convictions. Therefore, I walked alone into the fire and stood in the fire for a full twenty minutes. After that, I came out and upon seeing me in perfect health, many fire worshippers accepted Islam and became Muslims. I told them that I stepped into the fire with the blessed Qur'an in my hand and said to myself that if this Holy Qur'an can save us from the fire of Hell, then it can surely protect us from a minor thing like the fire of this world.'

Respected readers! The status and strength of this Baghdadi Shah Saheb can be recognised from the aforementioned incident. I mentioned A'ala Hazrat 'Alaihir Rahmah and the incident that occurred with me during 'Asr Salaah to this pious person. The next day, I met him and he said, 'I spent all of last night crying and saying O Allah! I am amazed that there are such glorious accepted slaves of Yours who safeguard their Salaah and pray it with at much care as this.'"

Subhan Allah! We can not find anyone in the recent past who prayed Salaah with as much care and attention to detail, or safeguarded it as much as A'ala Hazrat Imam Ahmed Raza Khan 'Alaihir Rahmah. It is a fact that if someone has true devotion and love, then they do not worry about their own problems or pains; rather, they are always focused on the pleasure of the beloved. Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah was a true lover and devotee of Rasool Allah Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam, and that is why he knew that Salaah gives coolness to the blessed eyes of his beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wasallam. Therefore, Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah would withstand all troubles and pains but would be punctual in performing his Salaah. May Allah Ta'ala give us the guidance us to walk in the footsteps of Imam Ahmed Raza 'Alaihir Rahmah, Aameen.

His shadow is a splendid light; his life is a lamp...  
Whatever place he passed, it became illuminated.