



Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam Lahore (UK)

November, 99 Bulletin

Dar-us-Salaam, 15 Stanley Avenue, Wembley, UK, HA0 4JQ

November 99 Meeting

Assalamu alaikum

Venue: Dar-us-Salaam

Date: Sunday, 7th November 99

Time: 3 p.m.

Topic: Ch 1:1-7; Ch 6:51-60; Ch 71:10-20, 28

Please study these verses with footnotes, before the meeting and bring your Holy Quran with you.

Efficacy of prayer

The word prayer as used in the title of this article is ambiguous. This is because the terms used in Islam for what may be called ritual prayer (*salaat*) and supplication are both translated into English language as prayer. Of course, there is a link between the two. It is only when one's *salaat* takes the form of an intense discourse between the seeker (the human) and the sought (Allah) that all else is forgotten that a link is established between man and Allah. Once this is done, then Allah listens to most of the supplications of such a person.

In order that this link may be established the *salaat* begins long before one folds one's arms while facing the *Qibla*. It starts when one hears the words *Allahu Akbar* in the *azan* by the crier. In the morning when one hears these words they remind one that Allah's company is better than material comforts or human companionship. When one hears the same words repeated at mid-day, it is a reminder that pursuit of Allah is better

than seeking after material gain. So leave off the hope of material gain and replace it with striving for the spiritual. And again, in the mid-afternoon, one is reminded of the same message. At sunset and at night when one may be relaxing in the company of one's family and friends, one is asked to return to Allah. Over and over again, one is told "*Ash ha du un la i la ha il lalla*" or that there is no object worth adoring except for Allah. And further, "*Ash ha du unna Muhammadun Rasul Ullah.*", look at the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the measure of success he had because he made none other than Allah as the object of his desires. One is also told that what one is being called towards is the real, lasting goodness.

This call to prayer and the effect it has on your heart is the first step of nearness to Allah. If our wives or our children were to call us, we drop whatever we are doing and rush to their sides. Until we get there, we are restless. **The Crier's call to prayer should produce an even more intense emotion in our hearts. Here is Allah calling you to Himself, and rather than rush to Him we carry on with our worldly affairs, as if nothing of importance has happened.**

The next step is the *wudu* (or the ritual washing). The idea is not to rush from work to the mosque at the very last minute and then splash some water on your body. The idea is to take a measured look at yourself and perform a cleansing operation. An operation which is as spiritual as it is physical. When you wash out your mouth, think whether you lied or you engaged in any conversation which was sinful. Did you back bite your brother? Did

you spread rumours about some one? Did you break a promise you had made? Cleansing your mouth is making a promise to Allah that you will not do so again. When you wash your face, think what your eyes saw or did. Was it appropriate for you to see what you did? Was it sinful?

If what you saw needed to be resisted, did you use your faculties to do so? **How beautifully did our beloved Prophet, Muhammad the Glorious, put it when he said: "If you see some evil, try to resist it with your hands. If that is impossible, resist it with your tongue. If even that is not possible, resist it with your heart."**

In the same way when hands and the feet are washed, the same questions are asked. Did I do an evil deed with these hands? Did my feet take me to a place of sin? I saw some one who needed help, did my feet carry me to help that person? Did my hands and arms rise up to protect a weak person who needed protection? **It is only when the whole body begins to obey Allah instinctively that nearness to Allah begins to be achieved.**

Allah is not far from us. He is closer to us than our life-vein, yet we cannot get close to Him. It is as if we are deaf, dumb and blind. He is calling us, but we cannot hear Him. He is showing us the Way but we cannot understand Him. He is in front of us but we cannot see Him. **The call to prayer is to take our thoughts away from worldly pursuits and direct them towards Allah. The ritual ablution washes away the temporal world and replaces it with the Spiritual world.** A man who lives next to a river and baths in it five times a day cannot

remain dirty. In the same way a Muslim who truly heeds the Call to prayer, the *wudu* and the *salaat* cannot remain polluted by the desires of this world. He becomes totally Allah's.

It is in this state of intense excitement, after the call and *wudu*, that a Muslim starts his *salaat*. He lays bare his soul, admitting to all his errors and weaknesses and seeks guidance from Allah.

The Promised Messiah was asked when will one know that one has started to pray for the love of Allah and not for the sake of a ritual. He replied that an alcoholic cannot remain without a drink, as soon as he opens his eyes his thirsts and cannot be parted from his bottle. When you find yourself thirsting after communion with Allah in the same way, then you have started to pray for the love of Allah rather than just a ritual.

