



The General Presidency for the Affairs of
the Grand Holy Mosque and the Prophet's Holy Mosque

Translation of the Two Holy Mosques Khutbahs
A Joint Project



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College of Languages and Translation

[27-5-35 – B – Al-Qasim]

المسجد النبوي

The Position of Prayer in Islam

His Eminence Sheikh Abdul-Muhsin ibn Muhammad Al-Qasim, may Allah preserve him, delivered the Friday *khutbah* entitled, “The Position of Prayer in Islam”, in which he talked about prayer and the important position it holds in the religion of Allah, Exalted be He. He also mentioned its virtues and significance as well as the characteristics that distinguish it from other acts of worship, as indicated in Allah’s Book and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him.

Part One

Praise be to Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil within ourselves and from our wrong deeds. He whom Allah guides, none can misguide, and he whom Allah sends astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, Who has no partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah’s servant and messenger. May Allah bestow his bountiful peace and blessings upon him and upon his family and Companions.

O Muslims!

Fear Allah, servants of Allah, as He should be feared, for fear of Allah is the best you can show and the noblest quality to keep secret.

O Muslims!

The greatest deed in the sight of Allah is to worship none but Him; no other deed could ever make a servant closer to Allah. The best act of obedience after belief in the Oneness of Allah is the prayer, which is the second pillar of Islam, for it includes



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remembrance and glorification of Allah as well as humility and total submission to Him. In fact, Allah calls the prayer faith, as He says in the Qur'an:

﴿... And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost (i.e. your prayers offered towards Jerusalem)...﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 143)

The prayer is the backbone of Islam. It is the first attribute of the pious in Allah's Book after belief in the unseen and the comfort of the Prophet's eyes, peace and blessings be upon him. It was also the first act which he asked his envoys to different places to call people to perform. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said to Mu'adh ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, [upon sending him to Yemen] **“Let the first thing to which you call them be the worship of Allah alone, Might and Majesty be to Him, and when they have known enough about Allah, tell them that Allah has enjoined them to perform five prayers every day and night”** (Agreed upon).

The first thing that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, required of Muslims after declaring their belief in the Oneness of Allah was to establish the prayer, which it is the most important of all physical acts of worship. His commandment to his *Ummah* before he passed away was, **“[Pay due attention to] the prayer, [Pay due attention to] the prayer, and [fear Allah concerning] the captives and slaves whom your right hands possess”** (Reported by Ahmad).

Whoever performs the prayer perfectly has indeed fully established his religion, but whoever neglects it will most probably be neglectful of other acts of worship. The prayer also provides protection for the polytheists once they convert to Islam. Allah says:

﴿... But if they repent and perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)*, and give *Zakat*, then leave their way free ...﴾ (At-Tawbah: 5)

It also serves as a protection for life and property. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said:



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“I have been commanded to fight people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and until they perform the prayer and pay *Zakah*. If they do so, they will have gained my protection for their lives and property, unless [they do acts that are punishable] in accordance with Islam, and their reckoning is left to Allah.” (Reported by Al-Bukhari)

Performing prayers is enough reason for establishing brotherhood in faith. Allah says:

﴿But if they repent, perform *As-Salat* (*Iqamat-as-Salat*), and give *Zakat*, then they are your brethren in religion ...﴾ (At-Tawbah: 11)

Due to its high position and its characteristics that distinguish it from other acts of worship, Allah has enjoined His prophets and messengers to perform it. Therefore, He revealed to Ibrahim (Prophet Abraham), Ishaq (Prophet Isaac), and Ya‘qub (Prophet Jacob) the command to establish it. Allah says:

﴿... and We revealed to them the doing of good deeds, performing *Salat* (*Iqamat-as-Salat*), and the giving of *Zakat* ...﴾ (Al-Anbiya’: 73)

Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, called upon his Lord to make his offspring among those who perform the prayer. Allah praises Isma‘il (Prophet Ishmael), peace be upon him, for being so keen on performing it. He says:

﴿And he used to enjoin on his family and his people *As-Salat* (the prayers) and the *Zakat*, and his Lord was pleased with him.﴾
(Maryam: 55)

The first obligation that Allah imposed upon Musa (Prophet Moses) after declaring His Oneness is to perform the prayers. Allah directly addressed Musa about the prayers without any intermediary:



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﴿Verily! I am Allah! *La ilaha illa Ana* (none has the right to be worshipped but I), so worship Me, and perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)* for My Remembrance.﴾ (Ta-Ha: 14)

