

Zakah: Its status in Islam – Imam Ibn Baaz

[Excellent Article]

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June 6, 2015



A lecture entitled, “**Zakah: Its status in Islam**“, which His Eminence gave in Al-Jami Al-Kabir, Riyadh

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all creation. May Allah’s Peace and Blessings be upon His Slave, Messenger, Khalil (beloved, close elect) and truthful conveyer of the Divine Revelation, our Prophet, Imam and Master Muhammad ibn `Abdullah, his family, and Companions and whosoever follows his example and seeks his guidance until the Day of Resurrection. To continue:

The topic of the lecture as the presenter said is (**Status of Zakah in Islam**). Every Muslim individual who possesses the least knowledge of Islam knows that Zakah, being the third pillar of Islam, holds a great status in Islam. Zakah has been mentioned in connection with Salah (Prayer) in many places of the Qur’an. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also mentioned Zakah next to Salah in numerous Hadiths.

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says:

“**And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allâh) along with those who bow down (in prayer)**” [Surah Al-Baqarah, 2: 43]

Allah (Glorified be He) also says:

“**And perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât), and give Zakât and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) that you may receive mercy (from Allâh)**” [Surah Al-Nur, 24: 56]

In another place, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) also says:

“But if they repent, perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and give Zakât, then they are your brethren in religion” [Surah At-Tawbah, 9: 11]

In yet another place, Allah (Exalted be He) says:

“And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allâh, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and give Zakât, and that is the right religion” [Surah Al-Bayyinah, 98: 5]

It is narrated in the Two Sahih (authentic) Books of Hadith (i.e., Al-Bukhari and Muslim) on the authority of `Abdullah ibn `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

Islam was based on five pillars: testimony that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; performing Salah (prayers), giving Zakah; fasting Ramadan; and performing Hajj (pilgrimage).

[Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Book on faith, Chapter on Islam is based on five things, no. 8; Muslim, Book on faith, Chapter on Islam is founded on five (fundaments), no. 16; and Al-Tirmidhy, Book on faith, Chapter on Islam is based on five things, no. 2609, and the wording is his]

In another version, the Hadith reads:

Islam was based on five pillars: worshipping Allah Alone and disbelieving that there is any other Gods, performing Salah (Prayers), giving Zakah...

[Narrated by Muslim, Chapter on Islam is founded on five (fundaments), no. 16]

This indicates the great position which Zakah holds in Islam. It is mentioned next to Salah both in the Qur'an and Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Salah is considered the cornerstone of Islam and the second greatest pillar next to only the Shahadah (testimony of faith).

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says regarding Salah:

“Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawât (the prayers) especially the middle Salât (i.e. the best prayer – ‘Asr). And stand before Allâh with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salât (prayers)]. [Surah Al-Baqarah, 2: 238]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) is also reported to have said:

That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salah. He who abandons it, becomes a disbeliever.

[Narrated by Al-Tirmidhy, Book on faith, Chapter on abandoning Salah, no. 2621.]

In another Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

| What makes one a disbeliever and a polytheist is abandoning prayers.

[Narrated by Muslim, Book on faith, Chapter on calling one who neglects Salah a disbeliever, no. 82]

Zakah is the sister pillar of Salah.

Salah is a physical act of worship in which the Muslim stands before Allah supplicating to Him, mentioning His Name and reciting Ayahs of the Qur'an. It has such a great effect on hearts. If performed properly, Salah will restrain one from committing indecent acts and will serve as a means to attaining happiness, safety and salvation. It will also set their heart aright and bless their deeds.

One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) was speaking to his Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) about Salah and he said:

Whoever observes it regularly, it will be a source of light, authoritative proof and a means of salvation on the Day of Resurrection, and whoever does not observe it regularly, it will not be a source of light, authoritative proof and a means of salvation and on the Day of Resurrection he will join the company of Fir'aun (Pharaoh), Haman, Qarun (Korah), and Ubay ibn Khalaf.

[Narrated by Imam Ahmad, Section on the Hadiths narrated by the Companions who narrated a large number of Hadiths, Section on the Hadiths narrated by `Abdullah ibn `Amar ibn Al-`As, no. 6540.]

