



Obstacles To Khushoo', Virtues of Prayer at Home and in the Mosque¹

From the book, "as-Salaat wa Atharuhaa Fee Ziyaadatul Imaan..."

Trans. Abu Iyaad Amjad Rafiq

1. Weak Eemaan in the Meeting with Allaah.

Allaah the Exalted said: **Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer. Indeed it is hard except upon those who are humble and submissive. Those who know with certainty² that they are to meet their Lord and that to Him they will return.³**

Allaah the Exalted has explained one of the characteristics of the khaashi'een (those who are humble and submissive, filled with awe) that they are the ones who are fully certain that they will indeed meet their Lord, the Sublime, and that they will return to Him.

This is knowledge of the meeting with Allaah and the final return to Him. Any deficiency in this knowledge is deficiency in khushoo'. This belief (in the meeting with Allaah) will make you hold yourself to account by necessity so that you are made to beautify the prayer and your conduct is corrected and made upright.

2. The Whispering of Shaytaan.

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) reported that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "When the call to prayer is made, Shaytaan flees on his heels and passes wind with noise during his flight so that he does not hear the adhaan. When the adhaan is completed he comes back. When the iqamah is pronounced he takes to his heels again until it is completed. Then he returns again and whispers into the heart of the person

¹ I have mentioned some points under this section without expanding upon them or providing evidence since they have already been mentioned in previous sections.

² The word 'yadhunnoona' has been used, meaning: 'they know'. Ibn Katheer said in his Tafseer: "The Arabs call Yaqeen (certainty) Dhann and also Shakk (doubt) Dhann." He also quotes the saying of Mujaahid: "Every dhann in the Qur'aan is knowledge" and said: "This isnaad is Saheeh."

³ Surah Baqarah 2:45-46.

(so that the person starts thinking about other things) and says to him: Remember this and remember that. So the person remembers those things which were not in his mind before the prayer began and as a result he forgets how much he has prayed.”⁴

3. Heedlessness and the Hawaa (whims)

4. Excessive Concern with the World

5. Abandoning the Mosque and the Congregational Prayer.

Abu Dardaa (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “There are no three persons in a town or bedouins (in the desert) amongst whom the prayer is not established (in congregation) except that Shaytaan has gained mastery over them. So observe prayer in congregation as the wolf eats the lonely animal.”⁵

6. Lack of Love for one’s Muslim Brothers for the sake of Allaah

The Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, you will not enter Paradise until you believe and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I not direct you to something which if you were to do would cause you to love one another? Increase in giving salutations to one another.”⁶

Entering into Paradise, therefore, has been linked with loving for the sake of Allaah the Exalted, and khushoo’ is the path towards Paradise. Neither Paradise nor khushoo’ will be made easy except with strengthening the ties of love for the sake of Allaah the Exalted.

7. Not straightening the rows.

8. Oppressing the Servants of Allaah and not fulfilling their rights.

⁴ Reported by Bukhaaree, Muslim and others.

⁵ Reported by Ahmad in his [Musnad], Abu Daawood and others.

⁶ Reported by Muslim and others from Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu).

9. Turning around (looking around) during the prayer and raising one's eyesight to the sky.

Qataadah (radiallaahu anhu) reported that Anas told saying: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "What is the matter with the people that they raise their eyes to the sky during their prayer?" He continued to say this sternly until he said: "Either the people will refrain from this or their eyesight will be snatched away from them."⁷

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) reported that the Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Either the people will stop from raising their eyes to the sky while supplicating in the prayer or their sight will be snatched from them."⁸

Ibn Umar (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Do not raise your eyesight to the sky during the prayer so that it is swiped away from you."⁹

And also there occurs in the hadeeth: "...And Allaah commands you with prayer, so when you pray do not turn around (i.e. look around) as Allaah directs His Face towards the face of His servant while he is praying, so long as he does not turn around."¹⁰

10. Praying upon something which is colourful or attractive, something which has been ornamented or something with pictures upon it.

Aaishah (radiallaahu anhaa) reports that the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) prayed in a shirt which had marks on it. He took a glance at these marks during the prayer and when he finished he said: "Take this shirt of

⁷ Reported by Bukhaaree, Chapter: Raising the Eyesight to the Sky During Prayer.

⁸ Reported by Muslim, Chapter: Prohibition of Raising the Eyesight to the Sky During Prayer.

⁹ Reported by Ibn Maajah and at-Tirmidhee. It is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami'], no. 7157.

¹⁰ Part of a hadeeth reported by at-Trimidhee who said: "Hadeeth Hasan Saheeh" and it is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami'], no. 553.

