

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيَابًا

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

... مَنْ حَافِظَ عَلَيْهَا كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا، وَبُرْهَانًا، وَنَجَاةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ...

## NEGLECTING PRAYER IS A GREAT LOSS

### A Blessed Friday to You, Brothers and Sisters!

In the Surah al-Maryam, the Almighty Lord mentions the tawhid struggle of Prophets Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Zechariah, John, and Jesus one by one. Then He mentions the calamity that befell upon the community that lived after these prophets in the verse I have recited at the beginning of my khutbah. **“There came after them successors who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they are going to meet evil.”**<sup>1</sup>

### Honorable Believers!

According to this verse, one of the greatest losses for a believer on the earth is to lose prayer, to neglect it. Because prayer is submission to the Lord and also one of the most special and beautiful manifestations of our servitude. Prayer means reaching a peaceful place. It means reaching peace. It means finding peace. It is a union longingly awaited by the believer. It is meeting our Lord five times a day. At the start of this meeting is “Allahu Akbar” which is the acknowledgment of Allah’s greatness. Raising hands to the ear level means throwing behind all worldly things that prevent Allah’s favor. Qiyam is the symbol of turning only to Allah and remaining on His path. Qiraat is our heartfelt supplication to the Lord in His own verses. Ruku and sajdah are the peak of being Allah’s servants. Salam is wishing well-being and peace for both ourselves and for brothers and sisters with whom we live together.

### Dear Brothers and Sisters!

As believers who pray are deemed worthy of praise in our Holy Book, those who neglect prayer are criticized just as much. As those who perform their due prayer and elevate themselves are given the good news of grace, those who deprive themselves of this great blessing are warned just as much. Those who attain praise, good news, and mercy with their prayers are الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي

صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ They are the ones who adhere to the spirit, essence, and messages of prayer. They consider prayer as elevation. They are the ones who understand the hadith, **“Prayer becomes a warrant for light, proof, and salvation on the Day for those who regularly perform it.”**<sup>2</sup>

### Brothers and Sisters!

There are also those who are criticized despite performing prayer in the Holy Quran. They are الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَآؤُونَ that is those who are loose about their prayer. They are those whose prayers can’t protect them against evil. They are those who don’t perform their prayers with believer’s mentality and sincerity. They are those who add hypocrisy and vanity to their prayers. وَإِنَّمَا لَكِبْرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْغَافِلِينَ They are those who have a hard time in prayer since they don’t perform it devotedly. They are those who don’t know that prayer is not a burden, it is a blessing.

### Brothers and Sisters!

As our Holy Book mentions those who deprive themselves of the upsides of prayer, it also deals with the hypocrites and the deniers. They are, فَلَا صِدْقَ وَلَا صَلَىٰ or وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَىٰ They are those who are lazy about prayer. They even do not hesitate from exploiting prayer.

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا They are those who mock it when they are invited to prayer. Those who make light of the religion’s symbols.

### Brothers and Sisters!

Prayer protects us as long as we protect it. It preserves us so long as we preserve it. It never spares us its generosity. All we need to do is to not spare ourselves prayer. Prayer never shies away from elevating us. All we need to do is to elevate our prayer with our sincerity. Prayer never draws away from us, it does not deprive us of closeness to our Lord. All we need to do is to not draw away from prayer. Despite all that, we immerse ourselves so much in the flow of life that we either can’t perform our prayers on time or leave it. However, our Prophet (pbuh) said the best prayer was the one performed on time. He said to his distinguished muezzin, **“Get up, o Bilal! Refresh us with prayer!”**<sup>3</sup> and eased the intensity of life with prayer. He took away his exhaustion with prayer. He found peace with prayer.

### Brothers and Sisters!

Then come, let us ask ourselves these questions: Do we protect our prayers, and do they protect us? Do we pain for the remorse of the prayers we delayed or neglected? Are our prayers the bridge of union and fondness that connect us to our Lord? Is our goal an indispensable oath of our morality that elevates us before our Lord and people? Are our prayers a shield that protect us against evil?

### Brothers and Sisters!

May the Almighty grant us to be among those who elevate with prayer. May He grant us to be among those who are purified with prayer, who earn His favor with prayer, and who attain His eternal blessings.

<sup>1</sup> Maryam 19/59.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Hanbal, II, 169.

<sup>3</sup> Abu Dawud, Edeb, 78.