Narrated by Imam Ahmad and others with a good Sanad (chain of narrators).

Commenting on the above Hadith, some scholars said:

“On the Day of Resurrection one who abandons Salah will join the company of Pharaoh, Haman Qarun, and Ubayy ibn Khalaf on account of his imitating them.

The reason is that if he abandons it for the sake of holding a prestigious position, he will be behaving like Fir`aun (Pharaoh) who, being an enemy to Musa (Moses, peace be upon him), transgressed and behaved arrogantly taking advantage of his royal position. T

he same is true with Haman, Pharaoh’s minister, who, taking advantage of his position, behaved arrogantly and refused to follow Musa (Moses, peace be upon him). Therefore, one will dwell in Hellfire with Haman, Pharaoh’s minister, because of being occupied with his prestigious position and getting distracted from obeying Allah.

One who abandons it for the sake of collecting wealth will join the company of Qarun (Korah) who was addicted to the collection of wealth and lusting after his desires. He behaved arrogantly and disobeyed Prophet Musa. Thus, Allah caused the earth to swallow him up together with his dwelling. He was destined to enter Hellfire. Those who behave after the manner of Qarun will enter Hellfire with him. We seek refuge in Allah from this.

One who abandons Salah on account of being busy, conducting buying and selling transactions will be behaving after the manner of Ubay ibn Khalaf, the Makkah merchant, and will thus join his company in Hellfire. We seek refuge in Allah.

Zakah and Salah are equally important. Those who abstain from paying it on account of miserliness and greed for wealth will join the company of Allah’s enemy who preferred collecting wealth to showing obedience to Allah and His Messenger. It is reported that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Mu`adh to Yemen, he said:

Invite them to bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. Should they accept your invitation, then tell them that Allah has prescribed upon them to offer five Prayers a day. Should they obey you, tell them that Allah has prescribed upon them to pay Zakah which is collected from the rich among them and given to the poor.”

[Narrated by Imam Ahmad, Section on Banu Hashim, the beginning of the Section on the Hadiths narrated by `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, no. 2072; Al-Bukhari, Book on Zakah, Chapter on taking Sadaqah from the rich and giving it to the poor..., no. 1496; and Muslim, Book on faith, Chapter on calling people to the testimony of faith..., no. 19.]

This indicates that Zakah was prescribed as an act of sympathy and kindness to the poor. It is an obligation due from one’s wealth which they are obliged to ensure its delivery to those who deserve it. This is based on the Hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

I have been commanded to fight against people until they testify that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, perform the Prayer, and pay Zakah. If they do that, their blood and property are guaranteed protection on my behalf except when justified by law, and their affairs rest with Allah.

[Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Book on faith, Chapter on Allah's Saying: "If they turn in repentance and establish the prayer", no. 25; and Muslim, Book on faith, Chapter on the command to fight people until they profess that there is no God but Allah, no. 22.]

This and other similar Hadiths indicate the lawfulness to fight those whose miserliness makes them abstain from paying Zakah.

During Abu Bakr's lifetime, war was waged against those who refused to pay Zakah. This is because the blood of a Muslim is protected against being shed only when they establish Salah and pay Zakah. That is why when some Arabs refrained from paying Zakah following the Prophet's demise, the Sahabah engaged in fighting against them so that they could pay it off. After the Prophet's demise, some Muslims apostatized from Islam. Some of them said that had Muhammad been truly a Prophet of Allah, he would not have passed away. They forgot the fact that all prophets preceding him had also passed away.

Some others refused to pay Zakah. At this point Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) delivered a sermon encouraging the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) to fight the apostates until they came back to Islam. `Umar argued with him saying: "How will you fight those who bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah?" Abu Bakr replied: "We have been commanded to fight against people until they testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. If they do that, their blood and property are guaranteed protection on our behalf except when justified by law." Then Abu Bakr went on to say: "Is not Zakah one of Allah's Rights? By Allah, I will keep fighting those who differentiate between Salah and Zakah. By Allah, if they refuse to give me as much as a she-kid which they used to give during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, I will fight them on its account. Then `Umar said: "It was nothing but Allah Who had guided Abu Bakr to fight and I came to realize that he was right."

