

ENCOURAGING CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ
فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى
سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،
فِيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ، أَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us increase our righteousness to Allah the Almighty by doing all that He prescribes and leaving all that He prohibits. May we be blessed by Allah the Almighty in this life and the hereafter.

Dear brothers and sisters,

According to the al-Syafie teachings, congregational prayer is considered as fard al-Kifayah (communal obligation in Muslim legal doctrine). However, it is an obligation because the Prophet (pbuh) had never performed compulsory prayer alone. The Prophet (pbuh) said in a hadith narrated by Abu Daud:

مَا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ فِي قَرْيَةٍ وَلَا بَدْوٍ لَا تُقَامُ فِيهِمُ الصَّلَاةُ إِلَّا قَدْ اسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْجَمَاعَةِ فَإِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُ
الدُّنْبُ الْقَاصِيَةَ

Which means: *Any three people living in a village or in the desert who do not make Athan nor establish the prayer will be overwhelmed by Satan, so you have to establish congregational prayers, as the wolf eats only the sheep that strays from the herd.*

Abdullah Bin Mas'ud said :*If anyone would like to meet Allah tomorrow as a Muslim, he should persevere in observing these five prayers (in congregation) whenever the call for them is made, for Allah has chosen for your Prophet the way of right guidance. And the [five prayers in congregation] are part of this right guidance. If you were to pray them in your houses, as the one who stays behind in his house, you would be leaving a 'Sunnah' of your Prophet. If you leave the 'Sunnah' of your Prophet you would go astray. Verily, I have seen a time when no one abandoned them [the congregational prayers] except for the hypocrites who were well known for their hypocrisy. A man would be brought, supported by two people [due to his weakness or illness] until he was placed in a row (in the congregation)."*

Allah the Almighty says in chapter 2 (surah al Baqarah) verse 43:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

Which means: *And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].*

Dear brothers and sisters,

The disunity of Muslims can be overcome through congregational prayers. This was what the Prophet (pbuh) did when he migrated to Madinah from Mecca. Before he reached Madinah, the prophet (phuh) built the Quba

Mosque and performed congregational there, as mentioned by Allah the Almighty in chapter 9 (surah al Taubah) verse 108:

لَمَسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ

Which means: “ *Do not stand [for prayer] within it - ever. A mosque founded on righteousness from the first day is more worthy for you to stand in... ”.*

The Prophet (pbuh) strongly encouraged his followers to do congregational prayera at the mosque. In fact, he would burn the house of those who did not congregate to the mosque. According to historical facts, the prophet (pbuh) has never missed a single congregational prayer in his lifetime even when he was ill and so were his companions.

لَقَدْ رَأَيْنَا وَمَا يَتَخَلَّفُ عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ إِلَّا مُنَافِقٌ قَدْ عَلِمَ نِفَاقَهُ

Which means: “*Verily I see (know) among the companions, there is no one who leaves the prayer (congregation), but the hypocrites who have known hypocrisy*”.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Lately, we have seen that Islam and its followers are being insulted by the enemies of Islam; the *shari'a* (Islamic laws) is ridiculed and more disturbingly is the disunity among Muslims themselves. This situation can be overcome if we congregate to the mosques for our daily prayers. Let us pray that Allah the Almighty will always be with us and guide us. Make our presence for daily congregational prayers like our presence for Friday prayer.

Thus, from now onwards, let us diligently congregate to the mosques. Teach our children, family, members, neighbours and others to come to the mosque together. Be confident that if we do this, Allah the Almighty will assist us, and we will remain united and respected. This is mentioned in the prophet's (pbuh) hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَيَعْجَبُ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ فِي الْجَمِيعِ

Which means: “Indeed, Allah the Almighty admires congregational prayers”.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Awareness of the nation's prosperity and security as well as building the Muslim economy is unlikely to be achieved if we pray five times in a solitary manner in our homes.

Look at Turkey's economic performance today. Turkey had been a country way behind others in Europe, but since the awareness of its Muslim followers about the importance of congregational prayers and the priority they give to it; we find that the country is becoming more developed.

Allah the Almighty says in chapter 22 (surah al Haj) verse 78:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا دِينَ آبِ آدَمَ الَّذِي عَلَّمَهُ الْقُرْآنَ حَنِيفًا أُمَّةَ أُمَّةٍ وَأَنَّ الدِّينَ الْقَدِيمَ هُوَ مَوْلَانَا فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ وَاللَّهُ يَهْتَدِي لِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّونَ

Which means: *And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. Allah named you "Muslims"*

before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So establish prayer and give zakah and hold fast to Allah . He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper.

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْءَانِ الْعَظِيْمِ، وَنَفَعَنِيْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيْمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّيْ وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ. أَقُوْلُ قَوْلِيْ هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الْعَظِيْمَ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ.