**Friday Khutbah (Sermons) : Salaah**

My Dear Brothers in Islam, when the Beloved Prophet of Allah Ibrahim ‘Alayhis Salaam was building the Kaaba, the very first house of worship built on this earth, the very first house that would become the holiest place on this earth, He made a Du’a, in the middle of the desert, ONLY him and his son Ismail ‘Alayhis Salaam building the Kaaba brick-by-brick understanding that this house that they are building shall become the sanctuary, a holy place for all Believers, building the house of Allah, What Du’a did they make? Imagine their feeling, imagine what they were undergoing carrying out this task that Allah had commanded them to do.

What was this Du’a? It is recorded in the Quran and one phrase in this Du’a is so important that every single Muslim needs to know it and learn about it. While they are building the Kaaba, him and his son Ismail, he says:

Ibrahim ‘Alayhis Salaam says:

**“O my Rabb make ME amongst those who establish the Salaah, me and my children, make us amongst those who establish the Salaah .”** (Surah Ibrahim 14:40)

While he is building the Kaaba that shall become the Qiblah for the Salaah, that shall become the direction that EVERY believer faces, when they pray, Ibrahim ‘Alayhis Salaam doesn’t say make the people who pray amongst me but he says, “Make ME amongst the people who pray.” As if the people who pray are higher than him even though we know that he is the leader of the people, him and the Prophet Muhammad sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam. But showing us the status of the people who pray, he says “O Allah make ME amongst those who pray and also make my children”.

SO IMPORTANT is the concept of Salaah that while our Beloved Prophet Ibrahim ‘Alayhis Salaam is building the Kaaba he makes a Du’a and he says “O Allah MAKE ME And my Children.” Not just the Prophet Ibrahim ‘Alayhis Salaam, ALL the Prophets of Allah, ALL of them, we learn the importance of Salaah from their lives.

 The Prophet Musa ‘Alayhis Salaam, the Kaleemullah, the one whom  Allah ‘Azza Wa Jall spoke with directly, when the Prophet Musa ‘Alayhis Salaam is lost in the valley of Madyan, wandering him and his wife in the middle of the night, cold and dark. He sees a light in the mountain, he thinks it is a fire so he tells his wife, “Let me go to this fire and perhaps get a brand with which we can see the way and warm ourselves”. He climbs the mountain and Lo and Behold! It is not a fire of men but it is the LIGHT of Allah ‘Azza Wa Jall speaking with him directly.

Allah spoke with the Prophet Musa ‘Alayhis Salaam DIRECTLY and that is why he is called Kaleemullah. What do you think Allah said to Musa ‘Alayhis Salaam, the VERY FIRST commandment that he gave to the Prophet Musa, He said:

**“I AM ALLAH, THERE IS NO DEITY WORTHY OF WORSHIP EXCEPT ME SO WORSHIP ME AND ESTABLISH THE SALAAH TO REMEMBER ME.”** (Surah Ta ha 20:14)

The FIRST Meeting, the Rules are laid out. FA’BUDNI, WORSHIP ME and ESTABLISH THE Prayer.

The Prophet ‘Isa ‘Alayhis Salaam: his mother Maryam was known in Jerusalem to be from the most pious of women, her entire Dhikr, remembrance of Allah and her ‘Ibaadah was well known in the community. The most pious lady, she disappears for a few days, and then she comes forth back to the city carrying a baby in her hands.

O MARYAM WHAT HAVE YOU DONE! HOW COULD YOU DO THIS, YOU WERE NOT KNOWN FOR ANY EVIL, NOT EVEN YOUR PARENTS, HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?

But Allah ‘Azza Wa Jall has told her “You’re not allowed to speak, SAY NOTHING FOR 3 DAYS.” What can she do? She points to the child saying, “It’s not from me, it’s from Allah Subhaanahu Wa Ta’ala, I can’t say anything but it is NOT what you think it to be” and so Allah ‘Azza Wa Jall Wills that a Miracle occurs, the likes of which mankind has NEVER seen.

The new born infant, barely a day old, NEW BORN INFANT SPEAKS FROM THE ARMS OF Maryam ‘Alayhas Salaam. What do you think this baby says? What do you think the infant Prophet ‘Isa ‘Alayhis Salaam says?