The Sahabah unanimously agreed on fighting the Murtads (apostates). They fought against them vigorously until they came back to the fold of Islam. Only those among them who were destined to die as Murtads were killed at the hands of Muslims. We seek refuge in Allah from this. The ones killed included **Musaylimah Al-Kadhab** (the head of the apostates who claimed himself a Prophet after the death of Prophet Muhammad), some of his followers, some people from Banu Asad, and others. As they refused to come back to Islam, Muslims continued to fight them until they were killed. Other Murtads were guided back to Islam by the Will of Allah.

To sum it up: Zakah is of great importance in Islam. It is the third greatest pillar next to Salah and Shahadah. Muslims are duty bound to deliver it to those who deserve it. If the Muslim ruler orders that Zakah be paid off to him to undertake the process of distributing it, his order must be executed. If he does not demand that, the believer has to distribute it to the poor and other people who deserve it.

Allah has defined the categories of Zakah recipients in the Ayah (Qur'anic verse) where He (Glorified be He) says:

“As-Sadaqât (here it means Zakât) are only for the Fuqarâ’ (poor), and the Masâkin (needy) and those employed to collect (the funds), and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islâm), and to free the captives, and for those in debt, and for Allâh’s Cause, and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allâh. And Allâh is All-Knower, All-Wise. [Surah At-Tawbah, 9: 60]

The first and second categories of Zakah recipients include **Faqirs** (the poor) and the **Miskins** (the needy): These two have been defined as people who do not possess enough money. The Faqir is the person who does not have sufficient wealth to fulfill his needs or the needs of his dependents, such as food, drink, clothing and housing. The Miskin may be someone whose standard of living is better than the Faqir. However, their ruling is the same in all matters. They should be given an amount of Zakah which covers their basic needs for one whole year.

The third category of Zakah recipients includes **those employed to collect Zakah**: Collectors of Zakah include the people who travel around to collect it, or those who are responsible for maintaining it, or the scribes who record it in its register. Such people are given an amount from Zakah according to the effort they exert in collecting and maintaining it. The Muslim ruler can estimate the amount given to them.

The fourth category includes **the hearts that are newly inclined to Islam**, This category includes chiefs, masters and men of high standing whose word is listened to by their people. When they enter Islam, their people are expected to follow in their footsteps. When they refuse to accept Islam, the same will be the attitude of their people. They are given a portion of Zakah with the purpose of strengthening their Iman (faith), or winning the hearts of their counterparts, or seeking their help in defending Islam against its enemies.

The fifth category includes the **freeing of slaves and captives of war**: Zakah is to be given to slaves so that they can set themselves free from the bondage of slavery. In this regard, Zakah is given to the type of slaves known as **Mukatabs** (slaves with an agreement to buy their freedom). According to the correct view, one who delivers Zakah may buy slaves with the money of Zakah for the purpose of freeing them. It is also permissible that he uses the money of Zakah in buying Muslims who have fallen captive to the Kafirs (disbelievers). Thus Zakah is delivered to the Kafirs as a ransom to release the Muslim captives.

The sixth category includes **those in debt**: These are the people who borrow money from others to provide the basic needs of their dependents or to reconcile between Muslims. They offer to pay the money in order to bring about reconciliation between Muslims who are at enmity with each other. One who offers to pay money for that purpose should be given an amount of the Zakah even if he is rich. Zakah is also given to insolvent debtors who are incapable of paying off their debts.

The seventh category includes paying Zakah **in the cause of Allah**: in this category Zakah is given to equip Mujahidun (persons fighting in the Cause of Allah) with necessary weapons and cavalry if Bayt-ul-Mal (Muslim treasury) is short of providing them with this. Therefore, they are given a portion of Zakah which enables them to fight against the enemies of Allah.

The eighth category includes the **wayfarers**: wayfarers are people who move from one country to another. They may happen to run out of provisions due to the long distances they travel when journeying or being attacked by highway robbers or due to any other reason. They must be given a portion of Zakah which enables them to return home safely even if they are naturally rich people. They must be given an amount of Zakah that helps them return to their country.

