

Introduction

The place and importance of *as-salaa* (obligatory prayer) – or, *namaaz*, as it is known in Persian – in the Muslim scheme of things cannot be overstated. It has been said that, on the Day of Judgement, the very first inquiry made by the Almighty of a Muslim is going to be about prayer; a Persian saying states: *awwalleen pursish e namaaz bood*. To offer prayer regularly and punctually is considered to be the first and foremost duty of every Muslim man and woman; it is illustrated in Prophetic Tradition (*Hadith*) by the incident when Ali ibn Abu Taalib missed his 'asr (late afternoon) prayer and the Prophet miraculously instructed the Sun to roll back Time a little – which it duly did - so that Ali could perform his prayer at the right time. Also, great emphasis is laid upon performing and 'acting out' one's prayer meticulously. In this regard, a number of points are discussed ranging from the geographical accuracy of *qiblah* (direction) to the precise gap between one's feet while in *qiyaam* (standing position).

Despite all that, we are faced with the undeniable fact that the Quran, the Muslim Scripture, does *not* contain detailed, categorical instructions about this ritual of primary importance. At best, one finds somewhat vague information on the timing and certain body movements. There is certainly nothing to be found about the number of daily prayers neither is there any guidance about the changes this ritual may go through while a Muslim is travelling in space, living on planets other than Earth, or even certain regions of Earth itself, such as the Poles. To compound matters further, the term *as-salaa* has been used in the Quran for expressions and meanings which are very clearly other than the ritual obligatory prayer.

This state of affairs gives rise to a number of intriguing and nagging questions. Is *as-salaa* the equivalent of *namaaz*? Why is the Quran vague on this popularly the most important ritual? Is it a ritual, anyway? Or, is it an *institution* with a much wider context than being one of the personal rituals? What broader picture emerges if one considers various linguistic applications of *as-salaa*? In short, what is the *Quranic* concept of it as compared to the *Islamic*? These, among others, are the questions which have been dealt with in this translation of an excerpt from *Lughaat al Qur'aan* ('Language of the Quran'), pp. 1034-46, the monumental Urdu work on the lexicon of the Muslim Scripture by the late Mr G A Parwez, the founder of the Tolu-e-Islam Movement, published in January, 1961, by Idara Tolu-e-Islam, Lahore, Pakistan.

Khalid Mahmood Sayyed

As-Salaat (Gist)

Salaat is one of the fundamental principles of Islam. In the Qur'an the word *Salaat* and its numerous forms, derived from verbal roots **Sa'd lam waw** and **Sa'd, lam ya**, have been profusely used. *Al-musalli* is horse, which occupies the second spot in a race but runs so close that its ears brush the rear portion of the winning horse-(the one in front). The basic meaning of this root is to follow a leader closely and constantly in every walk of life. So *Salaat* means:

- To remain attached to the Laws of Allah, to remain within the parameters of the Laws of Allah and to remain devoted to the Book of Allah. As such, *tasleah* means to walk behind a person without overtaking him, but so closely that there remains hardly any gap between the two, and also to follow him by remaining devoted to him. On the basis of this, Raghib says, "The verse of the Qur'an *lam naku minal-Musalliin* (74:43) - we were not *Musalliin* -means that we were not the followers of the *Ambia* (Messengers)."
- To tread a balanced and straight path. This happens to be a *du'a* (entreaty), the Qur'an teaches us in its very first Surah (Al-Fatiha). A Muslim always desires to be on the 'straight and balanced path because he has to uncompromisingly follow Allah, Who continuously stays on a straight and balanced path - *Sir'at-al-Mustaqeem*(11:56). To follow Allah is to adhere willingly to His laws as enshrined in the Qur'an and to imbibe in one's personality Allah's most balanced attributes (called *Asmaul Husna*); of course, as closely as humanly possible.

