

On reverence in prayer

First sermon

All praise is due to Allah who decrees prayer and makes it a delight for worshippers, an ornament of the pious and a safehaven for believers. Through prayer, believers would feel their souls eased, their hearts assured, their humility and obedience to Allah, the most Exalted, elevated.

I testify that there is no deity save Allah, having no partners. I also bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, the leader of the pure and pious, may peace and prayer be upon him, his family, and his Companions and those who follow in their footsteps until the Day of Recompense.

As to what follows, I exhort you and myself to be ever conscious of Allah and do construct our lives in accordance to what He has ordered us as He says, **“O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow - and fear Allah . Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.”** (Al Hashr: 18).

Dear Muslims,

Humility is the state of humble heart, when standing in front of Allah, and that of the stable soul and body in commitment to worship Him. For its great status in Islam, Allah the Almighty, associates humility with His virtuous servants as He says, **“Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive.”** (Al Anbiyaa: 90); **“And they fall upon their faces weeping, and the Quran increases them in humble submission.”** (Al Israa: 109).

For his part, our Prophet Muhammad pbuh used to seek refuge with Allah from having an insolent heart saying, *“O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the knowledge which does not benefit, from the heart that does not entertain the fear (of Allah), from the soul that does not feel contented.”*

The highest form of peace and quietude is during prayer and is deemed a reason for success. Allah the Almighty says, **“Certainly will the believers have succeeded: They who are during their prayer humbly submissive.”** (Al Muaminun: 1-2). It is a sign of faith leading to pardon and forgiveness. The Prophet pbuh said, *“when the time for a prescribed prayer comes, any Muslim who performs ablution well and offers his prayer with humility and bowing, it will be an expiation for his past sins, so long as he has not committed a major sin; and this applies to for all times.”*

Attaining humility is the main gain for the worshipper, as our Guide pbuh said, *“verily, a man may return from praying and nothing is written for him except a tenth of his prayer, or a ninth, or an eighth, or a seventh, or a sixth, or a fifth, or a fourth, or a third, or a half.”*

Dear Servants of Allah,

Humility emanates from the heart, and reaches out to all other body parts, guiding them to comply with Allah’s commandments and admonitions. It was narrated that Saeed Ibn

al Musayeb saw a man playing with his beard during prayer and said, *“if this man’s heart is filled with humility, so should his body parts.”*

Stability in soul and body is possible to achieve through reverence and peace in prayer. This in turn can be attained by duly performing it as ordered by our Prophet pbuh. On the narration of Abu Masood, may Allah be satisfied with him, that the Prophet pbuh said, *“A Muslim’s Salat is not correct unless he stands after Rukua (bowing) and sits after Sujud (prostration) with his back upright.”*

To realise and grasp the meaning of tranquility in prayer, He pbuh used to say while he is in Rukua position, *“I affirm my faith in You and I submit humbly before You my hearing, my eyesight, my marrow, my bone and my sinew.”*

Reaching the stage of reverence in prayer requires also of the worshipper to remain aware that he is in front of Allah and should not turn his face whether to the right or to the left. About it, the Prophet pbuh said, *“Allah faces His servant while he is in Salat and keeps facing him as long as he does not turn. If he [the worshipper] turns, Allah turns away from him.”*

From this Hadith and the following, it is clear that turning the face during prayer is against humility. On the narration of Abu Qutada that the Prophet pbuh said, *“the worst kind of thief is one who steals from his Salat.”* The Companions asked, *“O Messenger of Allah, how can someone steal from his Salat?”* He pbuh said, *“he does not fulfill (the conditions) the Rukua and its Sujud.”* Or he pbuh said, *“whose back does not come to a complete rest during Rukua and Sujud.”*

For these reasons, the pious used to ready themselves appropriately to prayer. A scholar said, *“humility is the case when all of the person’s components are tranquil. He shall remain solemn in reverence of Allah, the most Exalted and avoid turning his head. When someone stands for prayer, he would fear Allah and avoid turning his face. He would also avoid playing with parts of his body, or be thinking of worldly affairs until he finishes prayer.”*

Dear Believers,

Among the things that can help achieve reverence in prayer is revering its status and staying focused. This is because losing concentration shall open the door for thinking about matters of life and other wandering thoughts, hence distracting the worshipper and causing him to recall nothing from his prayer. Also thinking deeply of the meanings of the verses said in prayer, whether by him or the Imam, can greatly help the person attain humility and increases his faith. Allah the Almighty said, **“And when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely.”** (Al Anfal: 2).