Ibn al-Qayyim (rh) said: "Turning around in the prayer is of two types: The First: The turning of the heart away from Allaah Azzawajall to other things besides Him. The Second: Turning of the eyesight. Both of them have been forbidden and Allaah does not cease to face His servant so long as he faces Him in his prayer. If he turns away with his heart or eyesight, Allaah turns away from him." Quoted by Ahmad Fareed in his book [Risaalah Taqdeer Qadr is-Salaat] [Translators note]

mine to Abu Jahm and bring me his Inbijaaniyyah¹¹ as it just diverted me from my prayer."¹²

Ai'shah (radiallaahu anhaa) also reports that the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "I was looking at its marks while I was in prayer and I feared that it might put me to trial."¹³

Anas (radiallaahu anhu) reports that Ai'shah used to have a Qiraam¹⁴ with which she used to screen one side of the room. The Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Take this qiraam of yours away from me because its pictures do not cease to be displayed in front of me during my prayer (i.e. divert my attention from the prayer)."¹⁵

SOME BENEFITS WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION

1. Be eager - may Allaah protect you - for the nawaafil and sunan prayers before and after the obligatory prayers because they make up for the deficiencies in the obligatory prayers. The Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "The first thing for which a servant will be called to account is his prayer. If he had completed it and perfected it, it is written for him as such. And if he had not completed it and perfected it Allaah says to the angels: "Look and see, do you find and voluntary (prayers) for My servant so that the obligatory ones may be completed by them?" The matter of zakah (obligatory charity) is treated in the same way and likewise the rest of the actions."¹⁶

Aa'id bin Qart (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Whoever performs a prayer which he has not perfected may add to it (i.e. make up for its shortcomings) by his superogatory prayers until it is made up for."¹⁷

2. Be eager also, to catch the Takbeerat ul-Ihraam (the opening takbeer) for forty days in succession as this frees a servant from hypocrisy and delivers him from the Fire - if Allaah wills. This is due to what has been reported from Anas (radiallaahu anhu) that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu

¹¹ A coarse garment made of wool which has no marks on it.

¹² Reported by Bukhaaree and Muslim.

¹³ Reported by Bukhaaree.

¹⁴ A soft colourful cloth made of wool.

¹⁵ Reported by Bukhaaree.

¹⁶ Reported by Ahmad in his [Musnad], Abu Dawood, Ibn Maajah, and al-Haakim from Tameem ad-Daaree (radiallaahu anhu) and it is Hasan. See [Saheeh ul-Jaami'], no. 2571.

¹⁷ Reported by at-Tabaraanee in [al-Kabeer] and it is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami'], no. 6224.

alaihi wasallam) said: "Whoever prays in congregation and catches the opening takbeer for forty days, it will be written that he has been declared free from two things: Free from the Fire and free from hypocrisy."¹⁸

3. Leave a part of your prayer for the house, because you will acquire a great deal of good from it. Jaabir (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "When one of you has performed the prayer in the mosque, let him leave a part of his prayer for his house for Allaah causes much good for him in his house on account of his prayer."¹⁹

There also occurs in the hadeeth: "Pray, O people, in your houses, as the most excellent prayer is the prayer of a man in his house, except for the obligatory prayers."²⁰

In another hadeeth there occurs: "The prayer of one of you in his house is more excellent than his prayer in this mosque of mine except for the obligatory prayers."²¹

Thus, the superogatory prayer which is performed in ones house is better than prayer in the Prophet's (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) mosque despite the fact that prayer which is performed in the Prophet's mosque is given a multiplied reward, a thousand times as much as an ordinary prayer.²²

Likewise, the superiority of nafl prayers in the house is like the superiority of the obligatory prayers compared to the nafl prayers. This is due to what has been reported from Suhaib bin an-Nu'maan (radiallaahu anhu) who said: The Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: The superiority of the prayer of a man in his house over his prayer where others see him is like the superiority of the obligatory prayers over the superogatory prayers."²³

4. Do not become negligent of completing and perfecting your rukoo' and sujood so that you do not become the biggest thief amongst people as occurs in his (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) saying: "The greatest thief amongst people is the one who steals from his prayer. He does not complete its rukoo'

¹⁸ Reported by at-Tirmidhee and it is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami'], no. 6241.

¹⁹ Reported by Muslim and others.

²⁰ Reported by Bukhaaree and others.

²¹ Reported by Abu Daawood and others. It is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami'], no. 3708.

²² Due to his (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) saying: "A prayer in my mosque is better than a thousand prayers in any other mosque except the Masjid ul-Haraam." Reported by Muslim and others.

