

Racing to Prayer

First Khutbah

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ , نَحْمَدُهُ , وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ , وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا , مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ , وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ , وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

Verily, all praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we seek His assistance and we ask for His forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Him from the evils of our selves. Whoever Allah guides, none can misguide. Whoever He misguides, none can guide. And I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad is His servant and messenger.

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ) [آل

عمران:102]

Al Imran(3) 102 : O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam.

Oh Believers:

Worshipping Allah is the aim loved by Allah Almighty. Allah the Exalted created creation for that purpose. And Allah the Most High sent messengers and revealed Books to clarify that. And He praised those establishing it. Allah Almighty said:

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ-الزمر: 9

Az Zumar (39) 9: Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]?

And He warned those turning arrogantly away:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ - غافر: 60

Ghafir (40) 60: **Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.**

Worship is solace with Allah and rejoicing in calling upon Allah Almighty. It is bliss that is not cut off, it is an endless joy. So whoever wants happiness, let them adhere to worshipping. For worshipping is more important to the hearts than food and water is to the bodies.

Few people realize the great meanings within these duties and acts of worship and their impacts on rectifying hearts, straightening out affairs and bringing joy to lives. For these duties are the paradise of this worldly life that lead to the paradise of the hereafter. And it is incumbent upon people to be grateful to Allah for having ordained and obligated these duties.

And to be grateful for the guidance in knowing them and success in performing them. For how many ignorant there are who do not know about them, and how many denied there are who fall short in offering them, and how many arrogant there are who turn away from them?

Indeed the successful are the people of guidance and consciousness of Allah. The ones whose hearts are attached to the Masjids, who go early to the prayers, who walk in the darkness to attend the prayers, who respond to the caller to success: come to the prayer, come to the success. Those who race for the first row and who observe the start of the prayer with the Imam.

Going early to prayer and waiting and occupying oneself with remembrance and recitation of the Quran before the prayer is one of the greatest bearers of good and happiness, and relievers of distress and worries. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا فِي التَّهَجِيرِ لَأَسْتَبَقُوا إِلَيْهِ

If they knew what (virtue) there is in coming early (for the prayer), they would compete in doing so. [Sunan an-Nasa'i 671, Grade: Sahih]

Imam Nawawi, may Allah have mercy on him, commented that this applies to coming early to any of the prayers.

And if the love of prayer solidifies in the heart, one will not find a sweeter taste than it.

And the scholars said that the reason for presence of the heart for something is having concern about it. So whenever a matter concerns you, your heart is present for that matter. So whoever directs their attention and concern to prayer, their heart will be present in it. And then their heart will be filled with submission that will overflow to their limbs with humility, solace and tranquility, feeling the Grandeur of the One before Whom they stand. And they know what they are saying, they pray and their hearts are tranquil with the remembrance of their Lord.

And Ibn al-Jawzi, may Allah have mercy on him, said the hardship of duties are eased for whoever glances at the brilliance of the reward.

Going early to prayer aids in presence of the heart, humility and turning to Allah in the best fashion. And it helps in making the ordained supplications and remembrances of the morning and evening. And it provides assistance in solitude with Allah and calling upon Him. And it provides assistance in responding quickly to the signs and favors of Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

الدُّعَاءُ لَا يُرَدُّ بَيْنَ الْأَذَانِ وَالْإِقَامَةِ

The supplication made between the Adhan and the Iqamah is not rejected. [Sunan Abi Dawud 521, Grade: Sahih (Albani)]

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

مَنْ صَلَّى قَبْلَ الظُّهْرِ أَرْبَعًا وَبَعْدَهَا أَرْبَعًا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّارِ - رواه أهل السنن

Whoever prays four units of prayer before the Dhuhr and four afterwards, Allah will forbid him to the Fire. [Sunan Ibn Majah 1160, Jami` at-Tirmidhi 427, Grade: Sahih]

And in another hadith:

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ امْرَأً صَلَّى قَبْلَ الْعَصْرِ أَرْبَعًا - رواه أبو داود، والترمذي وحسنه

May Allah show mercy to one who prays four units of prayer before the asr (afternoon) prayer. [Jami` at-Tirmidhi 430, Sunan Abi Dawud 1271, Grade Hasan]