- The method to carry out the duties. In *Surah Noor* (24:41) Allah poses a question: "Have you not pondered over the fact that whatever is there in the universe, including the birds with wings outspread, is continuously accomplishing its assignments with utmost sincerity because it is well aware of its duties (*tasbih*) and the method (*Salaat*) to carry them out." This obviously means that by instinctive drive *everything and every being in the universe knows as to what its tasbih and Salaat are*; the course it has to take and where it is destined for, and the cycle of struggle it has to undergo. This is called its *tasbih* and *Salaat* (For *tasbih* see *siin ba ha* – *Lughat- ul-Quran* vol. 2, p. 834). But Man has not been endowed with this instinctive know-how. He has been told of his duties and methods through *wahi* (revelation). As far as man's physical needs are concerned, he can gain knowledge about them through thought, consciousness, deliberation, intellect, experience and observation. But for the development of his personality and his needs of 'humanity' he has to rely on *wahi*. As such, for a man to know as to what his *tasbih* and *Salaat* are he has to know and to have faith in *wahi*. And in order to fulfil this objective it becomes essential to act as per the programme of *wahi*. This is, according to Quran, *iqamat-e- Salaat*- establishing the system of *Salaat*. To follow the Laws of the Quran is *wa yuqiimuunās-Salaat* (2:3). *Surah Alaq* (96:9-10) says, "When an obedient follower of Allah tries to discharge his obligatory duties then he (his enemy) puts obstacles in his way." The scope of these obligatory duties is quite wide and they encompass all aspects of life. In *Surah Hud* (11:87) it is stated: "The people of Shu'aib asked him: 'Does your *Salaat* command you that we should forsake that which our fathers (used to) worship, or that we

(should leave off) doing what we like with our own property? In other words they did not fully comprehend the structure of *Salaat* which encompasses even economic matters.

- To establish a system in accordance with the Laws of the Quran. It is not possible for a person to individually act per the programme of the *wahi* (*iqamat-e-Salaat*). This can only be done collectively within a system. That explains the Quran's use of plurals in this context. Hence, it is the responsibility of an Islamic state to establish this order. The Quran says: "They are the ones who, when given power in the land, establish (the system of) *Salaat* and *Zakat* (see *zay kaf waw* *Lugat-ul-Quran* vol. 2 p 808-811). And they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong." (22:41). Also (9:12) Elsewhere the people engaged in establishing the Divine Order are defined as people who do *Rukoo* (bow down) and *Sajda* (prostrate or fully surrender before the Laws of Allah). (For *rukoo* see *ra kaf ayn* and for *sajda* see *siin jüm daal*, *Lugat-ul-Quran* p. 778 and 844-851). It is for this reason that at another place (42:38) *iqamat-e-Salaat* and mutual consultation for the State's political affairs are discussed together: "They establish *Salaat* and (then) resolve their affairs through mutual consultation." And since all the affairs of the Muslim community are resolved in the light of the Laws of Allah (Book of Allah) therefore in *Sura Araaf* (7:170) *yummassikuu-na bil Kitaabi* and *aqaa-mus-Salaah* are placed together. As such, *iqamat-e-Salaat* means to establish a system in which all participating persons are consistent in following the laws of the Quran, and in this way remain in harmony with the Quran. In order to highlight this objective the Quran has used the word *tawallaa* as an antonym of *sallaa* (75:31-32).

Tawallaa means to deny and flout the correct path, to find ways of digression, to turn back, to refuse to acknowledge. Therefore, *sullaa* would mean to keep moving on the correct path in accordance with the Divine Laws, and to fulfil the duties determined or fixed by the Divine System. It is on this basis that Allama Hamiduddin Farahi in his '*Mufrad-tul-Quran*' says that one of the meanings of *Salaat* is to turn towards someone, to look up to him, to be attentive, and to turn one's face (towards someone) in attention.

