

CLASS 1

SUNNAH PRAYERS

Their Virtues

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

{And I (Allâh) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).} (51:56)

The purpose of our creation is to Worship Allah – this is clear, but if we ponder about the obligatory deeds that we need to do, it is just the five obligatory prayers that are to be done daily, apart from that we have no other strict obligations in our daily lives – so how is it that, if we were created to worship our Lord, we can simply get away with the *Salah*? Every *fardh* prayer combined does not usually exceed more than an hour of our day; even if one is to include fasting, giving *zakah*, or doing Hajj, none of those obligations are required to be fulfilled except for once a year or once in a lifetime.

If we break it down, our goal is to Worship Allah, so that we can attain His pleasure and be saved from the Hell fire and by His Mercy be granted Paradise.

His Pleasure

Allah says in Hadith Qudsi: “*And My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (voluntary deeds) until I love him, so I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My Protection, I will protect him.*” [Bukhari]

Saving oneself from Hell fire by getting Sins forgiven

Every time you make Ruku’ or Sujud, Your Sins Fall Away, The Prophet ﷺ said, “*When the worshipper stands up in prayer, all his sins are brought and placed upon his head and shoulders, so whenever he bows and prostrates, they fall from him.*” [Bahyaqi, Tabaraani, authenticated by Albani]

He ﷺ also said, “*Make a lot of sajdah (i.e. make a lot of prayer) because for every time you make a prostration to Allâh, your rank is raised and your sin is forgiven.*” [Muslim]

Subhan Allah, in addition to the hadith mentioned above (under saving from hell fire), the Prophet ﷺ specifically singled out the greatest part of prayer, the prostration, as a means by which our sins are forgiven.

And this Hadeeth is amazing where the Prophet ﷺ said, “*Whoever prays four before Dhuhr and four after it, Allah makes him prohibited for the fire.*” (Abu Dawud, At-Tirmithi, An-Nisa’i, Ibn Majah. Classed as Sahih by Albani).

Paradise

Rabee'ah ibn Ka'b al-Aslami (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: I used to stay overnight with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and bring him water for wudoo' and whatever he needed. He صلى الله عليه وسلم said to me: *"Ask."* I said: I ask to be with you in Paradise. He صلى الله عليه وسلم said: *"Is there anything else?"* I said: That is all. He صلى الله عليه وسلم said: *"Help me to do that for you by prostrating a great deal."* (Sahih Muslim).

The more we adhere to regularly offering the obligatory prayers on time, and the more we do naafil (supererogatory) prayers by night and day, the greater our chances of being with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and we will be with him in Paradise for longer. Whoever offers whatever he can of voluntary and naafil prayers will attain the honour of accompanying the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, in sha Allah, to a degree commensurate with that. Accompanying the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is of varying degrees. Some of the people will accompany him constantly and will be with him all the time in Paradise; some of the people will have the joy of meeting him or seeing him, according to the level of their righteous deeds.

This is what we understand from the hadith that was proven from Mi'daan ibn Abi Talhah, who said: I met Thawbaan, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and said: Tell me of a deed that I may do, by which Allah may admit me to Paradise – or he said: Tell me of the most beloved of deeds to Allah. He remained silent. I asked him (again) and he remained silent. I asked him a third time and he said: I asked the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم about that and he صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"You should prostrate to Allah a great deal, for you will not perform one prostration to Allah but Allah will raise you one degree in status thereby and erase one sin for you." (Sahih Muslim).

Look at how the raising of degrees is commensurate with offering more prayers before Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

Do not belittle the optional prayers

Abou Hurairah said: "Allaah's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم passed by a grave in which a person had been newly buried, and he صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Two light rak`ahs, which you would regard as being something slight, and which you pray as something extra; if he- and he pointed to his grave- were able to add them to his deeds it would be more beloved to him than (having) everything in your world."

(Classed as Sahih by Albani)

Difference between Sunnah & Nafil prayers

Sunnah mu'akkadah (confirmed Sunnah or something the Prophet ﷺ did regularly), naafil (supererogatory), voluntary and mandoob (recommended) all share a similar meaning; they are acts of worship that are enjoined and encouraged in Islam, without being obligatory.

Some of the scholars think that these words are similar in meaning, whilst others (Malikis) differentiate between them. In their view "Sunnah" refers to something that the Prophet ﷺ did persistently; naafil refers to things that he did sometimes and not at other times.

