

Fast 18: Special Prayers — Friday (*Jumu'ah*), *Tahajjud*, *Tarawih*

“O you who believe, when the call is sounded for prayer on Friday, hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business. That is better for you if you know.” (62:9)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ
يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا
الْبَيْعَ ۚ ذِكْمُ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

- There is no sabbath in Islam, and the number of prayers on Friday is the same as on any other day, with this difference, that the specially ordained Friday service takes the place of the early afternoon (*Zuhr*) prayer. It is the greater congregation of the Muslims at which the people of a place must all gather together, as the very name of the day *yaum al-jumu'ah* ('the day of gathering') indicates. Though all prayers are equally obligatory, yet the Holy Quran has specially ordained the Friday service, and it requires all Muslims to gather together for it, as stated in the verse above.
- The importance of the occasion and the greater number of persons assembled have made it necessary to issue further instructions regarding cleanliness in preparation for the Friday service. For example, it is recommended that a bath be taken before attending, scent be used, and the best clothes available be worn; also that the mouth be well-cleaned with a tooth-brush.
- A special feature of the Friday service is the sermon (*khutbah*) by the Imam, before the prayer service is held. After the people have assembled in the mosque, following the call to prayer, the call for prayer is given for a second time while the Imam is sitting. When the *adhān* is finished, the Imam stands up facing the audience and delivers the sermon. He begins with the *kalimah shahādah* and then goes on to recite a text of the Quran which he expounds to the audience. They are specially enjoined to remain sitting and silent during the sermon. This is delivered in two parts, the Imam taking a little rest by assuming the sitting position in the middle of the sermon, and then continuing.
- Any subject relating to the welfare of the community may be dealt with in the sermon. The Holy Prophet's practice shows that the sermon is:
 - for the education of the masses,
 - to awaken them to a general sense of duty,
 - to lead them to the ways of their welfare and prosperity,
 - and warn them against that which is a source of loss or ruin to them.

Therefore it must be delivered in a language which the people understand, and there is no sense in delivering it in Arabic to an audience which does not know the language. Prayer service is quite different, as it consists of a number of stated sentences, the meaning of which can be fully learnt by anyone in a short period. It is of the utmost importance that the masses should know what the preacher is saying in the Friday sermon which is the best means of education for the masses and for maintaining the vitality of the Muslim community as a whole.

- **Tahajjud prayers:** The word *tahajjud* literally signifies the ‘giving up of sleep’. The *Tahajjud* prayer is so called because it is said after one has had some sleep, and sleep is then given up for the sake of prayer. It is specially mentioned, and much recommended, in the Holy Quran itself in the very earliest revelations, but it is expressly stated to be voluntary. The Holy Prophet was thus instructed:

“And during a part of the night, keep awake by it (i.e., by prayer), beyond what is incumbent on you; maybe your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory.” (17:79)

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَنْ
يُبَعِّثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا ﴿٧٩﴾

His practice was to go to sleep immediately after the *Ishā* prayers, and then he generally woke up after midnight and passed almost all this latter half of the night in *Tahajjud* prayers, sometimes taking a short nap, which would give him a little rest, just before the morning prayer. These prayers consisted of eight *rak'ahs*, divided into a service of two at a time, followed by three *rak'ahs* of *witr*. To make it easier for the common people the *witr* prayer, which is really a part of *Tahajjud*, has been made a part of the voluntary portion of *Ishā* prayer.

- Every year in the month of Ramadan, Maulana Muhammad Ali in his *khutbas* and writings used to exhort the *Jama'at* to fall in prayer before God in *Tahajjud* and beseech Him tearfully to enable us to purify ourselves, advance in His cause, and carry out the work of the propagation of Islam. He said: “You have to rise early in any case to begin the fast; rise even earlier, by half an hour or an hour, and say *Tahajjud* prayers.” He advised several kinds of prayer to be asked of God.
- **Tarāwīḥ prayer:** *Tahajjud* was an individual prayer, but Hazrat Umar when he was *khalifa* introduced a change whereby this prayer in Ramadan became a congregational prayer to be said after the *Ishā* prayer. This is the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer. For the average person the change introduced by Umar is welcome. Nevertheless in the month of Ramadan *Tahajjud* in the latter part of the night and as an individual prayer is preferable.