

SALAT-O-SALAM

UPON PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ IS AN IMPORTANT DUTY OF A MUSLIM

Surely, Allah and His angels send blessings to the Prophet. O you who believe, do pray to Allah to bless him, and send your Salam (prayer for his being in peace) to him in abundance. (Al-Qur'an 33:56)

Invoking blessings and peace for the Prophet (Muhammad) ﷺ is an important Part of Islam. Praying to Allah ta'ala, the Almighty God, to bless the Prophet s even more and to send Salam to the Prophet is called Salat-o- Salam. Because of the verse above, Muslim scholars state in unison that Salat-o-Salam upon the Prophet ﷺ, at least once in life, is fardh (obligatory) upon every Muslim. This is a duty which is the same as Salah, Saum, Zakah and Hajj. In addition, in any sitting where the name of the Prophet ﷺ is mentioned, it is wājib (compulsory) for Muslims to invoke blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ at least once. Otherwise a sin shall be marked in their heavenly records.

Why?

The Prophet ﷺ is a source of blessings for his people. For invoking every blessing, the believer receives a response, one from the Prophet ﷺ, who is informed about the invocation and second from the Almighty God. The Prophet s responds to his dua and the Almighty covers him with mercy from all four sides.

Secondly, it strengthens the bond between a believer and the Prophet ﷺ. The more one remembers the Prophet ﷺ, with reverence

and love, the more he increases in love and Imān.

Islam emphasizes keeping ties with the kith and kin. Friends may be the family that one chooses, but the family that is chosen by the Creator should also be treated with diligence and care. Any effort that one makes towards preserving his ties with the kith and kin earns him extra. It is worth noting that out of all those who have a right over one, the Prophet ﷺ is the most important. Preserving ties with him is more important than any other relationship. This is because Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

'The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers';

Invoking blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ is a means to strengthen this relationship. By constantly engaging in salāt-o-salam, one is able to remind himself of the central stage that the Prophet ﷺ holds in his life.

The Prophet is not God, nor is he a son of God or a partner with Him. The Prophet is a servant of Allah, a human-being, created by the Almighty God. Invoking blessings and peace upon the Prophet ensures that one is never confused about the true nature of God being one.

Mahabbat with the Prophet ﷺ :

A firm bond of reverence, affection and love with the Prophet ﷺ is called 'mahabbat' for him. This bond of mahabbat is an important

part of faith. A companion came to the Prophet ﷺ and enquired about the Day of Judgment that when shall it be. The Prophet ﷺ asked him if he had made any preparations for this Day. He replied, 'I do not hold much salah or saum to my credit but I hold the true love of Allah and His Rasool in my heart'. Upon hearing this, the Prophet ﷺ remarked, 'surely one shall be [on the Day of Judgment] with the one whom he loved'. The constant invoking of blessings upon the Prophet increases one in love and affection for the Prophet ﷺ, leading to him earning the company of the Prophet ﷺ on the Day of Judgment.

This stronger bond of love and affection in itself is a great asset as it shall lead to the salvation in the here-after, it further makes it easy for one to abandon the path of evil and adopt a purer approach in life, as the effects of this bonding appear in his character and in his dealings with the people around him.

Hafiz Ibne Hajr (may Allah ta'ala have mercy upon him) has recorded a tradition in his work 'Munabbihāt', which manifests the effects of a stronger bond with the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ was once sitting among his companions, he remarked, 'Three things of this world are very dear to me: Perfume, Women and Salah – [the daily prayer, which is] the comfort of my eyes'.

'Quite true', rejoined Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, 'And I cherish three things: a look at your face, spending of my wealth upon you and that my daughter is your wife, O Messenger of Allah!'.

'Quite true', said Umar رضي الله عنه, 'And the three I love most are; enforcing that which is right, forbidding evil and wearing old clothes'.

'Quite true', said Usmān رضي الله عنه, 'And three I love most are: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and reciting the Qur'an'.

'Quite true', said Ali رضي الله عنه, 'And I love the three things most: serving a guest, fasting on a very hot day and smiting the enemy with my sword'.

In this tradition we see how the very objectives of life, for these noble companions, were transformed. Transformation of their character owed entirely to the devotion they had shown the Prophet ﷺ. They no longer dreamt of amassing wealth, nor indulging in pleasure and self-gratification, despite being aware that this was not totally prohibited, instead they craved to serve the others.

Similar was the overall state of the other companions of the Prophet ﷺ. This transformation in them came about because of the Prophet ﷺ and because of their absolute love and affection for him, leading to them surrendering before him unconditionally. They were not the most learned, yet were blessed with a character which simply was the best.

The benefits:

The Prophet ﷺ said, 'One who invokes blessings upon me, the angels invoke blessings upon him. So it is then his choice, whether he does less or more'. (Ibn Maajah, Amir b. Rabi'ah رضي الله عنه)

The Prophet ﷺ also said, 'Jibra'il عليه السلام came to me to say that anyone who invokes blessings upon you shall receive ten blessings from me, and anyone who invokes salām (peace) upon you shall receive ten salāms from me'. (Nasa'ie, Abu-Talha رضي الله عنه)

The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Indeed, the closest person to me on the Day of Judgment is he who invokes blessings upon me most abundantly'. (Tirmidhi)

He ﷺ also said, 'Invoke blessings upon me abundantly, for you shall be questioned regarding me in the grave'. The Scholars explain that 'invoking in abundance' means at least three hundred times' Imam Mustaghfiri r.a. narrates a tradition that 'The one who invokes one hundred blessings upon me daily, one hundred of his needs shall be fulfilled: thirty in this world and the rest in the Hereafter'. (Shaykh Muhammad Zakariya, p. 24-25)

How?