Allah also revealed to Musa and Harun (Prophet Aaron), peace be upon them, to command their people to perform prayers:

﴿And We revealed to Musa (Moses) and his brother (saying):
“Provide dwellings for your people in Egypt, and make your dwellings as places for your worship, and perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)* ...﴾ (Yunus: 87)

Zakariyya (Prophet Zachariah), peace be upon him, used to offer prayers regularly. Allah says:

﴿Then the angels called him, while he was standing in prayer in *Al-Mihrab* (a praying place or a private room) ...﴾ (Al ‘Imran: 39)

Dawud (Prophet David), peace be upon him, loved to perform prayers and used to stand in prayer almost one third of the night. When Prophet Shu‘aib called his people to believe in the Oneness of Allah and showed them his deep veneration for prayers, they said to him,

﴿“... Does your *Salat* (prayer) command that we leave off what our fathers used to worship, or that we leave off doing what we like with our property? ...”﴾ (Hud: 87)

‘Isa (Prophet Jesus), peace be upon him, spoke about prayers when he was still in the cradle:

﴿... and has enjoined on me *Salat* (prayer), and *Zakat*, as long as I live.﴾ (Maryam: 31)



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Allah has praised the Prophets, peace be upon them, saying:

﴿... When the Verses of the Most Gracious (Allah) were recited to them, they fell down prostrating and weeping.﴾ (Maryam: 58)

Allah also took a covenant from the Children of Israel to perform prayers:

﴿Indeed Allah took the covenant from the Children of Israel (Jews), and We appointed twelve leaders among them. And Allah said: 'I am with you if you perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)*...'﴾ (Al-Ma'idah: 12)

Luqman also instructed his son to perform prayers, saying:

﴿O my son! *Aqim-As-Salat* (perform *As-Salat*) ...﴾ (Luqman: 17)

Allah, Glorified be He, commanded the previous nations before us to perform prayers. He says:

﴿And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)* ...﴾ (Al-Bayyinah: 5)

Allah, Exalted be He, also commanded our prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to perform prayers. He said to him:

﴿And perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)*, at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night [i.e. the five compulsory *Salat* (prayers)]. ...﴾ (Hud: 114)

Allah also says to the Muslim *Ummah*:

﴿And perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)* ...﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 45)



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Muslims are commanded to perform prayers in times of fear and safety, during travel and residence, and during good health and sickness. Those who are morally accountable for their deeds are not allowed to discontinue performing it except for menstruating women or women in their post-natal bleeding. Children should be commanded to perform it when they are seven years old, and must be beaten for it (not severely, but so as to discipline them) when they are ten.

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, disliked going to bed before the ‘*Isha*’ (Nightfall) Prayer in order not to miss performing it and disliked indulging in conversation after the ‘*Isha*’ Prayer in order not to miss the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer or the voluntary night prayer because of staying up late at night.

Allah praises his believing servants for a number of attributes, which He begins with the performance of prayers:

﴿Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their *Salat* (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.﴾ (Al-Mu’minun: 1-2),

and which He concludes with the performance of prayers:

﴿And those who strictly guard their (five compulsory congregational) *Salawat* (prayers) (at their fixed stated hours).﴾ (Al-Mu’minun: 9)

Performing prayers is the most beloved deed to Allah. **The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was asked, “Which deed is the most beloved to Allah?” He said, “Performing prayers on time.” He was further asked, “Which deed comes next?” He said, “Honouring your parents”** (Reported by Al-Bukhari). Ibn Hajar, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said, “Patiently maintaining prayers, performing them on



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time, and constantly honouring one's parents are necessary, repeated, and constant deeds that none but the truthful can observe in obedience to the command of Allah.”

Allah distinguished the prayer among the acts of worship by prescribing it in the heavens and by directly addressing our prophet, Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, about it without any intermediaries. The prayers are five in number, but fifty in reward. It is not accepted without purity of the body, clothes, and the place where it is to be performed. It is not allowed to move, eat, or speak to people during prayers. This does not apply to other acts of worship, for while performing prayers, the servant is privately communicating to a Great Lord, and so he should not engage in communicating with others at the same time. Allah is in front of the person performing the prayers (between him and the *Qibla*, i.e. the direction to Makkah), and the nearest a servant can be to his Lord is when he prostrates himself to Allah.