It is when one reaches a state where one cannot live without Allah's company that one joins the ranks of the friends of Allah - those who do not fear and those who do not grieve. Allah listens to every one's supplication but those who are close to Him, those who are His friends, are listened to more often. Allah answers every one's supplication but that is not to say that what we ask for is granted. When this happens, we should remember some things.

It must be remembered that *salaat* is meant to produce a real change in one's heart. When one relies solely on Allah, that is when, sorrow and grief do not touch upon one's heart. There is a well known incident from the life of the Promised Messiah which illustrates this point. Hazrat Mirza sahib was posting out printed material to people using cheap rate post. While he was addressing the envelope to an opponent a point, which was not in the leaflet, came to his mind. He wrote it out on a separate piece of paper and put it in the envelope. This envelope got mixed up with the rest and it was also posted at the cheaper rate by mistake. This opponent contacted the authorities on receipt of the envelope and accused Hazrat Mirza sahib of sending out personal letters by cheap rate. The authorities duly charged Hazrat Mirza sahib with a criminal offence for which the punishment was

imprisonment. Hazrat sahib's attorneys said the matter was very simple. The person who made the complaint was a well known enemy of Hazrat sahib and all Hazrat sahib had to do was to deny putting the hand written note in with the printed material. No court in the world could then convict him. Hazrat Mirza sahib refused point blank even to consider this form of defence. His attorneys then responded by saying that, if he did not do so, he would certainly go to prison. This would humiliate him and his jamaat. The Promised Messiah's reply is worth writing in letters of Gold: **"Should I take on my shoulders humiliation in the eyes of Allah because I am afraid of humiliation in the eyes of the people of this world. I will not do so."**

If we are ill and we take some medication but it does not work. What do we do? Do we give up taking the medication or do we try a stronger dose or a better medication? The supplication is the same. If you think that Allah is not listening to your prayers, pray even harder, pray even more. Try to find out what it is that is missing in your prayers which is causing Allah not to answer it. Do not give up because, if you keep on trying, Allah will answer you. He may not grant your prayer but He will answer you.

Second, remember that we can only see the present. We cannot foretell the future. In many cases when we ask for some thing, we cannot see that, if what we are asking for is granted, in the future we will suffer. Allah can see that, because He is free of the bounds of time and space. So, even when we think that our supplications have been rejected we must always resign ourselves to His Will because Allah knows best.

If we love Allah we must believe that whatever befalls us, however distressing or difficult it may be, we have to resign ourselves to the Will of our beloved. We put up with everything that our wives, children and other relations may put us through. We do not forsake them because they have put us into a difficult situation. We all know someone who has patiently stood by their loved ones when affliction struck them down. Why do we not display the same patience in

our relations with Allah?

The life of the prophet Ayub (Job) is an example for us all. It is said that Allah said to Satan: "Look how faithful is my servant Ayub." Satan replied: "Why should he not be faithful to You when You have granted him everything. He has power, influence, wealth, health, family." Allah replied: "I give you power over Ayub's power and influence." Satan then arranged for Ayub to lose all power and influence but Ayub did not complain or pray for the power and influence to be restored to him. Allah then said to Satan: "Look how faithful is my servant Ayub." Satan replied: "Why should he not be faithful to You when he still has wealth, health, family." Allah replied: "I give you power over Ayub's wealth." Satan then arranged for Ayub to lose his wealth but Ayub still did not complain or pray for riches to be given back to him. This went on until Ayub lost everything. He lost power, riches, health, all his family except for his wife. While Ayub lay starving and in extreme pain, he still did not complain or pray for anything he had lost to be restored to him. Finally, his wife could bear it no longer. She cried and asked prophet Ayub to pray to Allah. Suddenly, Ayub seemed to find strength. He sat up and said to his wife: "Woman why do you not complain or forsake me." "Because I love you.", said his wife. Prophet Ayub replied: "Should I love Allah less than you love me. If my condition pleases my beloved Allah then what reason do I have to complain." And Allah said to Satan: "Look how faithful is my servant Ayub." but Satan had no answer.

When a human being reaches this state, neither the temptations of this world, nor its difficulties and trials affect him. It is about these people that Allah says that His friends do not grieve and they do not fear. He, Allah, has always loved you, you now truly love him. When this happens then He listens to you more and more. It is then that your prayers become truly effective. It is then that you declare, as did Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, that even if the whole world forsakes me, as long as my Allah is with me I am happy. So, brothers and sisters, let us make ourselves worthy of being listened to by Allah and have pleasure in whatever pleases Him, just like prophet Ayub.