The companions having learnt about the command regarding Salāt o Salam had enquired the Prophet ﷺ about its method. The Prophet ﷺ taught them the words of the Salāt o Salam, which are repeated towards the end of every daily prayer. These are the best words to invoke blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ.

However, at other occasions he ﷺ taught other words too. A number of scholars have compiled such transmission from the Prophet ﷺ. many of these are available from 'www.fcpm.org'

The recommended words for Salāt o Salam vary. Some are longer than the others. Depending upon the length of time available, one should opt for a shorter, medium or longer version of Salāt o Salam.

It is better to restrict oneself to the words that are selected by the Prophet ﷺ. it is further better that one sits down, facing towards the Ka'bah and recites his Salat o Salam softly. This is because this is how it is

recited in the daily prayers, which are taught by the Prophet ﷺ.

When?

When entering or going out of a Masjid: The Prophet ﷺ said, 'When one of you enters the Masjid, he should invoke blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ and then say, 'O Allah, open for me the doors of your mercy.' When he leaves the Masjid, he should invoke blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ and say, 'O Allah, open for me the doors of your grace'. (Abu-Dawud, Nasa'ie, Abu Humayd d)

In every dua. (supplication): 'Once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sitting [in the Masjid], a man entered and performed prayer. He then said, 'O Allah, forgive me and have mercy on me'. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'you have been hasty, O the one performing prayer! When you have performed your prayer, praise Allah in a manner that befits Him, then invoke blessings upon me, and finally supplicate him. Another man came and he did as the Prophet ﷺ had prescribed. The Prophet ﷺ said to him, 'Supplicate, for you will be answered'. (Tirmidhi, Abu-Dawud, Nasa'ie)

Upon hearing the Adhān (Call to Prayer): The Prophet ﷺ said, 'When you hear the mu'addhin [calling to prayer], say as he says, then invoke blessings upon me'. (Muslim, Abu-Dawud, Abdullah b. Amr b. Al-'As ؓ)

When a body part becomes numb: the Prophet ﷺ said, 'when a hand or feet of yours becomes numb, say, 'O Allah! Invoke blessings upon (Prophet) Muhammad and his family as you did upon Ibrahim a and his family. Surely, you are Praiseworthy and Majestic'. Same is recommended for others who feel unwell.

In every sitting: The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘No people assemble in a gathering, wherein they do not remember Allah and invoke blessings upon their Prophet, except that it will be a burden for them on the Day of Judgment. If Allah wills He will punish them, and if He wills He will forgive them’. (Ahmad, Abu-Dawud (Abu-Hurairah ﷺ))

Upon hearing the mention of the Prophet ﷺ :

This has been recommended in a famous Hadith, along with sparing time to serve one’s parents in their old age and for worship during the month of Ramadhan. (H.kim, Ibn Hibb.n, Ka’b b. Ujrah ﷺ)

Upon becoming enraged: it is an established tradition amongst Arabs that if they see someone in rage or a two ready to fight, someone says aloud to both, ‘Invoke blessings upon the Prophet’. One start reciting the Salāt-o-salām and the other backs off too. Salat o Salam is a tradition that needs to be revived amongst all our communities.

On Fridays and the Night before: The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Invoke blessings upon me abundantly on Friday, for it is a day in which the angles are present. Nobody sends blessings upon me except that his blessings are presented to me as soon as he has invoked them’. (Ibn M.jah, Abu Darda’ ﷺ)

How often?

Sayyiduna Ubayy ibn Ka’b ﷺ says, ‘I asked, O Messenger of Allah, I wish to invoke blessings upon you abundantly. How much of my time set aside for supplication should I devote to this purpose?’ The Prophet s replied, ‘As much as you like’. I asked, ‘One quarter?’ He ﷺ replied, ‘If you like, but if you do more it shall be better for you’. I further enquired, ‘One

half?’ He ﷺ replied, ‘If you like, but if you do more it shall be better for you’. I asked, ‘Two thirds?’ the Prophet ﷺ replied, ‘If you wish, but if you do more it shall be better for you’. I said, ‘I shall devote all my time to invoke blessings upon you’.

The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘In that case all your worries shall be taken care of and your sins will be forgiven’. (Tirmidhi)

Many Masjids around the country make an extra effort to revive the tradition of Salat-o-salam. Special sessions are held where the participants engage individually in this blessed practice. During the early years of Islam, this was a norm in every gathering, but with passing time, a need was felt to hold special such sessions. Since this combines the element of tarbiyah and ‘ibadah it is worth taking part to pick up good habits.

AlMasjid recommends for its members to allocate a little time to sit for this blessed practice on Thursday nights (or on Fridays during the day). The target usually for each participant is to recite Salat-o-salam up to 3000 times. This can be done at home or in a Masjid. If it is difficult to do it in one attempt, it can be done in a number of sittings during the week.