Ad-Dasooqi al-Maaliki said: Naafil refers in linguistic terms to something extra or additional; in Islamic terminology it refers to that which the Prophet ﷺ did but did not do persistently, i.e., sometimes he did not do it and sometimes he did do it... With regard to "Sunnah", in linguistic terms it refers to a way or path; in Islamic terminology it refers to that which the Prophet ﷺ did openly when he was among a group of people, and he persisted in doing it, but there is no proof to indicate that it is obligatory. Sunnahs that are described as mu'akkadah (confirmed) are those that bring a great deal of reward, such as Witr. End quote from Haashiyat ad-Dasooqi, 1/312

Scholars from Shaafa'i & Hanbali say it is the same and there is no difference.

The Hanafis differentiate between them and they regard the one who does not offer Sunnah mu'akkadah prayers (confirmed Sunnah, which the Prophet ﷺ did regularly) as having sinned, but they say that his sin is less serious than that of the one who fails to do obligatory actions.

Rewards associated with Sunnah (optional) prayers

- Closeness to Allah
- Palace in Jannah
- Protection from Hell fire
- Charity for every joint of the body
- Guidance (through Istikhaara)
- Reward of a Hajj
- Raising of Degrees
- Sins are forgiven
- Keeps us away from Bidah

We will InShaAllah study about all these with references in the upcoming classes.

HOW MUCH OF OUR PRAYER IS ACCEPTED?

The Prophet ﷺ said: “ *A person may offer a prayer and nothing of it is recorded for him except one tenth of it, one ninth of it, one eighth of it, one seventh of it, one sixth of it, one fifth of it, one quarter of it, one third of it, or half of it.*” (Narrated by Ahmad, Classed as Hasan)

The scholars say that this is based on how mindful we are in our prayer and how we fight against the whispers of Shaytaan.

LEVELS OF PRAYER

Ibn-Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah (rahimahullaah) said: And mankind, with regard to their performance of prayer are in five levels:

Level 5: The level of the one who is negligent and wrongs his soul: He is the one who falls short in performing wudhoo (ablution) properly, performing the prayer upon its time and within its specified limits, and in fulfilling its essential pillars.

Level 4: The one who guards his prayers upon their proper times and within their specified limits, fulfills their essential pillars and performs his wudhoo with care. However, his striving (in achieving the above) is wasted due to whispering in his prayer so he is taken away by thoughts and ideas.

Level 3: The one who guards his prayers within the specified limits, fulfills their essential pillars and strives with himself to repel the whispering, thoughts and ideas. He is busy struggling against his enemy (Shaytaan) so that he does not steal from the prayer. On account of this he is engaged in (both) prayer and jihaad (against his nafs).

Level 2: The one who stands for the prayer, completes and perfects its due rights, its essential pillars, performs it within its specified limits and his heart becomes engrossed in safeguarding its rights and specified limits, so that nothing is wasted from it. His whole concern is directed towards its establishment, its completion and its perfection, as it should be. His heart is immersed in the prayer and in enslavement to his Lord the Exalted.

Level 1: The one who stands for the prayer like the one mentioned above. However, on top of this, he has taken and placed his heart in front of his Lord Azzawajall, looking towards Him with his heart with anticipation, (his heart) filled with His love and His might, as if he sees and witnesses Allaah. The whisperings, thoughts and ideas have vanished and the coverings which are between him and his Lord are raised. What is between this person and others with respect to the prayer, is superior and greater than what is between the heavens and the earth. This person is busy with his Lord Azzawajall, delighted with Him.

The Level 5 type will be "PUNISHED",

The Level 4 type will be "HELD TO ACCOUNT",

The Level 3 type will have his sins and shortcomings "EXPIATED",

The Level 2 type will be REWARDED

and

The Level 1 i.e. The Top Level will be CLOSE TO HIS LORD, because he will receive the portion of the one who makes his prayer the delight and pleasure of his eye. Whoever makes his prayer, the delight and pleasure of his eye, will have the nearness to his Lord Azzawajall made the delight and pleasure of his eye in the hereafter. He will also be made a pleasure to the eye in this world since whoever makes Allaah the pleasure of his eye in this world, every other eye will become delighted and pleased with him. (Source: Al-Waabil us-Sayyib)

Now think about this, what level do you think YOU ARE IN?

Are you SURE?

Could be better, right?

The "MINIMUM LEVEL" we SHOULD be on is "LEVEL 3" but are we sure we strive enough to stay focused in our Salah? Or do we just get carried away with the whispers of Shaytaan?

This is kinda scary.

A true fight to the finish.

HOW SUNNAH PRAYERS CAN HELP WITH YOUR LEVELS?

Prophet ﷺ said:

The first of his deeds for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayer.

If it is good, then he will have succeeded and prospered, but if it is lacking, then he will have lost and failed. If anything is lacking from his obligatory prayer,

Allah, will say:

Look and see, does My slave have any voluntary prayers, which could make up for what is lacking from his obligatory prayer?

Then all of his deeds will be dealt with in a similar manner.

(at-Tirmidhi, classed as Sahih)