

## Arranging the Rows

### First Khutbah

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ , نَحْمَدُهُ , وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ , وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا , مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ , وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ , وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

Verily, all praise is for Allah. We praise Him, we seek His assistance and we ask for His forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Him from the evils of our selves. Whoever Allah guides, none can misguide. Whoever He misguides, none can guide. And I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad is His servant and messenger.

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ [آل

عمران:102]

Al Imran(3) 102 : **O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam.**

Oh Believers:

Unifying the voice of Muslims and harmonizing their hearts is one of the aims of the wise Shariah. And many of the sharia ordainments were built upon this. So whomsoever thinks that the worships of prayer, fasting and Hajj are free from these aims is among the most ignorant of the Shariah and its rulings.

The obligatory prayer is a means of harmonizing the hearts and unifying the voices of Muslims, because it was ordained to be performed in congregation. So the one who prays meets his brothers five times each

day and night. This is one of the wisdoms behind the congregational prayer and those not performing it or irregular in it miss out on its goodness. So woe to them from The One who ordained and obligated it and mandated a punishment for those leaving it.

And from among the most amazing matters ordained in the congregational prayer is straightening the rows and bridging the gaps. The Prophet ﷺ was strict about this and the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, followed his way and emphasized it.

Jabir bin Samurah (May Allah be pleased with them) reported:

خَرَجَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَصُفُّونَ كَمَا تَصُفُّ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهَا . فَقُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَكَيْفَ تَصُفُّ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهَا قَالَ " يُتِمُّونَ الصُّفُوفَ الْأُولَى وَيَتَرَاصُونَ فِي الصَّفِّ

**The Messenger of Allah ﷺ came out to us (once) and said, Will you not form rows as the angels form rows before their Lord? We asked: "O Messenger of Allah! how do the angels form rows before their Lord?" He ﷺ replied, " They complete the first rows and fill the gaps in the rows."**  
[Muslim 430a]

The command to establish prayer mandates having humility and focus. And forming the rows, filling them, straightening them and leaving no gaps is a means of establishing focus and humility in prayer.

For it expels the devil who looks for gaps in the rows to steal from the prayers of the worshippers. He whispers to them and takes their minds away from turning to Allah Almighty to the valleys of this worldly life until the prayer finishes and the worshipper was not conscious of their prayer. To the extent that the Imam errs in the number of units of prayer. And there may be a row or several rows behind him and none of the

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worshippers alert him of his mistake. And from what indicates that properly forming the rows expels the devil is the hadith narrated by Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, who reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

رَاصُوا صُفُوفَكُمْ وَقَارِبُوا بَيْنَهَا وَحَادُوا بِالْأَعْنَاقِ فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ إِنِّي لَأَرَى الشَّيَاطِينَ تَدْخُلُ مِنْ خَلَلِ الصَّفِّ كَأَنَّهَا الْحَذَفُ

**Stand close together in your rows, keep near to one another, and put your necks in line. For by the One in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad! I can see the satan entering through the gaps in the rows like the hadhaf (a type of small sheep found in Yemen).** [Sunan an-Nasa'i 815, Grade: Sahih]

And the Prophet ﷺ mentioned that Allah and the angels send blessings upon those who properly form the prayer rows. Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ الصُّفُوفَ وَمَنْ سَدَّ فُرْجَةً رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا دَرَجَةً

**Allah and His angels send blessings upon those who complete the rows, and whoever fills a gap, Allah will raise him one degree in status thereby.** [Sunan Ibn Majah 995, Grade:Hassan]

In properly forming the rows, the Prophet ﷺ did not suffice with speech and command. He also did so through action and warning that not doing so will cause the hearts to differ. Know that one of the reasons for what occurs among Muslims in terms of hatred, rivalry, and disagreement of the hearts, is not taking care in properly forming the rows. For the Prophet did not speak from his own inclination and informed us of the effects that forming the rows has upon the hearts.

Nu'man bin Bashir (May Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُسَوِّي صُفُوفَنَا حَتَّى كَأَنَّمَا يُسَوِّي بِهَا الْقِدَاحَ ، حَتَّى رَأَى أَنَا قَدْ عَقَلْنَا عَنْهُ ثُمَّ خَرَجَ يَوْمًا فَقَامَ حَتَّى كَادَ يُكَبِّرُ ، فَرَأَى رَجُلًا بَادِيًا صَدْرُهُ مِنَ الصَّفِّ ، فَقَالَ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ ، لَتُسَوِّنَّ صُفُوفَكُمْ أَوْ لِيُخَالِفَنَّ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ وُجُوهِكُمْ

**The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to straighten our rows (in Salat), as if he was straightening an arrow with their help until he saw that we had learnt it from him. One day he came out, stood up (for Salat) and was about to say: Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest), (marking the beginning of the prayer) when he saw a man, whose chest was bulging out from the row. He said, Servants of Allah, you must straighten your rows or Allah will turn your faces away from one another (cause dissension amongst you). [Bukhari 717, Muslim 436b].**

Al-Nawawi said in explaining this hadith that enmity, hatred, and differences of hearts will occur between you, as it is said, the face of so-and-so changed regarding me, that is, it appeared to me from his face that he hates me, and his heart has changed towards me. Because the discrepancy of their rows is a discrepancy in their outward appearances, and the discrepancy of their outward appearances is a cause for internal conflicts.

And crookedness is a form of discrepancy in the rows, because the Prophet ﷺ prohibited them from discrepancies in the row when he saw a man's chest in front of the others. Just as discrepancies in rows is due to gaps in the rows that allow satan to weave through. As discrepancies in rows is also due to discontinuities in the row. So proper forming of the rows includes removing any crookedness from the row, bringing the worshippers closer together until there are no gaps, joining a discontinuous row and not starting a new row until the row before it is complete.