- To surrender completely before the Laws of Allah and not to follow one's own desires. This meaning has been beautifully elucidated in *Surah Maryam* (19:59) where *iqamat-e-Salaat* and following one's own vain desires have been placed as antonym of one another, "Such unworthy generations succeeded (the Messengers) that they ruined the system *Salaat*) and followed their own emotions and desires." It means that to follow one's own desire is to distort *Salaat* and to follow the laws of Allah is to establish and keep intact *Salaat*. In *Surah Anam* (6:93) it is stated that the guardians of *Salaat* (system) are no different from those who have *Eiman* (conviction) in the Hereafter and the Book of Allah. Ibn-e-Qutaiba (Al-Qurtain vol.1, p.13) says that indeed *Salaat* means *ad-Diin* and *iqamat-e-salaat* means *iqamat-ud-Diin*. (economic and socio-political system) Moheet and Aqrab-ul-Mwadir).
- To overcome one's defects and shortcomings. The author of '*Al-Minar*' asserts that *Salaat* is recognition of the fact, both verbally and practically, that in order to eradicate one's imperfection one needs the Guidance of the Superior Authority, who is Perfect and without any

deficiency. Owing to this Qurtabi says that *Salaat*, in fact, means to obediently follow Allah.

- To tame, to subjugate, and to arrest someone's attention. In this reference the exposition of *Salaat* would be to subdue and tame the forces of the Universe and make them obedient to Man. (Moheet-ul-Moheet).
- Reverence and admiration. In other words *As-Salaat* means to demonstrate the Greatness of the Sustainer of this Universe with your realistic programmes, like establishing a socio-economic system. This shows that *iqamat-e-Salaat* and *itaa-e-Zakat* are correlated, i.e. to chalk out a programme in accordance with the Divine Laws, follow it practically and sincerely so as to give every person a chance to develop his personality and also provide means of nourishment.
- To offer *Namaz*. The varying meanings of *Salaat* mentioned above clearly suggest that when an obedient Muslim follows the Laws of Allah in any sphere of life to discharge his obligatory duties he, in fact, is performing *Salaat* only. And for this no time, place or form is necessary. But in the Quran at certain places the word *Salaat* has been used for a particular act or ritual, commonly called *Namaz* (A Pehalvi language word not used in the Quran). For instance: verse 5:6 outlines the method of ablution, which is to be performed when you rise up for *Salaat*. Verse 4:43 prohibits a Muslim from attending a *Salaat* congregation when in a state of *Sukr* (inebriation or drowsiness). And neither recite your *Salaat* aloud nor recite it in an inaudible tone, but seek a middle course (17:110). So the purpose of *Salaat* is served only when one understands what one is saying. However, it should be noted that for a

Muslim the use of all types of intoxicants is prohibited (5:90-91) According to verse 5:101 One can curtail *Salaat* if one fears an enemy attack. Verse 4:102 gives the method of shortening of *Salaat*. And *Surah Juma-ah* (62:9-10) says, "When the call is proclaimed for *Salaat* on Friday (or at the time of congregation), hasten earnestly to the *Zikr* of Allah, and leave off business (and traffic): that is better for you if you did but know. And when *Salaat* is over, you may disperse through the land and seek of bounty of Allah: and involve yourself in 'Zikr of Allah' frequently so that you may be successful."

- At this juncture a significant point needs a short explanation. The superstitious instincts of Man concocted stories of the auspicious and the ominous. Similarly, for doing, and also for not doing, specific work he outlined certain hours of day and night with the belief that they were auspicious. The Quran, while eradicating other superstitions about time, also clarified that there is nothing auspicious or ominous about day and night and hours. As such, in Islam the very idea that things should be started at an auspicious hour is irrelevant. So even for *Salaat* the Quran says; "You can establish *Salaat* from early morning till late night" (17:78) This means that in order to establish *ad-Diin* (economic and socio-political system) the efforts of Muslims are not limited to any specific time or place. For example see *Surah* 3:190, 20:130, 50:39, etc. The whole life of a Muslim—his days and nights, his mornings and evening—is devoted in implementing the Laws of Allah. But in these efforts *Salaat* congregations also play a significant and essential role. The Quran calls them *kitaabam-mawquuta* (4:103). One meaning of these words is: a specially prescribed duty. Another interpretation

is a duty that has to be perfected on time. Thus the importance of adherence to time in congregation is obvious. The Quran specially mentions *Salaat-ul-Ishaa*. From this it is evident that during Rasoolallah's (messenger) days at least these hours were fixed for the *Salaat* congregations.