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى الصَّفِّ الْمُقَدَّمِ، وَفِي لَفْظٍ: عَلَى الصَّفِّ الْأَوَّلِ - رواه النسائي وابن ماجه، وصححه الألباني

Indeed, Allah and the angels send blessings upon the first rows. And in a narration upon the first row. [Sunan an-Nasa'i 646, Sunan Ibn Majah 999, Grade: Hasan]

And Imam Ahmad narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ :

كَانَ يَسْتَغْفِرُ لِلصَّفِّ الْمُقَدَّمِ، ثَلَاثًا، وَلِلثَّانِي، مَرَّةً

Used to ask for forgiveness for the first row three times and for the second row twice. [Ibn Majah 996, Jami At Tirmithi 224, Grade: Sahih]

The one waiting for the prayer remains in the state of prayer as long as they are awaiting prayer. In the Hadith:

لَا يَزَالُ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي صَلَاةٍ مَا دَامَتِ الصَّلَاةُ تَحْبِسُهُ، لَا يَمْنَعُهُ أَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا الصَّلَاةُ

One of you remains in the state of prayer so long as the prayer detains him. Nothing prevents him from returning to his family other than prayer. [Bukhari 659, Muslim 649]

The angels of the Most Merciful request mercy and forgiveness for the one waiting for prayer as long as they do not invalidate their ablution. In the hadith:

الْمَلَائِكَةُ تُصَلِّي عَلَى أَحَدِكُمْ مَا دَامَ فِي مُصَلَاةٍ مَا لَمْ يُحْدِثِ اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ، اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْهُ

The angels ask for Allah's blessing and forgiveness for anyone of you as long as they are in their place of prayer and do not invalidate their ablution (saying) O Allah! Forgive him and be Merciful to him. [Bukhari 659, Muslim 649h]

Waiting for prayer is a reason for expiating sins and raising ranks. The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَلَا أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِهِ الْخَطِيئَاتِ وَيَرْفَعُ بِهِ الدَّرَجَاتِ . قَالُوا بَلَىٰ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ . قَالَ " إِسْبَاغُ الوُضوءِ عَلَى الْمَكَارِهِ وَكَثْرَةُ الخُطَا إِلَى الْمَسَاجِدِ وَانْتِظَارُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ فَذَلِكُمْ الرِّبَاطُ

Shall I tell you that for which Allah will expiate your sins, and raise your ranks? They said, Of course Messenger of Allah! He said: thorough ablution despite hardship, and taking many steps to the Masjeds, and waiting for a prayer after another prayer, for that is (like) guarding the frontier. [Muslim 251a]

As for going early to the Friday Prayer, indeed the Angels are at the doors of the Masjids on Friday recording those who come first and then those coming afterwards. They do so until when the Imam sits, then they fold the scrolls and sit and listen to the remembrance.

Imam Nawawi said that in it is urging to go early to Friday Prayer and that people's virtue in it and other matters is according to their deeds.

So a big congratulations to those whom the angels record them as early comers in their scrolls. And what a pity it is for those whom the angels fold their scrolls and are among those who missed out.

As far as the words and actions of the righteous predecessors in competing, racing and being the first, one does not cease to be amazed.

Sa'eed bin Zayd said, for forty years the caller to prayer did not call for Dhuhr prayer except that I was in the Masjid, except when I was ill or traveling.

And Sa'eed bin Musayeb said, for fifty years, I did not miss the takbir (start of prayer) and the adhan (call to prayer), and I did not look at the back of a man in prayer for fifty years (he always prayed in the front row).

And Ibn Sa'eed said, for thirty years, I did not hear the Adhan while I was with my family (he was in the Masjid).

And Wakī' bin Al Jarrāh said, Al 'Amash was almost 70 years old and he did not miss the first takbir of prayer.

Khutbah.info

And Ibn samā'ah said, for forty years, I did not miss the first takbir of prayer except the day that my mother passed.

And it was said about Ibrahim bin Maymoon, who was one of the trustworthy scholars of hadith, whose profession was goldsmithing, if he raised the anvil and heard the call to prayer, he would not return it down (he would let go).

And Sufyan bin 'Oaynah said in urging to go early for prayer before the call, do not be like the servant of evil who does not come until he is invited, go to the prayer before the call.

