

Shaykh Abd al-Haqq Turkmani

(hafidhahullāh)

“FLASH PRAYERS”¹

All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh, alone and with no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slaver and messenger, may prayers and peace be upon him, his family and all of his companions.

To proceed: the noble brothers from the Islamic Centre of Luton presented to me an issue regarding a new innovation which has reared its head, so I viewed it apt that I answer it. Here is the complete letter sent to me:

We wish to seek the ruling regarding a matter concerning the Muslims in Great Britain. There is a group calling to the establishment of a prayer called “[Flash Prayer](#)”, its details are as follows: they have raised a call to all Muslim in most cities in UK to gather in a specific location like a town Centre and they pray a particular prayer like Asr for example at one time in that specific location, all on the same day. And they chose the New Years Day of this year 2012 for this event. They strove extremely hard in advertising and marketing this event. They used all available methods of modern technology such as phones, Internet, social networking and they expected five thousand attendees and they were pushing for ten thousand. They actually carried out this prayer on the day specified which was today 1/1/2012 the non-Muslims new years day, they conducted this in many cities. They said the reason for them choosing this day specifically was that they desired to dedicate the year 2012 as the year of congregational prayer in UK. They used in their marketing the word ‘flash’ in English, which is linked to dancing and protests and anything that appears all of a sudden and disappears all of a sudden. They said, from the objectives of this salat are:

- 1) Dawah
- 2) Unity of the Ummah

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<https://turkmani.com/articles/63>

- 3) Dedicating this year as the ‘year of congregational prayer’
- 4) [Fun and a cool event](#) for the youth

We fear that this event will have an effect on the role of the Masājid on that day, when some of those who are deceived by their speech will go to the appointed location to pray and leave the Masjid and that this action may lead to other invented matters.

Based upon all that has proceeded, we seek your ruling regarding this matter, is it in accordance to the legislation or not? And is this action to be considered from the innovated matters which the Prophet (salallahu alaihi wa sallam) prohibited? Give us your ruling, may Allah reward you.

ANSWER

I say, seeking Allāh’s Aid, that this action is a vile innovation which has to be rejected and its danger and harm has to be explained. In the same way, the one who innovated it and those who call to it also have to be censured regardless of their intent. Do they intend by the action that what they are doing is good?! Or do they have other aim behind staging this action? Allāh has more knowledge with regards to their intents and He knows the secrets. Yet what is obligatory is to reject this innovation and warn against those who started it. As a result, I hope for a reward with Allāh for doing something which rejects this evil action:

FIRST

The Salāh is the greatest pillar of Islām after the Two Testimonies of Faith [Shahādatayn] and it is the link between the slave and His Lord, it is an act of worship intended by itself, rather it is at the head of acts of worship which gathers many meanings and realities of servitude to Allāh such as Niyyah, Ikhlas, reciting the Qur’ān, dhikr, du’a, Rukū’ and Sujūd. It is a sincere act of worship which only intends nearness to Allāh and seeking His Pleasure. This is as Allāh said to His Prophet Mūsā (*‘alayhi salām*):

“Indeed, I am Allāh. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.”

{*Tā Hā (20): 14*}

And Allāh said

“Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allāh is greater. And Allāh knows that which you do.”

{*al-Ankabūt (29): 45*}

The Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) said: “Allāh said: I divided the prayer between me and my servant into two, and for my servant is whatever he asks...”² The Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) said: “It is not appropriate for there to be any talking in this prayer. For it is just for tasbeeh, takbeer, and recitation of the Qur’ān.”³ The state of Salāh being an act of worship sincerely for Allāh is a matter which is well-known in the deen of Islām by necessity, about which no Muslims differ regardless of their

² Saheeh Muslim.

³ Saheeh Muslim

different Madhāhib. The only people who differed with this were some extremist philosophers and Sūfīs who claimed that the Salāh was not intended for its own merits and that it was merely a means to other moral aims and characteristics. Some Islamists activists agreed with them in this view and claimed that the salāh had a leisurely means and a training role to dominance on the earth and establishing a noble society, Abu’l-A’lā al-Mawdūdī agreed with this view in his book *Mabādi ul-Islām* and in his other books, as Shaykh Abu’l-Hasan an-Nadwī (*rahimahullāh*) refuted in his book *at-Tafseer as-Siyāsī li’l-Islām*. If this is clear: then using the Salāh for da’wah purposes, propagation, politics, sociology is a great evil against this foundation of the foundations of Islām, and a distortion of this act of worship and its reality and intent. It is also a pretext to destroy the deen and nullify its constants and definitive articles.