Zakah has such a great effect when delivered to those eight categories of recipients. It helps them perform the duties of Allah and relieves them of their sufferings like paying off their debts if they are in debt or freeing themselves from the bondage of slavery if they are slaves or fighting in the cause of Allah if they are Mujahidun or assisting the wayfarers. It is out of Allah's mercy that He makes His poor and rich Slaves co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety.

Payment of Zakah is a way of giving thanks to Allah because of the blessings He bestows upon them. Allah is the true Bestower of favors and blessings. It is the duty of every Muslim to pay out their Zakah as an act of showing gratitude to Allah. A Muslim should thank Allah for making him a deliverer and not a recipient of Zakah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

| **The upper hand is better than the lower one...**

[Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Book on Zakah, Chapter on Sadaqah should only be given by the wealthy, no. 1428; and Muslim, Book on Zakah, Chapter on the statement that the upper hand (that which gives) is better than the lower hand (that which receives), no. 1034]

The upper hand is the one that delivers Zakah while the lower hand is the one which receives it. The Muslim should thank Allah for providing them with wealth which they are duty bound to give a portion of to Allah's Slaves.

Zakah also purges the soul of the deliverer and purifies his wealth as well. Allah (Glorified be He) says:

Take Sadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it” [Surah At-Tawbah, 9: 103]

You will be rewarded on account of paying Zakah both in this life and the Hereafter. Your money is purified and preserved when you pay it out.

It is also a means of purifying the soul. This has been referred to in the above Ayah which reads: “Take Sadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it”

When the Muslim gives their fellow poor Muslims from the wealth that Allah has bestowed on them, they will be abundantly rewarded by Allah for relieving them of their distresses. This act of yours will make them hold you in high esteem. It may be that they will make Du`a’ (supplication) for you which may be a reason for your happiness and salvation in this life and the Hereafter. A Muslim is not harmed when they pay only a little amount of the many bounties that Allah has bestowed on them. They give these amounts to the children, old people and poor ones. The Muslim will receive great rewards from Allah.

Allah has threatened those who refuse to pay Zakah out of miserliness.

Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says:

And those who hoard up gold and silver [Al-Kanz: the money, the Zakât of which has not been paid] and spend them not in the Way of Allâh, announce unto them a painful torment

“On the Day when that (Al-Kanz: money, gold and silver the Zakât of which has not been paid) will be heated in the Fire of Hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, (and it will be said unto them): **“This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard.”** [Surah At-Tawbah, 9: 34-35]

This is the evil consequence of those who withhold payment of Zakah. They will be thrown into Hellfire where the wealth they amassed and refused to pay its Zakah will be a source of their agony on the Day of Resurrection. This will be a fitting retribution for their refusal to fulfill the right of Allah. While the wealth which a person does not give its due Zakah is labeled as **“hoarded wealth”**, that money whose due Zakah is paid is free of blame.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

Whatever reaches a quantity on which Zakah is payable is not a treasure (kanz) when Zakah is paid

[Narrated by Abu Dawud, Book on Zakah, Chapter on what is Kanz and Zakah on jewelry, no. 1564]

Whenever you pay the Zakah due from the wealth in your possession, it will not be labeled as hoarded wealth and vice versa. If you refuse to pay Zakah due from it, it will be a source of your agony on the Day of Resurrection. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

Any person who possesses gold or silver and does not pay what is due from them (in another narration their Zakah); on the Day of Resurrection, plates of silver and gold would be heated for him in the fire of Hell and with them his flank, forehead, and back will be branded during a day the extent of which will be fifty thousand years. Then he will be shown his final abode, either to Paradise or to Hell.

He who possesses camels and does not pay what is due from him regarding them, will be thrown on his face or on his back in a vast desert plain (on the Day of Resurrection) and they will trample him with their hoofs and bite him with their teeth. As often as the first of them passes him, the last of them will be made to return during a day the extent of which will be fifty thousand years. And he would be shown his last abode either to Paradise or to Hell.