Performing prayers is one of the reasons for entering Paradise and seeing Allah's Noble Face. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“You will see your Lord as you can see this full moon, and you will have no trouble in seeing Him, so if you can avoid missing a prayer before sunrise (the *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer) and a prayer before sunset (the '*Asr* (Afternoon) Prayer) you must do so”**(Agreed upon). Ibn Rajab, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said, “The most sublime thing you could ever experience in Paradise is to see Allah, and the most honourable act in this world is to perform these two prayers (i.e. the *Fajr* Prayer and the '*Asr* Prayer). To maintain performing them is hopefully a reason for entering Paradise and seeing Allah in it.”

The rewards of prayer are great even before one performs it. Ablution (*wudu*) before prayer erases sins. In addition, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“If any of you goes to the mosque at dawn or dusk (for prayer), Allah will prepare for him a hospitable abode in Paradise whenever he goes”** (Agreed upon). Allah records one good deed for each step that you take to the mosque for performing prayer. In addition, one of your steps to the mosque raises you a degree in the sight of Allah and the



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other erases one of your sins. The angels pray for everyone who enters the mosque to perform prayers, saying, **“O Allah! Bestow blessings upon him! O Allah! Have mercy upon him”** as long as he has not broken his ablution (*wudu*) in the mosque” (Reported by Al-Bukhari). While the angels continue to invoke Allah’s blessings on a person who is waiting for the prayer, it is recorded for him in his book of deeds that he is in prayer as long as he is waiting for the prayer.

During the prayer, one is exposed to gifts of divine forgiveness. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Whoever says, ‘Amin (Amen)’ at the same time as the angles will have his previous sins forgiven”** (Reported by Al-Bukhari).

Remembrance of Allah after performing prayers erases sins. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“He who says after the prayer, ‘Subhan-Allah’ (Glorified be Allah) thirty-three times, ‘Al-hamdu lillah’ (Praise be to Allah) thirty-three times, and ‘Allahu Akbar’ (Allah is the Greatest) thirty-four times, will have his previous sins forgiven”** (Reported by Al-Bukhari).

He who maintains the mosques of Allah by performing prayers in them and fearing Allah is among the believers. Allah, Glorified be He, says:

﴿The Mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day; perform *As-Salat* (*Iqamat-as-Salat*) ...﴾ (At-Tawbah: 18)

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Whoever performs the ‘Isha’ (Nightfall) Prayer in congregation will have the reward of one who has stood in prayer for half of the night; and whoever performs the *Subh* (Dawn) Prayer in congregation will have the reward of one who has stood in prayer for the whole night”** (Reported by Muslim).



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The prayer is a great door to earning forgiveness in so short a time. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, likened it to a river when he said to his Companions, **“If there was a river by the door of anyone of you and he bathed in it five times a day, would there be any trace of dirt left on him?”** They said, **“No, no trace of dirt would be left on him.”** He said, **“That is like the five prayers, by means of which Allah erases sins”** (Agreed upon).

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, also said, **“When the time for a prescribed prayer is due and a Muslim performs ablution (*wudu*) properly for it and offers his prayer with proper humility and bowing, this prayer will serve as expiation for his previous sins, so long as he has not committed a major sin; and this applies to the whole of a Muslim’s life”** (Reported by Muslim).

The worldly benefits of prayer are countless: it brings happiness, secures and eases provision of livelihood, and leads to good consequences. Allah, Glorified be He, says:

﴿And enjoin *As-Salat* (the prayer) on your family, and be patient in offering them [i.e. the *Salat* (prayers)]. We ask not of you a provision (i.e. to give Us something: money): We provide for you. And the good end (i.e. Paradise) is for the *Muttaqun* (the pious).﴾
(Ta-Ha: 132)

The prayer also wards off evil and brings about all that is good. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **“Whoever prays the *Subh* (Dawn) prayer is under the responsibility of Allah”** (Reported by Muslim). That is to say, he is under Allah’s protection and care.

Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said, “The prayer has an amazing effect on removing the evils of the present world, especially if it is duly performed, both outwardly and inwardly. Nothing removes the evils of this world and of



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the hereafter and brings their benefits better than prayers.” He went on saying, “It has an amazing effect on maintaining the health and the strength of both the body and the heart and on keeping the harmful substances away from them. Should two men ever be subjected to a disability, a disease, a trial, or an affliction, the one who observes prayer would be less affected by them, and his end would certainly be safer.”

Nothing can better serve to remove afflictions than true monotheism and prayer. Allah saved Yunus (Prophet Jonah), peace be upon him, from the belly of the fish because of his prayer:

﴿Had he not been of those who glorify Allah, he would have indeed remained inside its belly (the fish) till the Day of Resurrection.﴾
(As-Saffat: 143-144)

Dawud (Prophet David), peace be upon him, was equally subjected to a trial and found no way to repentance except through performing prayer, besides asking forgiveness of Allah:

﴿... and he sought Forgiveness of his Lord, and he fell down prostrate and turned (to Allah) in repentance.﴾ (Sad: 24)

When Allah chose to subject Maryam (Mary, mother of Jesus) to the trial of giving birth to a child without a husband, He ordered her to perform prayers in order to alleviate her suffering:

﴿O Mary! “Submit yourself with obedience to your Lord (Allah, by worshipping none but Him Alone) and prostrate yourself, and *Irka’i* (bow down) along with *Ar-Raki’un* (those who bow down).﴾ (Al ‘Imran: 43)



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Furthermore, whenever the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was distressed by something, he would perform prayers. Allah has ordered the believers to seek help in prayers under all circumstances:

﴿O you who believe! Seek help in patience and *As-Salat* (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with *As-Sabirun* (the patient).﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 153)

We appeal to Allah for help by performing the *Istikharah* Prayer (prayer to Allah to guide us to the right way in matters we plan to undertake), we resort to Allah and perform the *Khusuf* (Eclipse) Prayer when there is a change in the course of nature, and we prostrate ourselves before Him in times of joy to thank Him for His gifts.

The prayer was the greatest form of thanking Allah performed by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. When he prayed, he would stand until his feet swelled. **A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, once asked him, "Why are you doing all this, O Messenger of Allah, when Allah has forgiven all your past and future sins?" He said, "Shouldn't I be a thankful servant?"** (Reported by Al-Bukhari).

On the Day of Judgement, the prayer will precede all other deeds and will be the first act for which people will be held to account. Performing prayers so often is also one of the deeds that will hopefully help us to be in the company of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, in Paradise. **A man once came to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and said, "I would like to be your companion in Paradise." The Prophet said, "Help me in this by prostrating a lot"** (Reported by Muslim).

On the Day of Judgement, the believers will be distinguished from hypocrites by prostration. When the believers see their Lord, they will fall prostrate. However, when the hypocrites are called to prostrate, they will not be able to do so, by way of punishment. Allah, Glorified be He, says:



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«(Remember) the Day when the Shin shall be laid bare (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) and they shall be called to prostrate themselves (to Allah), but they (hypocrites, and those who pray to show off or to gain good reputation) shall not be able to do so.» (Al-Qalam: 42)

In addition, should a Muslim enter Hell on account of some sins he has committed, the parts of his body which touched the ground during his prostration will not be touched by the fire.

The prayer is indeed a great obligation which Allah, Glorified be He, has prescribed to draw the line of demarcation between belief and disbelief. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “**What stands between a man and *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) is the abandonment of prayer**” (Reported by Muslim). Allah, Glorified be He, made a pledge that whoever neglects the prayer will go to Hell, saying:

«Then, there has succeeded them a posterity who have given up As-Salat (the prayers) [i.e. made their *Salat* (prayers) to be lost, either by not offering them or by not offering them perfectly or by not offering them in their proper fixed times) and have followed lusts. So they will be thrown in Hell.» (Maryam: 59)

The disbelievers will be asked on the Day of Judgement:

«“What has caused you to enter Hell?” They will say: “We were not of those who used to offer their *Salat* (prayers).”» (Al-Muddath-thir: 42-43)

Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “There is no share in Islam for him who abandons prayers.”

O Muslims!



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Every morally accountable person must perform prayers regularly and order his family to do so. This is the way of all prophets, peace be upon them. Indeed, the prayer leads to the good pleasure of the Lord, serves as expiation of sins, raises one to high degrees in the hereafter, encompasses all good, and restrains one from all evil. It improves one's condition and leads to good outcomes. It also leads to success, peace of mind, and prosperity. It blesses one's wealth, brings tranquillity to one's home, and causes one's offspring to be righteous.

I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Shaitan:

﴿Perform *As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)* from mid-day till the darkness of the night (i.e. the *Zuhr*, '*Asr*, *Maghrib*, and '*Isha*' prayers), and recite the Qur'an in the early dawn (i.e. the morning prayer). Verily, the recitation of the Qur'an in the early dawn is ever witnessed (attended by the angels in charge of mankind of the day and the night).﴾ (Al-Isra': 78)

May Allah bless you and me with the Great Qur'an and make us benefit from its verses and wise words. I have said what you have heard and I ask forgiveness of Allah for myself, for you, and for all Muslims, for any sin that we have committed. Ask Allah for forgiveness. He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.