SECOND

From the oft-repeated Qawā’id Fiqhiyyah according to Ahl ul-’Ilm is:

“The basis for acts of worship is withholding and prohibition⁴.”

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullāh*) stated:

The behaviour of the servants of Allāh, from statements and actions, are two types: a) acts of worship by which their religion is established, and b) customs which are required for their worldly life. By deducing Usūl of the Sharee’ah we know that the acts of worship which Allāh obligates and loves are not established except via what the Divine Legislation has instructed.

As for customary practices then they are what the people do regularly in their worldly affairs that they require. The basis of these practices is that there is no prohibition; what is prohibited of these practices is only what Allāh has prohibited. This is because commanding and forbidding are from Allāh’s Divine Legislation, and acts of worship have to be prescribed⁵, so whatever is not prescribed, how can it be judged to be an act of worship? And whatever is not known to be prohibited from the customs of people, how can it be judged to be haram? For this reason, Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal and other jurists from Ahl ul-Hadeeth say: “the basis of acts of worship is tawqeef [to withhold from addition to them]”, nothing from them

⁴ Shaykh `Abdur Rahman as-Sa`dee said: “The principle regarding acts of worship is one of prohibition, except if the Sharee`ah relates a prescription for it. And the principle regarding the customary behaviour is permissibility, except when the Sharee`ah relates a prohibition for it” [Minhaaj ul-Qaasideen Mukhtasar fee Usoolil-Fiqh (p. 27)]

⁵ either as an obligation, or a recommendation.

can be legislated except what Allāh has legislated, if not then we would be included in the meaning of Allāh’s Saying:

“Or have they other deities who have ordained for them a religion to which Allāh has not consented?”

{*ash-Shoorā (42): 21*}⁶

THIRD

A Muslim’s acts of worship are not authentic except with sincerity to Allāh, as this is what Allāh has instructed us to have:

“And they were not commanded except to worship Allāh, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give zakāh. And that is the correct religion.”

{*al-Bayyinah (98): 5*}

And Allāh said:

“Indeed, We have sent down to you the Book, [O Muhammad], in truth. So worship Allāh, [being] sincere to Him in religion. Unquestionably, for Allāh is the pure religion.”

{*az-Zumar (39): 2-3*}

And Allāh said:

“Say, ‘Allāh [alone] do I worship, sincere to Him in my religion...”

{*az-Zumar (39): 14*}

Sincerity in the religion is the basis of the religion of Islām, as Ibn Taymiyyah stated in *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol.18, p.257. Ikhlas is: the intent of gaining nearness [to Allāh] and intending to perform that which has been obligated.⁷ For this reason the scholars agree that acts of worship are intended in and of themselves such as Salāh, Siyām and Hajj, and hence are not deemed as correct except with intention.⁸ More than one scholar has transmitted a consensus on the obligation of Niyah for the Salāh⁹ and they differed over whether it was a condition for its

⁶ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol.29, pp.16-17 and *Al-Fatawa al-Kubra* vol.5, p 4.

⁷ Ibn ‘AbdulBarr, *al-Istidhkār*, vol.1, p.264

⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, vol.18, p.257

⁹ Dr ‘Umar al-Ashqar, *Maqāsid ul-Mukallifeen*, p.323

correctness. Most of the Shāfiʿī scholars held that it was a pillar¹⁰ yet all are agreed on the invalidity of Salāh without the Niyyah.

The scholars definitions of ikhlās closely-resemble each other which refers to intending worship for Allāh alone and no one else, ar-Rāghib al-Asfahānī stated in *al-Mufradāt*: **“al-Ikhlās is: at-Ta’arree from what is other than Allāh”** while Abu’l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī stated in his *Risālah* that ikhlās is:

...to single out the Truth, glory be unto Him, with intended acts of obedience which is to want, by obeying Him, nearness to Allāh and nothing else from the actions which are done for creation, in order to profit from people or in order gain love and praise from the creation.

Al-Qushayrī also stated: **“It is correct to say that ikhlās is purifying action from the observation of creation.”** Al-’Izz ibn ’AbdusSalām, in his book *Qawā’id ul-Abkām*, defined ikhlās as being:

...a responsible person doing an act of obedience purely for Allāh alone not wanting the praise of the people or any estimation [from people], and neither wanting any worldly benefit or averting a worldly harm.