- To become subservient to Allah. This is an expanded interpretation of the word *ibadat* which is commonly but wrongly translated in English as worship. A close reading of the Quran unambiguously makes it clear that '*ibadat* of Allah' is not worship or *Pooja* as the followers of different religions perform. According to the Quran '*ibadat*' (see *qin bad dal*, page 1120 vol 3, Lughat-ul-Quran) means to follow the laws of Allah, or to become subservient to Him.' Obviously this subservience has to be accepted willingly at every step in life and in every department of worldly affairs. Its practical form is a system of State, which is established in accordance with the Quranic values. About the supporters of this system the Quran says: "They are the ones who respond to their Sustainer, and establish (the Quranic' system) *Salaat*, who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultations; who keep open (for the welfare of the humanity) that We (Allah) bestow on them for sustenance." (42:38). In these verses the point to be noted is correlation between obedience to Allah, establishment of a system (*iqamat-e-Salaat*) and conducting affairs of the State by mutual consultations. Obviously, in order to implement the laws of Allah mutual consultations are necessary to arrive at workable decisions on essential affairs. Thus for consultations assemblies become imperative. If seen in a broad spectrum these assemblies would be part of an establishment and sustaining a system, (*iqamat-e-Salat*). But in these

assemblies one more fact has also been taken into consideration – man's nature of expressing his feelings through his limbs and other parts of the body (see *ra kaf ain* and *siin jiim daal*. Lughaat-ul-Quran page 778 and 844). In reverence one bows one's head involuntarily. In submission 'the head surrenders'. Although, the Quran keeps in view the spirit behind action and facts, and does not give weight to mere formalism, but when form is required to represent an emotion or reality, it does not prohibit formalism, provided the form is not considered an end in itself. In the context of *Salaat* or (*Namaz*) the practical aspects of *sajda* and *qiyam* etc, that have come before us are for this objective. It is essential that when these emotions are practically expressed in collective form they should be in rhythmic harmony; otherwise there would be a total chaos in the congregation. To maintain discipline, harmony and unity in expressing intense respect, veneration, submission and compliance is in itself a big exercise for the development of the human personality.

The above discussion makes it amply clear that in the Quran *aqeemu-as-Salaat* has been used both for *Salaat* or *Namaz*, congregations and for *aqamat-e-Diin* (the establishment and stability of the whole system in accordance with the laws of Allah, willingly following the Laws and orders of Allah and accomplishing those obligatory duties, which an obedient *momin* is expected to perform). To find out this distinction one has to consider the whole verse and the context in which it is revealed to see what exactly is meant by *aqamat-e-Salaat*. Similarly, one has to see in what context the word *musalleen* has been used, for it has been used for *jamat-e-momineen* (as a whole) or for those participating in the *Salaat* congregation. The Quran also tells about those *musalleen* who are at the

pinnacle of human excellence (70:22-35) and about those for whom there is perdition (107:4-7)

- To respect, to bless, to encourage, to develop, to nourish, not to let decay or chaos to crop up. These are meanings that Raghīb has given of *Salle alaihe*. By keeping them in mind one can easily understand the verses of the Quran in which this root occurs with 'ala. For instance, "Allah and His *malaaiika* (*forces of nature*) encourage you; provide you with necessary means of growth, development and nourishment, and make your efforts bear fruits." (33:43). This verse is about those *momineen* who when faced with difficulties in the enforcement and establishment of *Diin* do not waver or get disheartened, but instead remain steadfast and bravely fight against all odds. Therefore, they become entitled to all the plaudits and encouragement from Allah (2:157) And with especial reference to Rasool-Allah (PBUH) the Quran says: "Allah and all the forces of nature help and encourage the Rasool in the fulfilment of his programme. O *jamaat-ul-Momineen*: You should also help your Rasool in making his programme a success. Support him so that his efforts bear fruits. (33:56). And the practical method to help him is to submit before him and follow him (48:9)". *Momineen* are, (7:157) it is said at another place: "Those who corroborate and respect him, and help him (in such a manner that) they follow the Light (Quran) which is sent down with him (7:157)." So this is the method by which a *Momin* fulfills his duty of *Salaat alaihe*.

