

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## **THE ESSENCE OF SALAAT ALAN-NABI**

When we Muslims discuss the greatness of our beloved Rasool *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, we focus on various aspects of his life; his handsome features, his sublime conduct, his noble teachings, his remarkable achievements, his miracles and his excellence over the rest of the Ambiyaa *alaihimus salaam*. With regards to the last aspect, it could be asked that ‘if Rasulallah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* excelled the rest of the Ambiyaa *alaihimus salaam*, why did Allah command the angels to prostrate to Aadam *alaihis salaam* instead of Rasulallah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*? Does this not imply that Aadam *alaihis salaam* enjoyed a greater status than Rasulallah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*?’

The answer to this question is in the aayah

ان الله و ملائكته يصلون على النبي يا ايها الذين آمنوا صلوا عليه و سلموا تسليما  
“Surely Allah and His angels send *salawaat* to the Nabi. O those who have *Imaan*, you also send *salaat* and *salaam* to him.”<sup>1</sup>

~ In this aayah Allah informs us that He also sends *salawaat* to Rasulallah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. On the contrary, it is quite obvious that Allah did not prostrate to Aadam

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ahzaab (Aayah 56)

*alaihis salaam* when He had commanded the *malaaikeh* (angels) to do so.<sup>2</sup>

- ~ Usage of the past tense in all the aayaat that refer to the prostration of the angels to Aadam *alaihis salaam* indicates that this happened only once. However, usage of the present tense in this aayah implies that Allah and His angels continuously send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.
- ~ While the command to prostrate to Aadam *alaihis salaam* applied to the inhabitants of the skies only, the sending of *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* applies to the inhabitants of the skies and the earth. Thus Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

“O those who have *Imaan*, you also send *salaat* and *salaam* to him.”

### **THE STATUS OF RASULULLAH SALLALLAHU ALAIHI WASALLAM**

The fact that Allah and His angels send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* is sufficient proof of his lofty status in the court of Allah. This is enhanced further by the fact that there is no evidence whatsoever – neither in the Qur’aan and the Sunnah nor in any of the previous scriptures - that Allah sends *salawaat* to any other Nabi.

### **MOTIVATION**

Besides highlighting the status of Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, this aayah also draws attention to the reason why we should send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi*

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<sup>2</sup> Shamsud-Deen As-Sakhaawi, *Al-Qawl-ul-Badee’* (Pg. 36)

*wasallam*; if Allah and His angels send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, should we not be doing the same? When ordaining fasting on the Muslims, Allah said: "...fasting has been ordained for you just as it was ordained for those who were before you."<sup>3</sup> The meaning of this being that: 'if the previous nations were able to fast, you could also do so'. Similarly, when ordaining *salawaat* in favour of Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, Allah commenced the aayah saying that He and His angels send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. The reason for this is to emphasize the importance of *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. 'If Allah and the angels do so, you too should do so!'

## **BENEFIT**

Ibn-ul-Qayyim *rahimahullah* mentioned thirty nine benefits of sending *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.<sup>4</sup> The first benefit that he mentioned is obedience to the command of Allah. The second and third benefits are conformity with Allah and the angels; those who send frequent *salwaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* are following the example of Allah the His angels.

## **ANOTHER BENEFIT**

As a rule, man's reward and punishment is always according to his actions. Haafidh Ibn Katheer *rahimahullah* says in this

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<sup>3</sup> Surah Al-Baqarah (Aayah 183)

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Jilaa-ul-Afhaam* (Pg.216-222)

regard that الجزاء من جنس العمل (reward and punishment are in accordance with the nature of one's action).<sup>5</sup> Thus:

~ Allah says in the Qur'aan:

فاذكروني أذكركم

“Remember me and I will remember you.”<sup>6</sup>

- ~ Those who drink wine in the worldly life will be deprived of the wine of Jannah.<sup>7</sup>
- ~ Those who wear silk in the worldly life will be prevented from wearing it in Jannah.<sup>8</sup>
- ~ Those who listen to music in the worldly life will never hear the voices of the *qurraa* of Jannah.<sup>9</sup>

Likewise, the reward for those who send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* is that Allah and His angels send *salawaat* to them.<sup>10</sup>

## **THE MEANING OF SALAWAAT**

There is a consensus among the *Mufasssireen* that the *salawaat* of the angels is *du'aa* that Allah show mercy to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. However, there is a difference of opinion regarding the *salawaat* of Allah. Some claim that it means mercy. Thus the meaning of Allah sending *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* is that Allah shows special mercy to him. Others are of the opinion that it means praise.

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<sup>5</sup> He mentioned this on thirteen different occasions in his *Tafseer-ul-Qur'aan-il-Adheem*. For example: VI.1 Pg.52 and VI.1 Pg.167

<sup>6</sup> Surah Al-Baqarah (Aayah 152)

<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Jilaa-ul-Afhaam* (Pg.216)

Hence the meaning of Allah sending *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* is that Allah praises him among the angels. Accordingly, those who send frequent *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* earn the mercy of Allah and His praises.

## **A QUESTION**

Irrespective of the meaning of the *salawaat* of Allah, does Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* really need our *du'aas*? After all, if Allah is continuously showering His mercy upon Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, why do we sinners have to make *du'aa* to Allah to shower His mercy on him?

## **THE ANSWER**

The answer to this question is that definitely Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* does not require our *du'aas*. However, there are three reasons why we send *salawaat* to him. They are:

1. By sending *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* we follow the example of Allah and thereby gain closeness to him. We also earn His mercy, forgiveness for our sins and a higher rank in *Jannah*. In short, we send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* for our own benefit.
2. By sending *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* we acknowledge his exalted status.

3. It is also a means of expressing our gratitude to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.<sup>11</sup>

### **THREE MORE BENEFITS**

Among the other benefits of sending *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* are:

1. The names of those who send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* are presented to him.<sup>12</sup> This is understood from the following two *ahaadith*:
  - a. “Surely your *salaat* is presented to me.”<sup>13</sup>
  - b. “Allah has deputed a group of angels to convey to me the *salaam* sent to me by my *Ummah*.”<sup>14</sup>
2. Frequent recitation of *salawaat* increases one’s love for Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

من أحب شيئاً أكثر من ذكره

“The person who loves something speaks much of it.”<sup>15</sup>

3. Consequently, those who recite frequent *salawaat* eventually become the beloved of Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ahmed bin Muhammed As-Saawi, *Haashiyat-us-Saawi Alal-Jalaalayn* (V.3 Pg.269), Shamsud-Deen As-Sakhaawi, *Al-Qawl-ul-Badee’* (Pg. 23), Fakhrud-Deen Ar-Raazi, *Mafaateeh-ul-Ghaib* (V. Pg )

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Jilaa-ul-Afhaam* (Pg.220)

<sup>13</sup> Sunan Abi Da’ud V.1 Pg. 150 (H.M. Sa’eed Co.)

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<sup>15</sup> This is a famous Arabic parable.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *Jilaa-ul-Afhaam* (Pg.220)

## ANOTHER QUESTION

In all the various wordings of the *salawaat* that we send to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, we say “... اللهم صل على” or “... صلى الله على” In both phrases we are actually asking Allah to send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. The question arises that, considering Allah’s command that we send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, why do we ask Allah to do so? Should we not be saying “... أصلى على” (I send *salawaat* ...)?

## THE ANSWER

One answer to this question is that due to our sins and spiritual weaknesses, our *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* cannot be as significant as that of Allah’s. We therefore ask Allah to send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* on our behalf.<sup>17</sup>

Another answer is that when commanding us to send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, Allah did not indicate the required amount. This could be a reminder to us that no matter how much *salawaat* we send to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, it will never be enough. Hence, we ask Allah to send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* on our behalf because He knows best how much *salawaat* should be sent to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. Putting it differently, asking Allah to send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* on our behalf is an acknowledgment

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<sup>17</sup> Shamsud-Deen As-Sakhaawi, *Al-Qawl-ul-Badee’* (Pg.72)

that ‘O Allah, we wish to send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* but we are unable to do so in a manner that befits the lofty status of Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. We therefore request you to do it on our behalf. This is similar to the *du’aa* لا أحصي ثناء عليك (‘O Allah, I am unable to praise you!).<sup>18</sup>

### **AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION**

Just as the *Ummah* have been commanded to send *salawaat* to Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, he has also been commanded to send *salawaat* to them.

وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ

“And send *salawaat* to them. Undoubtedly, your *salawaat* is tranquility for them.”<sup>19</sup>

The reason for this, as observed by Fakhrudd-Deen Ar-Raazi, is so that Rasulullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* may repay the *Ummah* and not be obliged to them.<sup>20</sup>

و صلى الله على النبي محمد و على آله و أصحابه أجمعين

Abu Hudhaifa Muhammed Karolia

1431 جمادى الآخرة / 08 June 2010

Al-Jaami'ah Al-Mahmoodiah

Springs

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<sup>18</sup> Shamsud-Deen As-Sakhaawi, *Al-Qawl-ul-Badee'* (Pg.73)

<sup>19</sup> Surah At-Tawbah (Aayah 103)

<sup>20</sup> Fakhrudd-Deen Ar-Raazi, *Mafaateeh-ul-Ghaib* (V. Pg )