

The Importance of Salaat¹

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Abstract: *In the following article, several traditions and sayings declaring the importance of meeting God have been mentioned. Meeting God has been and is the greatest wish of all holy men and those who have reached the understanding that their spirits deserves nothing but God Himself. Although there are many claims which promise mankind the shortest way to God, but most have proved to be incorrect. Here we will learn that the one and only way to God is through the teachings of the Infallibles and through the daily prayers (Salaat).*

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¹ Also known as Namaz or the 'daily prayers'

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The highest aim and goal of the divine scholars and those who tread the path of worship, is meeting with Allah and seeing¹ Him. This is a meeting which can neither be expressed in words nor penned on paper, because divine vision is the work of Allah Himself. The work of Allah, like His Being, does not have any method (*kaifiyyah*) like the works of mortals, and therefore it cannot be expressed.

Allah introduced Himself to His servants and manifested His Own Self on their hearts. By setting aside the veils of negligence and forgetfulness, ignorance, disobedience, immorality, evil ethics, etc. a person prepares his heart to receive this divine manifestation. Purity of heart and sincerity in intention illuminates the divine light further and becomes the cause for the servant to achieve great heights in the field of divine recognition and reach his ultimate goal i.e. meeting with Allah.

The desire to meet Allah can be seen in many supplications and traditions which have been handed down to us from the Prophet and Imams. For instance:

Imam Zain al-Abedin (*as*) invokes:

“O Allah! Make us tread the path that leads to meeting You, and make us travel on the road that is nearest to You... attach us with those servants of Yours who are in haste to reach You. Those who continuously knock on Your door, and worship only You in the night... You have fulfilled their desire by allowing them to meet you, and You have filled their hearts with Your love, and have quenched their thirst with Your pure drink. Thus, by You, they achieved the enjoyment of speaking with You (*munajaah*) and achieved their farthest aims... No one but You, O Allah, is my aim. My being awake and up in the nights is only because of You and not for anybody

¹ This kind of seeing is not like how we see with our eyes, it is seeing with the heart.

else. Meeting you is the light of my eyes and reaching you is my desire and seeing you is my wish.”¹

In another supplication, the same Imam (*as*) pleads:

“Nothing can quench my thirst but reaching You and nothing can extinguish my burning desire but meeting You And nothing can extinguish my craving for you except seeing Your face (*wajh*), and my restlessness cannot be done away with but by gaining proximity to You...and My sorrow cannot be dispelled except by being near You.”²

Imam al-Baqir (*as*) says:

“The Messenger of Allah is the gate of Allah which except through him He cannot be approached. He (*s*) is the path of Allah which if walked on, will lead to Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He). After him, the same applies to Amir al-Mo'meneen (*as*) and the Imams following him, one after the other...”³

When the Prophet (*s*) was taken to the Heavens (*Mi'raj*), Allah Almighty said to him:

“O Ahmad! Abstaining from sins (*wara'*) opens the doors of worship for a worshipper. Then through it, he is honored in the eyes of the people and reaches Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He).”⁴

The mentioned traditions speak about meeting, reaching and seeing Allah. According to Imam al-Baqir (*as*), treading the path of the Holy Prophet (*as*) and the Ahlul Bayt will lead to this meeting. Therefore, this status cannot be achieved but by following the course charted by the Messenger of Allah (*as*) and

¹ Al-Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 91, p. 147

² Al-Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 91, p. 147

³ Al-Kulaini, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 198

⁴ Al-Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 74, p. 26

through the master-ship of his infallible progeny (*as*). Hence, whoever intends to take the journey of reaching the levels and stages of recognition and to reach its highest grades must hold fast to the Holy Prophet (*s*) and his Ahlul Bayt (*as*).

He should pay attention that his actions conform to the divine commands brought by the Holy Prophet (*s*) and the Ahlul Bayt (*as*). He should not take a single step without their permission. If he fails to do so, he will not reach his destination. If he is steadfast in this path, Allah the Almighty will fulfill His promise and grant him his desire.

As his recognition (*ma'rifah*) of Allah increases so do things such as, humility, modesty, obedience, gratitude, remembrance, attention, glorification and praising. Serving his Lord and God also increases His compliance and submission to the divine laws and he performs all his actions sincerely and purely for Allah and no one else. Obviously, any action that has the color of Allah and is performed only for Him will never be ruined. Allah the Almighty declares:

“Everything is perishable (will perish) except for His Face.” (The holy Quran 28:88)

Imam al-Baqir (*as*) explains this verse like this:

“Allah is greater than being described with a face. The meaning (of the verse) is: ‘Everything will be destroyed except His religion and ‘Face’ is the means by which a thing is approached.”¹

In the traditions of the Ahlul Bayt (*as*), meeting with Allah has also been used to refer to death. Al-Majlesi (*may Allah be satisfied with him*), in his masterpiece: ‘Bihar al-Anwar’, volume 6, page 124, has mentioned traditions explaining the above concept, under the chapter: “The Love of Meeting Allah and the dispraise

¹ Al-Saduq, *Al-Towhid*, p. 149

of Fleeing from Death”. In some traditions, ‘meeting with Allah’ has also been interpreted as resurrection and being brought out from the grave on Judgment Day for questioning and examination of one’s deeds in this world. Amir al-Mo’meneen Ali ibn Abi Talib (*as*) explains:

“And His words, ‘But they do not believe in the meeting (*liqa*)’ of their Lord’¹ means ‘resurrection’ (i.e. they do not believe they will be resurrected). Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) has named resurrection as His meeting. Likewise He has also mentioned the believers as ‘those who suppose they will meet their Lord’². Meaning: they are certain that they will be resurrected, brought together, (their actions) accounted for and rewarded and punished accordingly... Thus, in this case, meeting does not mean physical vision. Meeting means resurrection and wherever the word ‘meeting (*liqa*) Him’ has been mentioned in the Book of Allah, interpret it as ‘resurrection’.”³

¹ Quran 33:10

² Quran 2:46

³ Al-Saduq, *Al-Towhid*, p. 267