He who possesses cows and sheep and does not pay their Zakah (in another wording of the Hadith what is due on him regarding them) will be thrown on the Day of Judgment in a vast desert plain and they will trample him with their hoofs and gore him with their horns. As often as the last of them passes him the first of them would be made to return to him again during a day the extent of which would be fifty thousand years. Then he would be shown his last abode either to Paradise or to Hell.

[Narrated by Muslim, Book on Zakah, Chapter on sin of one who does not pay Zakah, no. 987.]

This Hadith indicates how severe the punishment is of one who refuses to pay Zakah out of miserliness. On the Day of Resurrection, their wealth will be a source of their grief and agony whether it be money, food, fruit, camels, cattle or sheep. They will be used as tools of punishment on the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet indicated how they will be punished with their own wealth. The same is true with regard to gold and silver and other things of the sort. We ask Allah to grant us safety and protection from this.

It is our duty and the duty of all Muslims to enjoin one another to pay Zakah.

We are duty bound to enjoin one another to fulfill Allah's Rights, strive hard to do that and remind those who are negligent of paying Zakah. Reminding people of this benefits the believers. Zakah, Salah and fasting are all obligatory duties, yet one may be heedless of that because of the gravity of his sins which darken their heart and cause them to continually disobey Allah. Satan and his helpers also make their deeds fair-seeming to them until they become completely unmindful of Allah and the Hereafter. They fall victim to the worship of Satan and start to accompany evil people. Their hearts become

obsessed with the love of wealth and lustful desires. They refuse to befriend righteous people and prefer to follow the path of deviant fellows. Therefore, it is the duty of all Muslims to remind those heedless Muslims.

Allah says:

And remind (by preaching the Qur'ân, O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم), for verily, the reminding profits the believers [Surah Al-Dhariyat, 51: 55]

Allah (Glorified be He) also says:

So remind them (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) – you are only one who reminds [Surah Al-Ghashiyah, 88: 21]

A believer should remind his fellow believing brother. He should not assume that their fellow brothers are well aware of the consequences of refraining from paying Zakah. Whenever they see that their brothers have started to be neglectful of Allah's duties, they must start advising them and reminding them of Allah through the use of kind words and gentle preaching. They should seem to be worried about them and concerned with their salvation and happiness. A true Muslim brother is one who keeps advising, reminding and directing you to the straight path. He never keeps himself away from you nor flatters you. Rather, he gives you counsel and admonishes you. He reminds you to be mindful of Allah. He shows you the path of salvation so that you can follow it and warns you of treading the path of perdition so that you can steer clear of it. You should never give up hope of advising him.

Allah (Glorified be He) says:

“...and never give up hope of Allâh's Mercy” [Surah Yusuf, 12: 87]

Allah (Glorified be He) also says:

“Despair not of the Mercy of Allâh” [Surah Al-Zumar, 39: 53]

Reality proves that there have been many disobedient Muslims who continued to be heedless of Allah's Commandments for years. Then, the time came when they were guided back to the straight path at the hands of righteous Muslims who kept encouraging them to perform deeds of righteousness. They started to awaken from their heedlessness and pray to Allah for the sake of those who guided them. As Allah shows them true guidance, they return to the path of truth and repent to Him of all their past sins. In this way, Allah forgives them and atones their previous misdeeds. So, I advise you, my dear brothers, not to give up hope.

Someone has told me just after Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer that he had come from Masjid Al-Nusiry and Masjid Al-Turky while the marketplaces there were filled with people who did not offer Salah and were busy conducting buying and selling transactions. He started to weep and said: “This is intolerable.” Therefore, I see that we are in need of advising and co-operating with one another. It should not be said that authorities in charge would

undertake this duty. It is true that these authorities shoulder great responsibility and that they have to be held accountable if they ever fail to play their role properly. We ask Allah to grant them help and success. Muslim rulers shoulder great responsibility in this regard. Every Muslim whether educated, scholar, or judge shares their prescribed responsibility of disapproving evil acts and enjoining good ones. The more Muslims co-operate with one another and enjoin one another to hold fast to the truth, the less evil will spread. Marketplaces are filled with many Muslims who neglect offering Salah (Prayer) and sit outside Masjids (mosques) while their fellow Muslims are in the process of offering it. These people must be reminded of their negligence of Salah and passers-by must disapprove of this heinous act of theirs. They may be warned in such words as “Do you not fear Allah? How come you are sitting like this while your Muslim brothers are offering Salah.” One should join their fellow Muslims in Salah even if they are on a journey.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) passed by a man who did not move while the prayer was beginning. He asked him, “Are you not a Muslim?”