**‘Isa ‘Alayhis Salaam says, “I am a servant of Allah, Allah has granted me the wisdom and given me the book, and He has made me a Prophet, and He has made me Blessed wheresoever I may be AND HE HAS COMMANDED THAT I PRAY AND GIVE CHARITY AS LONG AS I LIVE.”** (Surah Maryam 19:30-31)

He has COMMANDED THAT I PRAY AS LONG AS I LIVE. The baby ‘Isa is speaking to us as an infant. Allah ‘Azza Wa Jall inspired him, Allah has commanded me to establish the Salaah as long as I live.  How about the most Beloved Prophet of Allah, the Greatest human being to walk on the face of this earth – the  Prophet Muhammad Sal-Allaahu alayhi wa sallam, what do we learn from his Seerah, from his Blessed life about the importance of Prayer.

 The  Prophet Muhammad sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam’s  Seerah tells us about the importance of Prayer in MANY ways, suffices for this khutbah that I mention only one of them. Every single commandment of Islam, Allah ‘Azza Wa Jall revealed it to us in the Quran or through the Prophet’s statements. The Angel Jibril came down to the Prophet Sal-Allahu ‘Alayhi Wa Sallam with the commandment to recite the Quran, to fast the month of Ramadan, he told us to go for Hajj, he told us to avoid the major sins, ALL OF THIS IS IN THE QURAN.

So the Angel Jibril came down with verses and these verses are recited to this day. But there is one commandment, one pillar of Islam, that Allah Subhanhu Wa Ta’ala Wills that instead of sending down the angel to the Prophet sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam, He calls the Prophet up to Himself! So important was the command, so central was the message, that no angel came down but rather the Rasul was brought up. The Rasul sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam was brought up so that Allah subhaanahu wa ta’aala could speak to him directly, without any intermediaries, without an angel in the middle. On the blessed night of Israa wal mi’raaj.

When the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam went up the heavens with the angel Jibril, and then Jibril said, “I cannot go any further; you proceed forth alone ya Rasul Allah.”

Even the angel Jibril, the holiest of all angels said “I cannot go any further, I do not have permission, you proceed.”

And so the Beloved Prophet Sal-Allaahu alayhi wa sallam Proceeded forth to a place where NO CREATED Being had ever been before. No created being, not even the angel Jibril. And then Allah ‘azza wa jall spoke with him directly, like He had spoken directly to Musa ‘Alayhis Salam but in this case it was more Blessed because it was NOT in the Mount Sinai but above the heavens.

What do you think Allah ‘Azza Wa Jall said? What was the commandment, what was the message? We all know the story.

The Prophet sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam was told that he has to instruct his Ummah to PRAY 50 times a day. This was the message, this was the erason the messenger had to be brought up, why the Rasul had a private audience with Allah jalla-jalaaluhu:  To tell us the importance of the salaah, to Illustrate the centrality of this pillar of Islam. No Angel comes down, no verses are revealed, the Prophet is brought up and he is told directly, **“Tell your Ummah they need to pray 50 times a day.”**

The  Prophet Muhammad sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam, being the obedient slave that he is, takes the commandment and comes back down and meets the Prophet Musa ‘Alayhis Salaam in the 6th heaven. The Prophet Musa ‘Alayhis Salaam says,“What has Allah commanded you to say to your Ummah?” He said, “Allah has told me to tell my Ummah to pray 50 times a day.”

The Prophet Musa ‘Alayhis Salaam says “I have experienced mankind more than you have, I have more experience and wisdom at that stage, I have dealt with the Bani Isra’eel.”

The Prophet Muhammad Sal-Allaahu alayhi wa sallam was in the beginning of his message so Musa ‘Alayhis Salaam said “I have more experience in this matter, your Ummah will never be able to pray 50 times a day, go back up to Allah and ask Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala to lower it, to make it easier”  and so begins a series of ascents and descents, of ups and downs, where the Prophet Sal-Allahu alayhi wa sallam goes up and asks for some slight concession, it goes down from 50 to 45, and then to 40, and then to 35, all the way down to 5. Up and Down the Prophet Sal-Allaahu alayhi wa sallam is going until Allah ‘Azza Wa Jall says **“IT IS 5 AND YET IT IS 50.”** They shall pray 5 but they shall get the reward of 50.