This, then, is the *Salaat* of Allah and His *Malaaiika* on *jamat-ul-Momineen* and on Rasool-Allah. And this is *Salaat* and *Salaam* of *jamaat-ul-Momineen* on Rasool-Allah. Notice that the order of *salluu alayhi wa sal-limuu*

tasliimaa (33:56) demands a great action-orientated programme. This means that by following the laws of Allah the *Diin* brought by Rasool-Allah will prevail over all religions and philosophies of the world. On the other hand, it was said to the Rasool that when the members of *jamaat-e-Momineen* bring their earnings to donate in the way of Allah, he should accept them. And encourage them because encouragement and appreciation from you (Rasool) is an assuagement for them (9:103). They think that spending their earnings in the way of Allah is a means to be near to Allah and getting encouragement and appreciation from Rasool (9:99). (For the meaning of *Qurb-e-Allah* or to be near to Allah see the heading *Qafra ba*).

- Jewish temples. According to the Hebrew dictionary *Salawat* (plural of *Salaat*) is synagogue or praying place of Jews. In verse 22: 40 this word has been used in this context or meaning.

END

OTHER PUBLICATIONS**Islam: A Challenge To Religion**

by G.A. Parwez

The very name of the book strikes one as a paradox for it is universally accepted that Islam is one of the major religions of the world. So how could a religion challenge the very institution to which it subscribes? The author has indeed made a successful bid to prove this strange aphorism for the first time in the history of Islamic thought and his research deserves careful study. It is thought-provoking; it is revolutionary, opening new vistas and bold horizons of intellectual endeavours. It is the outcome of life-long study of one of the renowned Quranic thinkers of our times.

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QURANIC LAWS

“Quranic Laws” was written under pressing demands. It provides the code of laws for an Islamic State, and as such it may be considered a precursor of “Tabweeb-ul-Quran” (classification by Parwez in three big volumes.)

In this book the purport of the Quranic verses have also been given. Along with this, inferences have also been drawn, although this right belongs to the Legislative Assembly of an Islamic State. However, Parwez emphasises that his inferences are not more than a pointer in this direction.

Although this collection of the Quranic Laws shall benefit all Muslims in general, it shall be especially useful for those connected with legal affairs, e.g. judges, advocates, those working with the law sections of the government, members of the legislature, the constituent assemblies, and those concerned with the media.

The chapters deal with such topics as state affairs, Government Agencies, Justice, General Injunctions for Family life, Inheritance and Testament, Protection of Life and Property, and chapters pertaining to economy and Basic Human Rights etc. etc.

EXPOSITION OF THE HOLY QURAN

VOLUME :1

It was in 1983 that Allama Ghulam Ahmad Parwez undertook the project of rendering into English his celebrated work titled "*Mafhum-ul-Quran*". He could only complete up to Surah "Al-Kahaf (No. 18)—Slightly more than half the text of the Quran, when death overtook him.

The reader would notice that some of the Quranic terms are retained as such (in Arabic) in this exposition e.g. *Allah, Deen, Nabi, Rasool, Momin, Kafir* etc. These concepts have special significance in the Quran and it is just not possible to translate them in few words in English. So Glossary of terms has been added.

The reader would find a new approach in this presentation which is different from all other translations in English. As the title explains, this presentation is not the translation of the Holy Quran, but its Exposition.

It is an honest and serious human effort to convey the pristine concepts of the Holy Quran. The original Arabic text of Wahi, (revelation) however, is eternal and its understanding during any span of time cannot be taken as the last word, which shall have to be left to the last man on this earth.

LETTERS TO TAHIRA

“Letters to Tahira” is essentially a collection of letters written to a mature and inquisitive young lady with clean intellect. This was in response to the queries the author had received from many of the female readers of his earlier similar book “Letters to Saleem”.

These letters bring forth the trials, tribulations and those vexing problems that the unfortunate and helpless girls of our society have to face today.