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If there is a gap in a row and a man tries to fill it, it is obligatory upon the person to the left and right to relax their arms and shoulders so that he can enter and close the gap. As Ibn 'Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

أَقِيمُوا الصُّفُوفَ وَحَادُوا بَيْنَ الْمَنَاكِبِ وَسُدُّوا الْخُلَلَ وَلِينُوا بِأَيْدِي إِخْوَانِكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُوا  
فُرُجَاتٍ لِلشَّيْطَانِ

**Arrange the rows in order, stand shoulder to shoulder, close the gaps, be accommodating to your brothers, and do not leave gaps for Satan.** [Abu Dawud 666, Grade: Sahih]

Abu Dawud said the meaning of be accommodating to your brothers is that if a man tries to enter the row the people on either side should relax their shoulders until the person is able to enter the row.

And in the Hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas, he said that the Prophet said:

خَيْرُكُمْ أَلْيَنُكُمْ مَنَاكِبَ فِي الصَّلَاةِ

**The best among you are the ones with the most accommodating shoulders in prayer.** [Abu Dawood 672, Grade:Sahih]

And many people are denied this goodness because they believe that since they came early it is not right for someone who came late to enter next to them, even though there is a large gap between him and the person next to him. He wants space and does not want to be cramped.

And people in this regard are either moderate or of two extremes. There are those who want to insert themselves in the row even though there is no space. He wants to get the virtue of praying in the first row, even though he harms others through this behavior and transgresses against the rights of those who came earlier to the Masjid. And there are those

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who leave space between them and the person next to them, which results in a discrepancy in the row and leaves a gap for the satan. And the correct in this regard is that a worshipper should not infringe upon the rights of others in the row and not harm them by forcefully entering the row. And if he sees a gap, he fills it or relaxes his arms and shoulders for the one who wants to fill a gap.

أَقُولُ مَا تَسْمَعُونَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

I say what you have heard and I seek forgiveness from Allah for me and you from every sin. So seek forgiveness from Him, Verily He is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

## Second Khutbah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ  
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

All praise is to Allah, and peace and blessings upon the Messenger of Allah, and I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah and I bear witness that Mohammad is His slave and messenger.

Oh people:

Towards the end of the era of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, people began to pay less attention to straightening the rows, closing the gaps, and standing close together. Then the inattentiveness to this great matter increased throughout the centuries until the focus and humility in prayer decreased and scattered thoughts increased. Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, who was one of the last of the Companions, called attention to this matter. When he arrived in Al

Madinah he was asked if he noticed any changes from the time of Prophet ﷺ. He replied:

مَا أَنْكَرْتُ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْكُمْ لَا تُقِيمُونَ الصُّفُوفَ

**I have not found any change except that you do not properly form the rows (of prayer).** [Bukhari 724]

So servants of Allah, be mindful of your prayers. For it is the relaxation of your hearts and your tranquility and your connection to your Lord Almighty and you need Him the Most Glorified at all times. Allah Almighty said:

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

At Tawbah (9) 18: **The mosques of Allāh are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allāh and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakāh and do not fear except Allāh, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.**

Oh Allah grant us knowledge in our religion and acting upon what we learn. And make it evidence for us and not against us. Indeed Allah is All Hearing, Answering.

هَذَا وَصَلُّوا وَسَلِّمُوا عَلَىٰ نَبِيِّكُمْ كَمَا أَمَرَكُمْ بِذَلِكَ رَبُّكُمْ , فَقَالَ

I conclude with this and send prayers of blessings and peace upon your Prophet as your Lord commanded:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

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Al Ahzaab (33) 56: Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [ Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [ Allah to grant him] peace.

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنَا فِيْمَنْ هَدَيْتَ وَعَافِنَا فِيْمَنْ عَافَيْتَ وَتَوَلَّنَا فِيْمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيْمَا  
أَعْطَيْتَ وَقِنَا شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ إِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ وَإِنَّهُ لَا يَذِلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ  
تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ

O Allah, guide us with those whom You have guided, grant us well-being among those You have granted well-being, be an ally to us along with those whom You are an ally to, and bless what You have bestowed upon us, and save us from the evil of what You have decreed. For verily You decree and none can decree over You. He whom You support can never be humiliated. Glory is to You, our Lord, You are Blessed and Exalted.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ نَعْلَمْ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ  
مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ نَعْلَمْ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا  
سَأَلَكَ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَاذَ بِهِ عَبْدُكَ وَنَبِيُّكَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ  
الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ  
عَمَلٍ وَنَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ كُلَّ قَضَاءٍ قَضَيْتَهُ لَنَا خَيْرًا

O Allah, We ask You for all that is good, in this world and in the Hereafter, what we know and what we do not know. O Allah, we seek refuge with You from all evil, in this world and in the Hereafter, what we know and what we do not know. O Allah, we ask You for the good that Your servant and



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Prophet has asked You for, and we seek refuge with You from the evil from which Your servant and Prophet sought refuge. O Allah, we ask You for Paradise and for that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed, and we seek refuge in You from Hell and from that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed. And we ask You to make every decree that You decree concerning us good.

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ  
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ، يَعْظُمُ لِعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

Servants of Allah. Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.

أذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ يَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا يَزِدْكُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا يُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا يَجْعَلْ  
لَكُمْ مِنْ أَمْرِكُمْ مَخْرَجًا ، وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ

Remember Allah, the Great - He will remember you. Thank Him for His favors - He will increase you therein. And seek forgiveness from Him - He will forgive you. And be conscious of Him - He will provide you a way out of difficult matters. And, establish the prayer.