And so the Prophet  Sal-Allahu alayhi wa sallam was told to tell his Ummah to pray 5 times a day.  Now the question arises, “Why did Allah tell the Prophet Sal-Allahu alayhi wa sallam to pray 50 times a day when He knew that it will be brought down to 5?” Of course Allah knew, it is in the knowledge of Allah. Why go through this 50, 45; what is the Wisdom? Some of the Scholars have said that the wisdom behind this is to illustrate for us that there is NO Other Purpose for our life other than the Salaah. It is as if Allah is saying, “I have only created you for the prayer.”

Imagine if we had to pray 50 times a day; that means every 15, 20 minutes we have to do wudhu, stand up and pray, and another 15 minutes later we’ll have to go and pray. Our whole life would be nothing but the prayer, exemplifying the verse in the Quran, showing it in action.

**“I HAVE ONLY CREATED MAN AND JINN TO WORSHIP ME.”** (Surah Al Dhariyat 51:56)

This is why you have been created, children of Adam! “I created you to worship Me.” And the best act of worship, and the most beloved act of worship, is the Salaah.

And so it is as if Allah is telling us that this is why you are here. Now I know you couldn’t do 50, so I’m letting you do 5, but your purpose of creation is the worship of Allah. Remember that and never forget it.

This is one of the wisdom of why Allah legislated 50 and then brought it down to 5.

O Muslims, the importance of the prayer cannot be overemphasized! So many are the aayaat, so many are the ahadith. Do you know, O Muslims, do you know that in the Quran, dozens of times, Allah commands us to pray? In fact, never does Allah tell us to pray only, never does He say “SALLU!”; the command, “Pray O Muslims!” No, not even once in the Quran does Allah say “sallu” (meaning pray); rather, He commands us to do something more: ***“Wa Aqeemus-Salaah,” “Alladheena Yuqeemunas-Salaah,” “Iqaamatis-Salaah”*** is what Allah commands us to do, NOT just “sallu” which means just to pray.

Iqaamatus-salaah is a higher concept than just sallu. ***“Iqaamatus-salaah”*** means that you pray it properly, at its time, fulfilling the conditions, understanding what you’re doing with khushoo’, contemplating the words of Allah, knowing the meanings of Allah’s words coming out of your mouth. Allah never commands us to just stand up and pray, He commands us to establish the prayer.  Perfect it, Do it Properly.

The importance of this Pillar of Islam, in the first year of the Prophet’s message, it was legislated before the prohibition of Alcohol, before the prohibition of interest, before Zina, before any other commandment was legislated. The Angel Jibril comes down and he instructs the Prophet Sal-Allahu alayhi wa sallam and teaches him how to prayer. In the first weeks of the Risalah, he is beginning to pray. This is how important the prayer is.

The prayer, O Muslims, the prayer! The Prophet Sal-Allahu alayhi wa sallam said that **“The covenant that I have (meaning, with the Muslims) is the Prayer.”**

**“Al-’Ahdulladhee baynana wa banyahumus-salaah, faman tarakha fa qad kafar.”  - “The treaty, the contract that I have with the Muslims is the Prayer; whoever leaves it has committed Kufr.”**

O Muslims when I write a treaty, when I write a contract with you and I put a condition in it and you go ahead and break that condition, what happens? The Contract Becomes Null and Void, the contract no longer holds, it dissolves. You have broken the treaty because I put a condition and you broke that condition. If you want the treaty, you have to do this, this, and this and then you come and disregard what I say, then there is no treaty, that contract between us is null and void.