And reflect upon the instruction of Muadh bin Jabel, may Allah be pleased with him, to his son, oh son, when you pray, pray the prayer of one bidding farewell. Do not think that you will ever return.

The prayer of one bidding farewell will see its great effects in their hearing, sight, movements and stillness. Rather it is the hastened paradise of bliss.

And this is the pursuit of the great that requires great determination and hearts that are alive, putting the obedience of their creator over their desires and this worldly life. May Allah the Most Merciful, Especially Merciful grant us this great favor and blessing.

Allah Almighty said:

فِي بُيُوتِ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ * رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ * لِيَجْزِيََهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ-النور: 36- 38

An Noor (24) 36-38: (36) [Such niches are] in houses [i.e., mosques] which Allāh has ordered to be raised and that His name be mentioned [i.e., praised] therein; exalting Him within them in the morning and the evenings (37) [Are] men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the remembrance of Allāh and performance of prayer and giving of zakāh. They fear a Day in which the hearts and eyes will [fearfully] turn about - (38) That Allāh may reward them [according to] the best of

what they did and increase them from His bounty. And Allāh gives provision to whom He wills without account [i.e., limit].

أَقُولُ مَا تَسْمَعُونَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

I say what you have heard and I seek forgiveness from Allah for me and you from every sin. So seek forgives from Him, Verily He is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

All praise is to Allah, and peace and blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, and I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad is His slave and messenger.

Oh people:

The five daily prayers will be light, proof and salvation on the Day of Resurrection for those safeguarding them. And for those not safeguarding them, they will not be light, and will not be proof and will not be salvation. And on the Day of Resurrection, those people will be with Pharoah, Qaroon, Hamaan and Ubay bin Khalaf (the leader of the hypocrites). So be conscious of Allah and hasten and establish the prayers turning to your Lord with humility and submission. As Al Hassan Al Başry said, if you stand for prayer, stand with focus as your Lord commanded, and beware of inattentiveness...Allah looks at you while you are looking at other than Him.

Oh Allah help us in remembering You, expressing gratitude to You and worshipping You in the best fashion. And make us among your close servants and among those foremost in faith and performing righteous deeds. Indeed Allah is All Hearing Answering.

هَذَا وَصَلُّوا وَسَلِّمُوا عَلَى نَبِيِّكُمْ كَمَا أَمَرَكُمْ بِذَلِكَ رَبُّكُمْ , فَقَالَ

I conclude with this and send prayers of blessings and peace upon your Prophet as your Lord commanded:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Al Ahzaab (33) 56: Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنَا فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ وَعَافِنَا فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ وَتَوَلَّنَا فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيمَا
أَعْطَيْتَ وَقِنَا شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ إِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ وَإِنَّهُ لَا يَذُلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ
تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ

O Allah, guide us with those whom You have guided, grant us well-being among those You have granted well-being, be an ally to us along with those whom You are an ally to, and bless what You have bestowed upon us, and save us from the evil of what You have decreed. For verily You decree and none can decree over You. He whom You support can never be humiliated. Glory is to You, our Lord, You are Blessed and Exalted.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ نَعْلَمْ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ
مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ نَعْلَمْ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا
سَأَلَكَ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَاذَ بِهِ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ

الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَنَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ كُلَّ قَضَاءٍ قَضَيْتَهُ لَنَا خَيْرًا

O Allah, We ask You for all that is good, in this world and in the Hereafter, what we know and what we do not know. O Allah, we seek refuge with You from all evil, in this world and in the Hereafter, what we know and what we do not know. O Allah, we ask You for the good that Your servant and Prophet has asked You for, and we seek refuge with You from the evil from which Your servant and Prophet sought refuge. O Allah, we ask You for Paradise and for that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed, and we seek refuge in You from Hell and from that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed. And we ask You to make every decree that You decree concerning us good.

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَيَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ، يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Servants of Allah. Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.

أذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ يَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا يَزِدْكُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا يُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَخْرَجًا ، وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ

Remember Allah, the Great - He will remember you. Thank Him for His favors - He will increase you therein. And seek forgiveness from Him - He will forgive you. And be conscious of Him - He will provide you a way out of difficult matters. And, establish the prayer.