[Narrated by Imam Ahmad, the beginning of the Section on the Hadiths narrated by Al-Madinah narrators, the Hadith narrated by Mihjan Al-Diyaly, no. 15960; and Al-Nasa’y, Book on Imamate, Chapter on performing an obligatory Salah again in a congregation, no. 857]

He ordered him to join Salah with other Muslims even after he had already prayed.

After the Prophet had offered the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer in Mina in the year of the Farewell Hajj, some people said to him: “O Messenger of Allah! Here are two people who have not offered the Fajr Prayer with us.” He asked that they be brought to him. They came trembling with fear. The Prophet (peace be upon him) inquired: “What prevented you from offering Salah with us?” They said: “O Messenger of Allah! We offered it in our camp”. The Prophet said: “Never do this again. If you have prayed in your houses and then you come to the Masjid (mosque), then pray with the congregation. It will be regarded as supererogatory Prayer for you”.

[Narrated by Imam Ahmad, Section on the Hadiths narrated by Levanters narrators, the Hadith narrated by Yazid ibn Al-Aswad, no. 17020; and Al-Tirmidhy, Book on Salah, Chapter on a man offers Salah alone and then joins the congregation, no. 219]

If someone, who has already offered an Obligatory Prayer alone, goes to the Masjid and sees that the Congregational Prayer is not yet finished, they have to join the Muslims. If they happen to join the Imam in the first Rak`ah (unit of Prayer), then they will make Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) with him. If they miss some Rak`ahs, they have to make up for them after Taslim. When the Prophet was asked about some Muslim rulers who delay offering Salah until later times, he said to the questioner:

Observe the prayer at its proper time and if you can, do it along with them, and do not say that you have already observed prayer for it would be a supererogatory prayer for you.

[Narrated by Muslim, Book on Masjids and places for Salah, Chapter on disapproval of delaying Salah from its prescribed time..., no. 648; Al-Nasa'y, Book on Imamate, Chapter on performing Salah with wrongful rulers, no. 778; and Abu Dawud, Book on Salah, Chapter on if an Imam delays Salah after its prescribed time, no. 431.]

Muslims should reprimand those who sit in the streets at prayer time. Should one of them argue that he has already offered Salah, he must be ordered not to sit near the Masjid and to hide from people or join them in Prayer which will be regarded as supererogatory for him. He must be ordered to do this in order not to discourage people from offering Salah. He must be told to hasten to offer it with his fellow Muslims. It will be regarded as supererogatory Prayer if he has already offered it alone. The Imams at different Masjids should spend equal or similar times in offering Salah so that those who abandon Salah might not claim that they have prayed at such and such Masjid. Muslims are duty bound to co-operate in righteousness and piety and enjoin one another to hold steadfastly to the truth.

Allah describes those of His servants who are winners that they enjoin one another to hold to the path of truth and to endure it patiently. Allah (Glorified be He) says:

“By Al-‘Asr (the time).