So the Prophet Sal-Allahu alayhi wa sallam is saying, **“If you want to have a relationship with me, you want to call yourself a follower of my Ummah, a believer in me, al-’ahdulladhee baynana wa baynahumus-salaah, the condition in the treaty that I am putting upon them is salaah. Faman tarakha faqad kafar! Whoever leaves it, don’t call yourself Muslims anymore! He has committed kufr, left the fold of Islam.”**

That is why many of the scholars of the past said that the Muslim who does not pray, is not a Muslim. There is no different of opinion, my brothers – that if a Muslim drinks, steals, fornicates, takes drugs, that person is still a Muslim even though he is evil and bad, he is still a Muslim. But there is a difference of opinion that if a Muslim does not pray, then some ‘Ulamaa say he has left the fold of Islam based upon this hadith. There is no other act that if you leave it, scholars say that you might be a kaafir or a non-Muslim, but for the prayer. Yes, many ‘Ulamaa of the past said that because of these ahadith because of these verses, that the prayer is a hallmark, it is a sign of the Muslim.

O Muslims, Iblees, Shaytaan, was asked by Allah Subhanahu-Wa Ta’ala to make ONE Sajdah. And Shaytaan said “NO, I don’t have to do it.” He disobeyed this command and because of this arrogance, Shaytaan became who he became. Shaytaan believes in Allah, he believes in the Day of Judgement, he believes in Heaven and Hell, he has seen it with his own eyes, he even makes du’a to Allah – what did he say when he was kicked out of Jannah by Allah?  ***“QALA RABBI ANZHIRNI YAUMA-YUB’ATHOON.”***  Iblees  said, **“O My Rabb!” Shaytaan believes in Allah as a Rabb “O MY RABB! ALLOW ME TO LIVE UNTIL THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT,”**Iblees believes in the Day of Judgement, he had to make a Du’a to Allah.

IS IBLEES A MUSLIM!? OBVIOUSLY NOT! But why? Did he deny Allah? Did he reject the Prophet, did he say the Quran is fables and fabrication? Did he deny the day of judgement and heaven and hell? NO!!!! Iblees knows! He has seen it with his own eyes… but he refused to worship Allah. One sajdah!

So then what do you think O Muslims is the case of the one who hears Hayya ‘alas-salaah, hayya ‘alal falaah? He who knows he has to pray 17 Rak’aat minimum a day, over 30 Sajdah’s and he says “I don’t have time – my classes, my labs, my work, my this and my that…”

So what do you think is his status O Muslims? O Muslims do you not realize that when the people of Jannah ask the people of Jahannam,

**“What has caused you to enter Hell?”** (Surah Al Muddathir 74:42)

The 1st thing that the people of Hell-Fire say in reply is:

They said:

**“We did not used to pray.”**(Surah Al Muddathir 74:43)

That is the first excuse that they give!

Do you not realize that the Rasul Sal-Allahu ‘Alayhi Wa Sallam said that on the Day of Judgement the 1st thing that will be asked will be the prayer? If it is in order, then everything else will be in order; but if it is not in order, then everything else will be in disorder.

O Muslims, what is the excuse that YOU have for not praying? We make time for everything – for our studies, for playing games, for watching the television, for the internet, we have time for everything YET when it comes to the prayer, we do not have time.  We do not create time for the very PURPOSE of OUR CREATION.

Some people say, “Oh, I do such and such a sin, until I stop it I will not pray, I don’t want to be a hypocrite.” “I have seen such and such a person who lies, drinks, and he prays; I don’t want to be like him, I want to be a pure Muslim.” Realize, O Brothers , that the solution to leaving off these sins is by praying! Allah says in the Quran:

**“The Prayer Prohibits you from vulgarities, obscenities and other sins.”** (Surah Al ‘Ankabut 29:45)

So in order to LEAVE these evil acts, you need to establish a relationship with Allah. And you do this through ESTABLISHING THE Prayer.