Ibn Qayyim said in *Madarij- as- Saalikeen*: **“Sincerity is: purifying the action from all defects, meaning his actions should not be mixed with that which will stain it from the defects that are from the desires of the soul. For example; through seeking (by it) to be beautified in the hearts of the creation, or seeking their praise or avoiding their blaming, or seeking their gratification, or seeking their wealth, their service, their love, or seeking their help in his needs, or seeking their love, or other than that from the defects and stains which separate it from its bond, so it is; intending anything other than Allah from his action whatever it may be.”**¹¹

If this is well-established, then we know that using the prayer for other than what it was legislated is a cause for corrupting Niyyah and terminating ikhlās, even if there was a religious aim [behind using the Salāh for other than what it was legislated], such as da’wah, showing the power of the Muslims and their gathering together. So then what if there is a worldly benefit as

¹⁰ Ibid., p.342

¹¹ *Maqāsid ul-Mukallifeen*, p.358.

mentioned in the question “fun and cool event for youth” – there is no doubt that this intent has a negative impact on Niyyah and Ikhlas, and even if we were to say that what they are doing has no impact on their Niyyah and objectives, if this door is opened and repeated it will lead those who do it to corrupt their Niyyat and Ikhlas, and they will efface the realities of acts of worship within their hearts, and the meanings for faith and worship will become merely abstract, as is the case of many people today. The jurists have stated that whoever seeks an act of worship by other than what it was legislated for has contradicted the Sharee’ah and whatever contradicts it, then acting by it in this case is incorrect, and there are many proofs for this as ash-Shatibi explained in *al-Muwafaqat*, vol.3, p.28. Dr ’Umar al-Ashqar summarised this in his book *Maqasid ul-Mukallifeen*, p.413:

Firstly, the one who is responsible, if he intends other than what the Legislator intended has made what the Legislator intended an obsolete consideration...and this opposes the manifest Sharee’ah.

Secondly, the one who intends other than what the Legislator intended by the act of worship has opposed the Messenger and followed a way other than the way of the believers, and Allah censured this type of people:

“And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers – We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination.”

{*an-Nisa* (4): 114}

Thirdly, this type of intent makes acts of worship which are to be performed as if they have not been performed or done. For the Legislator wants acts of worship to be performed in a specific intent and if the responsible person does not do them, then he will be like a person who does other than what he has been instructed to do, and like one who has abandoned what he has been instructed to do.

Fourthly, the one who is responsible is responsible for actions which have been intended by the Legislator via commands and prohibitions...

Fifthly, indeed success of this project and continuation in it will lead to making a mockery of Allah’s verses, because within His verses are His regulations which He has legislated. Allah said, after mentioning some regulations which He legislated:

“And do not take the verses of Allah in jest.”

{*al-Baqarah* (2): 231}

This which Allāh warns from is what is established with those who intend acts of worship for other than what they have been legislated for. And for this reason it is said to the Munāfiqeen when they intended to manifest Islām other than what the Legislator intended:

“Is it Allāh and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?”

{*at-Tawbah (9): 65*}

FOURTH

It is clear from what we have mentioned in the above points, that it is obligatory to protect the acts of worship from all those things which damage its realities [and from anything that] makes it an issue of ijtihād and opinion which can be taken or rejected, [making it] an arena of ikhtilāf and disputation, [thus] leading to its sanctity being desecrated, its standing being diminished and people being heedless to its realities, and attaching innovated matters to them as has happened with the Christians who utilise music and so forth!

FIFTH

The success of this project [i.e. the flash prayer] will lead to nullifying the performance of restricted prayers within Masājid and it is well-known with all Muslims that the Masājid have been built for the establishment of the five daily prayers within them except for the Sunnah prayers.

SIXTH

This action causes the utmost damage to one of the pillars of Islām by making it an unclear issue and doing it is like what those fools do when they surprise people in market places and gathering places with ridiculous surprise behaviour which is both controversial and antagonistic. This is clear in the naming of this project as a “Flash Prayer”. In English the name “[Flash Mob](#)” means: a gathering of a group of people by surprise in a public place and performing actions which are irregular for a limited period and then the people disperse, often for entertainment purposes or artistic expression. This term appeared in 2003 when a ‘Flash Mob’ first started in Manhattan in 2003. The term was first found in the 11th edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: “a meaningless or futile sudden event, which distinguishes it from other forms of gatherings and assemblies such as reasonable meetings at town halls etc.” Websters New Millenium Dictionary of English states: “...a group of people summoned (as by e-mail or text message) to a designated location at a specified time to perform an indicated action before

dispersing...” A Flash Mob took place at underground train stations in London in April 2006 with their portable musical instruments and started at a certain time with dancing and it caused mayhem for public life in the city.