“Verily, man is in loss,

“Except those who believe (in Islâmic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth [i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma‘ruf) which Allâh has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar which Allâh has forbidden], and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allâh’s Cause during preaching His religion of Islâmic Monotheism or Jihâd). [Surah Al-Asr]

Allah (Glorified be He) informs us that this type of people are the real winners who will attain happiness on account of their possession of the following four characteristics. Firstly, they have sincere belief in Allah and His Messenger. Secondly, they work deeds of righteousness which means that their Iman is fruitful. Iman is not just what resides firmly in the heart as it has to be confirmed by deeds. For example, it is not just enough to believe in the obligatory nature of Salah while neglecting to offer it, or to believe in the obligatory nature of Zakah while refusing to pay it, or to believe in the obligatory nature of fasting while abstaining from it. Iman has to be demonstrated both in words and in deeds. The real winners are those who combine between true Iman, righteous deeds and enjoining one another to do good and to remain steadfast. These are the real winners as they have firm belief in Allah and His Messenger. They declare the Oneness of Allah and His Messenger. They also believe in the Truth revealed by Allah and conveyed by His Messenger. Then, they practiced that really after their belief undertaking the obligations that Allah ordained and leaving the Prohibitions that He forbade. They also advised one another to hold fast to the truth without negligence or weakness, enjoining each other to

the truth and cooperating with one another in righteousness and benevolent acts. They preached Islam, enjoined what is right and forbade what is wrong patiently as these matters cannot be attained without observing patience. Whoever seeks these merits has to keep patient and seek the help of Allah; beseeching Allah for His Help, thank Him, do the best in doing His Commandments, advising for His Sake, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, reminding people of Allah forbearingly. Undoubtedly, you have to bear troubles as it is the way of Paradise that is surrounded with troubling hardships. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says:

Paradise is surrounded by hardships and Hell-Fire is surrounded by temptations.

[Narrated by Muslim, Book on Paradise, description of its boon and inhabitants, first chapter, no. 2823]

There are many obstacles lying in the way to Jannah (Paradise). These obstacles have to be overcome with patience.

The greatest of these obstacles include following desires of the self, surrendering to the temptations of Shaytan (devil) and keeping company with evil friends. While the Shaytan makes bad deeds fair-seeming to the doer, his soul is naturally prone to evil and the evil company he keeps corrupts his manners. This evil company brings harm to him by causing him to deviate from the right path. Therefore, one should patiently endure breaking their relationship with them. One should also develop a kind of steadfast adherence to obeying the Commands of Allah and disobeying the incitements of Shaytan. One should have firm determination that helps them not to fall victim to their whims and desires which lead to eternal dwelling in Hellfire. Therefore, you will realize the true meaning of felicity by following the commands of Allah, refusing to follow your whims and desires and holding fast to the path of guidance and steadfastness.

Every Muslim man or woman is duty bound to hasten to performing congregational Salah (Prayer) at its appointed time. They should put aside everything that distracts them from offering Salah like work or sleep. Undoubtedly, some Muslims find this difficult to do. However, once one starts to tame themselves by exercising **self-restraint**, they will sense a feeling of pleasure overwhelming their hearts each time they offer Salah. Self-restraint will help make their souls amenable to them. Thus, the heart is revived each time the Prayer time becomes due. One will also sense a feeling of comfort upon offering Salah to which they will hasten with pleasure. They will sense the same feelings when doing other good deeds. However, if one neglects offering Salah surrendering themselves to whims and desires, Satan will play tricks on them and their heart will become weak to the point that they will feel that Salah is burdensome, because the heart becomes weak due to its submission to desires, devil, and tempting ways of laziness and harmful neglect when a servant argues, in his defense of his falsehood, saying, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful.. Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Generous while he forgets that Allah (Exalted be He) also says:

Declare (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) unto My slaves, that truly, I am the Off-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful. “And that My Torment is indeed the most painful torment. [Surah Al-Hijr, 15: 49-50]

He also forgets that Allah (Exalted be He) says:

The Forgiver of sin, the Acceptor of repentance, the Severe in punishment, the Bestower (of favours). Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), to Him is the final return. [Surah Ghafir, 40: 3]

Allah forgives and is merciful to those who turn to Him in repentance, yet He inflicts severe punishment on those who neglect His Rights.

May Allah grant all Muslims success and guidance. May He guide us and you to that which pleases Him. May He also guide us to His Straight Path, teach us what is beneficial to us, and assist us in obeying Him and fulfilling His Rights. May Allah make us all among those who co-operate in righteousness and piety and those who enjoin one another to hold steadfastly to the truth. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) is Most Generous and Most Gracious. May Allah’s Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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