O Muslims, the importance of the prayer cannot be overemphasized. It comes right after saying La-Ilaha Ill-Allah Muhammad-ur-RasulAllah, right after a person becomes a Muslim. Yet how many of us pray 5 times a day? How many of us adhere to this command of Allah? Don’t you know in the life of the Prophet Sal-Allahu ‘Alayhi Wa Sallam, even the Munafiqoon, the hypocrites prayed 5 times a day in the masjid. Allah said:

**“And when they stand up for Salaah, Prayer, they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allah but little.”** (Surah Al Nisa’ 4:142)

Even the hypocrites had to pray during the time of the Prophet (sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam)! O Muslims, time is short, our lives will come to an end, no one knows when! Therefore we need to make a change right here and now. Not tomorrow, there is never a tomorrow. A person will say, “I will change next Ramadan, by the end of this month, after Hajj.” But death comes to that person first before he made that change. Right here and now, let every Muslim decide “O Allah! Help me to establish the prayer!” Let him make the du’a of Ibrahim alayhis-salaam,

**“Rabbi ij’alnee muqeem as-salaati wa min thurriyyati” –** **“make me and my offspring amongst those who establish the prayer.”** (Surah Ibrahim 14:40)

And Allah subhaanahu wa ta’aala will make you of a surety, but only if you show determination, only if you show sincerity. Take the first step to Allah, show that you want to pray and Allah will open the doors and make it easy for you to pray.

From now O Muslims! No excuses! From salaatul ‘Asr, let every Muslim promise himself and herself, ”I will make a change in my life.” And let me ask you just one thing, try it for one week, one week! Establish the prayer on time, and if you are able to pray in the Masjid, even better! If you live far from the masjid, at least in your house establish the salaah. And then see that one week of your life how you felt, the inner joy and the peace and the feeling of accomplishment – I have done something and I feel good. That feeling that you have, it will make you addicted to the Salaah. It will make you addicted to the Salaah.

Have you not seen O Muslims when you are around people who pray, when its time to pray, you find them fidgeting, nervous, looking at their watches, seeing where they can pray, they feel uncomfortable – why?! They want to just stand up in front of Allah and lower their heads to Allah, to feel that serenity and peace. They cannot live witout the prayer. Do you not feel jealous of that feeling? Do you not look at these people and their relationship with Allah? Well then, why don’t you change your life and be like them? What prevents you from doing so?

O MUSLIMS where there is a will there is a way. Find places of prayer, in your work places, in your homes, in your masajid. Take the time out, wherever you travel, travel with a prayer rug, have a compass with you, have a map and the schedule of the prayer timings. PLAN OUT YOUR DAY – if you’re going shopping, if you’re going here think, ‘Where will I be for Maghrib?, Where will I be for Dhuhr, Where will I be for Asr’. THINK. And when you plan it put very simply, just like you plan out your food and your water, just like you plan out your lives. Similarly, fit-in the prayer into your schedules. And if you are not praying 5 times a day, start with the Fara’id only, start with the obligatory, that is total of 17 raka’ahs in a day. Once you’ve mastered the fara’id move on to the sunan and extra acts of worship in prayer. But don’t just jump-in and start with everything in the prayer because you might find that difficult.

If you are not praying 5 times a day, start slowly with yourself and start with the 5 faraa’id. All you have to do is to stick with the faraa’id. That is the minimum and when you do it, then you will see the change for yourself, the change that happens in your life. It doesn’t take more than 5 mins or 10 mins max of your time.

O Muslims, do not underestimate the prayer.  I leave you with just one incident in the life of the Prophet Sal-Allahu ‘Alayhi Wa Sallam that illustrates how he felt about the prayer.

In his house, on the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal in the 11th year of the hijrah – When he was in the last moments of his life in the arms of his wife ‘Aisha Radhiy-Allahu ‘Anha, knowing that he only had a few seconds to live, knowing that he will now face the Angel of Death, knowing that the last words that he will say will be recorded as the last Wasiyya, the last Testament, as the last advice that he gave, Sal-Allahu ‘Alayhi Wa Sallam. What do you think he said in his last breath?

He said: **“As-salaah, as-salaah! Wat-taqullaha feema malakat aymaanukum.”**

The last wasiyya that he gave, the last thing that he’s thinking about to make sure his Ummah knows what to do: ***“As-salaah!”*** Which is translated as, **“Guard the prayer, guard the prayer; and fear Allah with regards to what your right hands possess.”** The last wasiyya that our Prophet sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam said was to remind us to pray to Allah subhaanahu wa ta’aala.

I pray that Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala makes us understand this simple yet important aspect of Islam, that He grants us the Tawfeeq to do so.