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Part Two

Praise be to Allah for His kindness to us and all forms of gratitude are due to Him for the success He has blessed us with and His graciousness. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, Who has no partners, in glorification of His dignified position, and I bear witness that our prophet, Muhammad, is His servant and messenger. May Allah bestow His bountiful peace and blessings upon him and upon his family and Companions.

O Muslims!

Allah has enjoined men to perform the prayer in congregation in mosques. Allah, Glorified be He, says:

﴿... and bow down (or submit yourselves with obedience to Allah) along with *Ar-Raki'ûn*.﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 43).

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was once determined to burn the houses of those who had not joined the congregational prayer. He said:

“The heaviest prayers for the hypocrites are the ‘Isha’ (Nightfall) Prayer and the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer, but if they knew the reward of these prayers, they would certainly attend them in mosques even if they had to crawl. I was once determined to order the caller to prayer to recite the *iqamah* (call to commence the prayer), order a man to lead the prayer, and then take a group of men with me carrying bundles of firewood to burn the houses of those who did not attend the prayers (in the mosque).” (Reported by Muslim)



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The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, did not even license a blind man who did not have a guide to lead him to the mosque to leave the prayer in congregation. Rather, he said to him, **“Do you hear the call to prayer?” The man said. “Yes.” He said, “Then answer it.”**

Therefore, hasten to perform the prayer in congregation, for it makes the face shine with light and it is the proof of faith. It comforts the heart and raises one's rank and status.

Servants of Allah!

Know that Allah has commanded you to ask Him to send His peace and blessings upon His Prophet. Allah says in His perfect Revelation:

﴿Allah sends His *Salat* (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy) on the Prophet (Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)) and also His angels (ask Allah to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your *Salat* on (ask Allah to bless) him (Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)), and (you should) greet (salute) him with the Islamic way of greeting (salutation, i.e. *As-Salamu 'Alaikum*).﴾
(Al-Ahzab: 56)

O Allah! Bestow peace and blessings upon our Prophet, Muhammad, and be pleased with the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, who ruled by truth and thereby established justice, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, along with all the other Companions, and also be pleased with us together with them, by Your grace and generosity, O Most Generous of all the generous!

O Allah! Provide power and glory to Islam and Muslims, subdue polytheism and the polytheists, and destroy the enemies of the religion. O Allah! Make this country of ours, as well as all other Muslim countries, safe, secure, and prosperous.



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O Allah! Improve the condition of Muslims everywhere. O Allah! Make the best among them the ones who rule them, and protect them against the evil of their evil-doers. O Allah! Spare the blood of Muslims everywhere.

O Allah! Grant victory to those who strive in Your cause. O Allah! Grant them Your protection, help, and support.

O Allah! Take revenge on those who have oppressed them. O Allah! Kill them one by one, reckon them by number, and leave none of them alive, O Owner of Majesty and Honour!

O Allah! You are Allah, and there is no god but You! You are Free of all wants and needs, and we stand in need of You! Send down rain upon us and do not make us among the despairing! O Allah! Grant us rain. O Allah! Grant us rain. O Allah! Grant us rain.

﴿... Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.﴾ (Al-A'raf: 23)

O Allah! Lead our ruler to Your guidance, make all his deeds pleasing to You, and guide all the Muslim rulers to act according to Your Book and rule by Your *Shari'ah*, O Lord of the Worlds!

Servants of Allah!

﴿Verily, Allah enjoins *Al-Adl* (i.e. justice and worshipping none but Allah Alone – Islamic Monotheism) and *Al-Ihsan* [i.e. to be patient in performing your duties to Allah, totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the *Sunnah* (legal ways) of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in a perfect manner], and giving (help) to kith and kin (i.e. all that Allah has ordered you to give them, e.g.,



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wealth, visiting, looking after them, or any other kind of help), and forbids *Al-Fahsha'* (i.e. all evil deeds, e.g. illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents, polytheism, to tell lies, to give false witness, to kill a life without right), and *Al-Munkar* (i.e. all that is prohibited by Islamic law: polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds), and *Al-Baghy* (i.e. all kinds of oppression). He admonishes you, that you may take heed.﴾ (An-Nahl: 90)

Remember Allah, the Most Great, the Sublime, and He will remember you. Thank Him for His blessings and favours and He will give you more. Verily, remembrance of Allah is greater than all, and Allah knows what you do.