Some letters highlight those maladies that are currently rampant amongst our modern educated class. These are the results of following the West blindly. The nation is gradually pushed towards destruction, and if the orthodox section of the society needs to change, the modernists, too, are not to be exempted. It is imperative that both extremes be brought to the middle path, in the light of the Quran.

It is a fact that women can ‘train’ a society more easily and effectively than men. The publishing of these letters will hopefully initiate the reformation process at home. Parwez hopes that if this effort of his can light a few Quranic candles in some homes, he believes his endeavours will have borne fruit.

REASONS FOR DECLINE OF MUSLIMS

For the last two centuries or so, the Muslims have been emotionally and mentally preoccupied with what has been now classically bandied about as their favourite theme: "The Rise And Fall of The Muslims". The glorious past has been nostalgically recalled again and again and the fall has been lamented and wailed upon endlessly. While some have done just this, the others have attempted to move away from it all, alienated and disgusted. The fall and disintegration of the Mughal Empire, leading to the dethronement of Bahadur Shah Zafar in the last century, followed by the fall and disintegration of the Ottomans and dethronement of Sultan Abdul Hamid II during and after First World War was a trauma that the Muslims have not yet go over.

Even a cursory glance over world history makes it amply clear that the fall of any empire and civilisation does not happen suddenly. It is preceded by a prolonged phase of decay, with Nature watching, as if hoping against hope that humankind may yet see the edge of the precipice and turn back. In the Quranic terminology this is the "period of respite".

The Muslims, however, like many others before them, reached a point of no return. Allama G.A. Parwez is one of those who objectively and scientifically attempted an analysis of the causes of the decline and fall of the Muslims from the Quranic perspective of the philosophy of history. This little book in Urdu has been very much in demand and voraciously read by all and sundry. For a long time the need was felt for the English rendering of this book. There had been a demand for it from those who were not very proficient in Urdu or those whose children were born and brought up abroad. We are greatly indebted to Mr. Ismail Atcha from Bolton, Lancashire, Britain, for fulfilling this dire need. He has put in tremendous effort to render this book into English.

ISLAMIC WAY OF LIVING

The future of a nation depends on the way its younger generation is brought up. Muslims living abroad, especially Pakistanis, feel apprehensive of their children going astray under the influence of foreign culture. Off and on they have contacted Dr. Abdul Wadud to write a book on the "Islamic Way of Living" which could be useful for the young.

The work that he has produced is not the exact translation but a reproduction in English of the book entitled "Islamee Muasharat" by Parwez. It comprises such Quranic instructions which guide the way to the formation of an Islamic Society. It is not a philosophical treatise but a description in simple terms, meant for children, as well as for those who neither have time, nor aptitude to go into details.

The Tolu-e-Islam Movement

The Beliefs and Objectives

We believe that...

- (1) Reason alone is not enough to solve the problem of life. Reason needs revelation (Wahy)-just as eyes need the light of the sun.
- (2) This revelation so preserved in the Quran in its final and complete form. Mankind, therefore, cannot reach its desired destination without the Quran.
- (3) The Quran is the criterion for the judging between truth and falsehood. Everything that agrees with the Quran is correct. That which is at variance with it, is false.
- (4) From the viewpoint of Quran, all human beings inhabiting the earth, are individuals belonging to **one universal brotherhood**. The practical aspect of establishing this brotherhood would be that all mankind may lead their lives according to QNE dispensation.
- (5) This universal organization of life may be formulated in such a manner that people of every era according to the requirements of their time-may compile the details of law in the light of the Quran. (These are called SHRIA LAWS). The details of law will keep changing according to circumstances, but the principles of the Quran shall forever remain unalterable.
- (6) From the point of view of such an organization, the Quran envisages a society in which the latent

abilities of ALL individuals are developed, and no one in such a society will be deprived of his life's necessities—food, shelter, health care, education etc; this is the Quranic Organisation For The Preservation of Mankind. This is called The Quranic Social Order. Once human's latent potentialities are fully developed, the world will thus become resplendent with the Light of the Eternal Nourisher.