²³ Reported by at-Tabaraanee in [al-Kabeer], al-Bayhaqee in [as-Sunan] and others. It is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami'], no. 4093.

nor its sujood. And the most miserly of people is the one who is miserly in giving salutations.”²⁴

I cannot find a word more appropriate and effective than the word ‘greatest thief’ for the dislike of one who does not complete and perfect the rukoo’ and the sujood. Stealing is blameworthy from the point of view of the sharee’ah, fitrah and unanimous agreement. When the thief steals he takes something from other than himself. When a man falls short of performing the rukoo’ and sujood properly he has taken that which does not belong to him and it is not permissible for him to do this because prayer is for Allaah the Exalted, not for a person himself. As this matter is known only to the one who is guilty of it, it becomes easy for him to take from his prayer, however much this may please him, without fear of people or fear of them finding out and so it is befits him to be called the greatest thief amongst them.

Do not also forget that whoever does not complete his rukoo’ and sujood has been threatened with dying on a religion other than the religion of Muhammad (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) - and refuge is sought in Allaah the Exalted. This has been reported by Waasil from Abu Waa’il who said that Hudhaifah (radiallaahu anhu) saw a man who did not complete his rukoo’ and sujood. When the man had completed his prayer, Hudhaifah said to him: You have not prayed. He (Abu Waa’il) said and I reckon he said: If you died you would have died on a sunnah other than that of Muhammad (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam).²⁵

5. Be zealous also for the first row in the mosque. That is best of rows as is mentioned in the hadeeth: “The best row for men is the first row and the worst of them the last one and the best row for women is the last one and the worst of them the first one.”²⁶

A man never ceases to delay himself from being in the first row except that Allaah delays his stay in the Hellfire, even if he is to be amongst the people of Paradise later, just like the Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) has

²⁴ Reported by at-Tabaraanee in [al-Awsat] from Abdullaah bin Mughaffal (radiallaahu anhu). It is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami’], no. 977.

²⁵ Reported by Bukhaaree. One of the noble brothers reminded me of a hadeeth which is traced back to the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) so I returned to it and in it there occurs: That the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) saw a man who was not completing his rukoo’ and was pecking in his sujood while he was praying. Then he (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “If this man died he would have died on a religion other than that of Muhammad.” Reported by Abu Ya’laa in his [Musnad], and Ibn Asaakir with a Hasan isnaad. Ibn Khuzaimah and others declared it Saheeh. It is also mentioned in “The Prophets Prayer Described” by Shaikh al-Albaanee.

²⁶ Reported by Muslim, Abu Daawood and others.

said: "A people do not cease delaying themselves from the first row (in prayer) except that Allaah delays (their stay) in the Hellfire."²⁷

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree (radiallaahu anhu) said that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) saw that some of his companions lagging behind (i.e. making themselves distant from the Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam)) so he (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said to them: "Come forward and join me (to make the prayer more complete) and let those who are after you also do the same with you (i.e. come closer to you)."²⁸

In another hadeeth their occurs: "Attend the Jumu'ah prayer and come close to the imaam. Indeed a man does not cease making himself distant (from the imaam, i.e. the first row) until his entry into Paradise is delayed, even if he was to enter it (i.e. even if he was one of its inhabitants)."²⁹

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) reports that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "If the people knew the reward for pronouncing the adhaan and for standing in the first row and found no other way to get to that except by drawing lots, they would draw lots and if they knew the reward for coming to the prayer in the early moments of its stated time they would race for it (come early) and if they knew the reward for Ishaah and Fajr prayers (in congregation) they would have come to offer them, even if they had to crawl."³⁰

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) also said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "If you knew (of if they knew) what is in the first row (of reward) there would have been a ballot (for it)."³¹

6. Be eager for prayer behind an imaam who gives the recitation of the qur'aan in the prayer its due right, one who makes his observance of the rules of tajweed and tarteel excellent and one who has a beautiful and effective voice. If you do not find this in a mosque which is close by you then try to find another mosque even if it is for just some of the prayers because a beautiful voice increases the qur'aan in beauty as is mentioned in the hadeeth which is reported by Al-Baraa'a (radiallaahu anhu) that the Prophet

²⁷ Reported by Abu Daawood and Ibn Khuzaimah and Ibn Hibbaan declared it Saheeh. It is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami'], no. 7576.

²⁸ Reported by Muslim and others.

²⁹ Reported by Ahmad in his [Musnad], Abu Daawood and others. It is also in [Saheeh ul- Jaami'], no. 198.

³⁰ Reported by Bukhaaree, Muslim and others.

³¹ Reported by Muslim and Ibn Maajah.

(sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “Beautify the qur’aan with your voices, because the beautiful voice increases the qur’aan in beauty.”³²

And Jaabir (radiallaahu anhu) reports that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “The one with the best voice amongst mankind is the one who when you hear him recite, you can see that he fears Allaah and holds Him in awe.”³³

³² Reported by Abu Daawood and others. It is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami’], no. 3575.

³³ Reported by Ibn Maajah and is also in [Saheeh ul-Jaami’], no. 2198.