Bearing this in mind, we seek Allah’s grace to help us be amongst those who stand humbly for prayer, submit to Allah in awe when they are in front of Him, listen and respond at Allah’s remembrance, feel content with what they were given and benefit from their knowledge.

May Allah help us also to obey Him and those He has ordained upon us to obey pursuant to His injunctions: "**O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you.**" (Annisaa:59).

May Allah bless you and me with the ability to implement the Holy Quran and the Sunna of His Messenger Muhammad pbuh. I say this and pray to Allah, the Almighty, to grant us forgiveness. Supplicate to Allah for forgiveness for He is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful.

Second sermon

Praise be to Allah. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, having no associates. I also bear witness that our Master Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, who was true to his promise. May the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, his companions and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

As to what follows, I urge you to obey Allah and be aware that humility is not only a matter of how the body stands and moves, but also of how far the soul is inclined to submit to Allah and contemplate over verses of the Quran. This way both the body and soul unite and submit to Allah in utmost humility, hence the purpose of Salat is achieved.

Once attained, reverence in prayer will bring out tranquillity wide and large all over the nation. This will start with families treating each other with mercy, fathers behaving compassionately with their dependents, the rich sympathising with the poor, and people showing tolerance amongst them. Worshippers will thus keep away from sources of evil or misdeeds, helping the community to emerge secure and tranquil. In fact, this is the ultimate goal of prayer, for Allah the Almighty says, "**Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.**" (Al Ankaboot: 45).

The sincere humility lies, however, in the heart and indulges the rest of the body. Abu Dardaa, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "seek refuge of Allah from humility of hypocrisy." They said, "O what is humility of hypocrisy?" He said, "that you see the body stands in reverence while the heart is less humble."

Umar Ibn al Khattab once looked at a young man, who was bending his head down, and addressed him saying, "O [young] man, hold your head and know that humility is no more than what is in the heart."

Dear Muslims,

Allah has asked you to abide by an order He has been the first to undertake, then His angels, for He says, "**Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace.**" (Al Ahzab : 56).

The Prophet pbuh said, "for everyone who invokes a blessing on me will receive ten blessings from Allah." May the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon our Master Muhammad pbuh, his family and all his Companions. May Allah be pleased with the

Rightly Guided Caliphs and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

O Allah, we seek Your favour to let our hearts be full of Your gratitude and keep our tongue moist with Your remembrance. May Allah bless us with good provision, accepted work, well-being in mind and body and blessed living life and progeny. O Allah guide us to know what is good, make us benefit from what we have learnt, and increase our knowledge.

O Allah, Give us piety and purify our souls. You are the Master and the Lord of souls. O Sustainer, amend our intentions, grant that our spouses and our offspring be a joy to our eyes and make success be an ally to us. O Allah, give us rain and do not make us among the despondent. O Allah, relieve us, O Allah, relieve us, O Allah, relieve us.

O Allah, we implore You at this instant not to let a sin unforgiven, a distress unrelieved, an illness unhealed or a handicapped without relief, a dead without mercy or a debt unsettled. Our Lord, give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire.

May Allah grant our leader HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and his Deputy, HH Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, success and provide strength and assistance to his brothers, Their Highness The Rulers of the Emirates, and his trustworthy Crown Prince HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

O Allah, forgive all of the Muslims, men and women, living and dead, and make blessings follow us and them. May Allah have mercy on Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Maktoum and all their brothers, the Late UAE Sheikhs. O Lord, forgive and show mercy, You are the Ever Merciful and there is no strength or power save with Allah, the High, the Great.

We pray to Allah, the Most Gracious, to continue blessing the UAE and all Muslim countries with safety and security.

O servants of Allah, remember Allah and He will remember you. Be grateful for His benevolence He will increase His blessings to you. Allah, the Most High, says, "**And establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.**" (Al Ankaboot: 45).