

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَواتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ。 أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ۔
الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا حَالِدُونَ۔
وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا صَلَّى يُنَاجِي رَبَّهُ۔

SALAH

Honorable Muslims!

Among the acts of worship that bring peace and happiness to our worldly life and lead to eternal Paradise in the Hereafter, salah holds the foremost place. The one who performs salah turns their face toward our qiblah, the Ka‘bah, and their direction toward their Lord. They purify their body from impurities and their heart from sins. They elevate their soul as if on mi‘raj and bring serenity to their heart.

Dear Believers!

Salah is a journey of servitude that begins with takbir and concludes with salam. Each takbir is a proclamation that there is no deity except Allah. Each qiyam is a symbol of never consenting to injustice and oppression. Each qira‘ah is to strengthen one's connection with the Holy Qur'an. Each ruku‘ is an act of humility; each sajdah is a submission to Allah. Each tahiyyat is an expression of the kalimah al-shahadah. Each salam is a pledge to be a Muslim from whose hand and tongue others are safe.

Esteemed Muslims!

As life continues to flow, we must take salah as our guide. When our hearts feel constricted, we must rise with salah. In times of hardship or illness, we should seek refuge in our Lord through salah. Amid the rush of the day, we should soothe our soul through salah. In the silence of the night, we should attain our spiritual revival through salah. In the mosque, at home, at school, in the workplace, out in the fields, or in the garden, we should turn to the mercy and forgiveness of Allah the Almighty through salah. For indeed, salah is the mi‘raj of the believer. As the Prophet Muhammad (saw) stated, “The key to Paradise is salah.”¹ The strongest bond that will sustain the love between the Creator and His servants is salah. The most excellent path that will distance people from evil and lead them to goodness is salah. It is also

salah that unites believing hearts in the same row, strengthening unity, solidarity, and brotherhood.

Honorable Believers!

Salah is a great mercy. Our beloved Prophet (saw) stated in a hadith, “Whenever anyone of you stands for the prayer, he is speaking in private to his Lord.”² Therefore, neglecting salah without a legitimate excuse in the sight of Islam is to be deprived of conversing with Allah the Almighty. Postponing salah with the thought of “I will pray later anyway” is to weaken the pillar of the religion. Neglecting salah by becoming absorbed in worldly occupations is to deprive oneself of divine grace. Our Exalted Lord states in the Holy Qur'an, “Bid your people to pray, and be diligent in 'observing' it.”³

Noble Muslims!

On the night connecting this coming Thursday to Friday, we will observe the Night of Mi‘raj, when we were blessed with the gift of the five daily prayers. This blessed night once again reminds us of the esteemed status of Masjid al-Aqsa in the sight of Allah the Almighty. It conveys the message that we must uphold the sanctity of mosques and masjids, which are symbols of tawhid and unity. Let us also take the Night of Mi‘raj as an opportunity to gather in the mosques and be in the presence of our Lord. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder in the same row before our Lord in devotion. Let us meet in prostration to attain the glad tidings of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), who said, “The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself.”⁴ Let us repent for the mistakes and sins we have committed. Let us offer our supplications to Allah the Almighty for the safety of our homeland, the perpetuity of our state, peace and harmony for all humanity, and the freedom of Masjid al-Aqsa and Gaza.

On this occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations in advance for the Night of Mi‘raj. I would like to conclude this Friday’s khutbah with the following glad tidings from our Exalted Lord: “Successful indeed are the believers: those who are ‘properly’ observant of their prayers. These are the ones who will be awarded Paradise as their own. They will be there forever.”⁵

¹ Tirmidhi, Taharah, 1.

² Bukhari, Salah, 36.

³ Ta-Ha, 20/132.

⁴ Muslim, Salat, 215.

⁵ Mu‘minun 23/9-11.

