

3 — Stories of The God-Conscious (Pious). How Scholars and Jurists of Islam Treated Prayer and its Obligations

✚ Abu Muhammad Zaynul Abideen (about how al-Khumayni (AR) treated Prayers)

...How much time is left for midday? Because he had no watch with him, and had no strength to look at the watch; after every 15 minutes he would ask us (the time), not because his Prayer should not be prayed outside its time, but because of performing Prayer at the beginning of its time...

... Once again, he said with disappointment: why do you deal with me in such a way. Take back the food, so that I perform my Prayer.

✚ Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Surely Allah Loves those who turn unto Him constantly and loves those who continually purify themselves.

✚ The Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

If you can always be in the state of wudhu, than do so; for verily if the Angel of death were to take the soul of a servant of God while the latter is in the state of wudu, martyrdom is written for him.

✚ Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (AS) is reported to have said:

Wudu upon wudu is light upon light.

✚ On several occasions, I have seen al-Khumayni performing wudhu, and noticed that he closes the water tap between the acts of wudhu, and re-opens it (only) when it is necessary, to avoid any extra water to flow from the tap.

✚ Whenever the Imam performed wudhu, he would perform all the parts of it facing the qibla (Makkah). Even if the basin was not in the direction of the qibla, at every instance, after taking a handful of water, he closed the tap, and facing the qibla, washed his face or hand.

One day in Paris a person came and said: The Americans have come to take an interview with al-Khumayni, and this program shall be broadcasted live. If such an action transpires than naturally other European countries would follow suit, and this can be effective in revealing the stances and movement of the revolution.

✚ Incidentally it was a Friday. I came to Imam Khumayni and informed him of the matter. He said: Now is the time of doing the recommended acts-the Friday ghusl, not the time for an interview. When he had performed the recommended acts of Friday, he said: I am ready for the interview.

✚ Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

Be watchful over the Prayers, and the middle Prayer; and stand obedient to God.

✚ The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

The best of deeds to Allah is Prayer in the beginning of its time.

✚ One of the important distinguishing characteristics of al-Khumayni was that he always performed the Prayer at the beginning of its time, and would give importance to the recommended Prayers (nawafil). This characteristic was present in him since the beginning of his youth age.

✚ al-Khumayni (AR) laid great importance to Prayer. He would narrate a tradition from Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (AS): If a person takes his Prayer lightly, he shall be deprived of our intercession.

Once I said to him: Taking Prayers lightly may mean that a person sometimes performs his Prayers, while sometimes he does not. He said: No. This, rather, is against the religion. Imam al-Sadiq meant that when Zuhr (noon) comes to transpire (for example), and the person does not perform his Prayers at the beginning of the Prayer time, he has in reality given preference to something else.

✚ One night before his demise, I was near him (al-Khumayni) in the hospital from 10.00 p.m. to 5.00 a.m. in the morning. He woke up several times from his sleep and asked for water. When I brought juice for him, he said: Give me natural water. He did not take fruit juice. He also asked about the time a number of times; and continually said: It should not happen that the sun rises and I have to pray qada.

✚ He (al-Khumayni) loved performing his Prayer at the beginning of its time. Even in his last day, he prayed the Prayer of Maghrib and Isha by means of signs at 10.00 p.m. He was in the state of unconsciousness when one of the doctors came besides him and, with the likelihood that probably by means of (mentioning) Prayer, Agha could be brought into consciousness, he said: Agha, it is time for Prayer.

The moment he said this, Imam regained his consciousness and performed his Prayer with signs of his hand. In the morning of that day too, he would always ask us: How much time is left for midday? Because he had no watch with him, and had no strength to look at the watch. After every 15 minutes he would ask us (the time), not because his Prayer should not be prayed outside its time, but because of performing Prayer at the beginning of its time.

✚ He (al-Khumayni) always prayed at the beginning of the Prayer time, and advised his children the same.

I remember that in the beginning of the war (Iraq-Iran imposed war), a gathering was held with some presidents and officials, both local and foreign. When there was a call for Prayer, al-Khumayni without paying attention to the others, stood up and performed his Prayer at the beginning of its time, and those present (also) prayed behind him.

And in that very period, not only did he recite the 8 units of nafila Prayers of Zuhr, but also prayed the 8 units of nafila Prayers of Asr.

During the days when he was in the hospital, prior to the call of midday Prayer, he would ask: How much time is left for the call of zuhr Prayer?

And in the middle of the night too he would ask: How much time is left for the call of Subh Prayer? So that he may recite his nafilah Prayers. The time he left this mortal world too, the last moments of his life was together with the word of Prayer. Even when he regained consciousness, the first sentence he pronounced was Allahu Akbar (Allah is great than what is attributed to Him).

✚ The day when he [Imam Khumayni) was transferred to the hospital, he requested that he should be informed about the time for midday and afternoon Prayer; and he would pray at the beginning of the Prayer time and then take his meal.

One day he suddenly noticed that the plate of food was brought inside the room. He asked: Do you mean that it is time for Prayer? Those present said: Yes, it is Prayer time.

al-Khumayni (AR), facing them said in an angry tone: Why then didn't you wake me up? They said: Due to your particular unfavorable state, we did not want to wake you up. Once again, he said with disappointment: Why do you deal with me in such a way? Take back the food, so that I perform my Prayer!

✚ I asked him (my teacher - Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi): What is the correct and balanced program of worship for a seeker of knowledge in your opinion?

He said with his ever humble attitude: I feel ashamed to talk about this, for I myself am greatly deprived of the same. However, I have heard things from great people, of which I shall narrate: ...The late Allamah Tabatabai and Ayatullah Behjat quoted Ayatullah Qadhi (the teacher of Allamah Tabatabai in Irfan), as saying: If a person prays the obligatory Prayers at the beginning of its time and does not attain lofty stations, he should curse me! (or, he said: he should spit at my face!).

✚ The beginning of Prayer time is a great secret!

Attention is like a muscle. Initially, when you try and hold your attention on something, it may feel that you are using more and more energy and it is fatiguing. That feeling is okay, as you have to use energy to maintain attention. However, the more you flex your attention the stronger it becomes, and easier to hold.

From the moment you are born your mind functions every second, minute, hour, and day of your life. It is active day and night, extensively while awake, less so while you're asleep, but it is continually working. It is therefore, apparent that the train of thought would continue while you are saying your Prayer unless you make changes to the way you function in Prayer.