The largest Flash Mob in history occurred on March 22nd 2008 wherein thousands of people gathered in 25 different cities around the world for a pillow fight flash mob wherein participants bashed each other with pillows! Due to these occurrences of chaos some countries even took legal measures to stop flash mobbing which caused people missing work etc. Germany was very strict against flash mobs which are performed in public areas [permits are required prior for using any public space for such actions]. In the United Kingdom flash mobbing has been stopped and the British Transport Police have stopped flash mobbing at train stations. In 2009 and 2010 in Philadelphia experienced a wave of crimes that either started with the intent or led to the destruction of private property, rioting, violence, and personal injury. As a result, police used pepper spray to disperse crowds and arrests were made. These events were often referred to as “flash robs,” “flash mob crimes,” or “flash mob violence.” Through the course of our research (over the internet) it has become apparent that some Christians also call to this type 4) of prayer (flash prayer) so they have preceded those Muslims in that.

The knowledge of the negative repercussions of these flash mobs are sufficient in cautioning every intelligent Muslim to maintain our deen, worship and manners from doing the likes of this behaviour which contains no benefit whatsoever, it is pure jest with no good in it whatsoever.

SEVEN

Based on what has been mentioned prior it is clearly apparent that this action resembles the kuffār and taking their foolish ways and mob antics and copying the behaviour of those who are the furthest people from deen and intelligence. Allāh and His Messenger (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) forbade us from resembling the kuffār and their mannerisms and following their desires and ways, Allāh says:

“...and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth.”

{*al-Mā'idah (5): 48*}

And Allāh says:

“...and do not follow their inclinations and beware of them, lest they tempt you away from some of what Allāh has revealed to you.”

{*al-Mā'idah (5): 49*}

Abū Sa’eed al-Khudrī narrated that Allāh’s Messenger (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) said: “*You will follow the way of those who came before you, handspan by handspan, arms length by arms length, until if they were to go into a lizards hole you would follow them into it.*” We asked: “[do you intend] the Yahūd and Nasārā O Messenger of Allāh?” He said (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*): “*Who else?*” Reported by al-Bukhārī.

EIGHT

It is not from the ways of the Muslims to celebrate the first day of the Christian-Gregorian year, or the Hijri year, or to specify it with any religious or worldly actions. Specifying the first day of the year like this via establishing the prayer is another vile innovation.

NINE

All of what they mention about noble intent for their actions are not possible to ascertain with certainty. Rather their actions lead to contrary results, opposite to what they intend, this is if they truly wanted good, this is what we think about our Muslim brothers by Allāh’s Will, based on the following:

Firstly, da’wah to Allāh – I saw that this noble aim is not achieved by this vile innovation from two aspects:

A: The prayer is not a means for da’wah, rather it is an act of worship solely and purely for Allāh’s Face. And if it rarely happened that one who observed someone praying attained some benefit or amazement about the beauty of Islam then that is from its fruits and benefits and not from its objectives and purposes for which it has been legislated. For this reason, the Prophet did not begin to call people to establish the prayer before they had acknowledged tawheed and eemān. Rather he called them to the Kalimah Tayyibah and clarified the reality of la ilaha il Allāh, Muhammad ur-Rasūlullāh, via wisdom and good preaching, and arguing with them in a way which is better. He recited the Qur’ān to them and clarified what Allāh had revealed, mentioning to them clear proofs and evidences, Salāh was not obligated except on the Night of Isrā’ before the Hijrah by a year, twelve years after Prophethood. The Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) ordered his companions to adhere to these stages of giving da’wah until Islām manifested, spread and the people accepted it. The Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wasasllam*) said to Mu’ādh ibn Jabal (*radi Allāhu ‘anhu*) when he despatched Mu’ādh to Yemen: “*You will go to the People of t.be Book, so when you reach them invite them to testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh. If they obey you in that then inform them tat Allāh has obligated the prayer on them five*

*times a day*¹²...” Whoever opposes this has certainly opposed the Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) and his Manhaj in da’wah to Allāh.

B: Prayer is an act of worship which has specific actions and forms such as Rukū’ and Sajdah and none respects them except for one who believes in the foundation upon which the Salāh was legislated and that is īmān and tawheed. For this reason, [this flash prayer idea] can be an issue of oddity and mockery from non-Muslims, so it is not wisdom to manifest it in front of them without a need or without their desire to see it and to just surprise them with it while they are busy with their worldly affairs. One of them could thus begin to mock, curse or denigrate the Salāh and this could cause chaos as usually occurs with flash mobbing. This action therefore can lead to evil and make people flee from Islam, so there is no good in it and no da’wah.

Secondly, uniting the Ummah – [in this manner] is a corrupt thought and from the deception of Shaytān, for uniting the Ummah is based on the Book and Sunnah and the understanding of the Salaf us-Sālih. The Muslims in all times and places gather to pray in their Masājid for the five daily prayers. If some people call the Muslims to specify a place or time for Salāh, then it is inevitable that some will agree and others will disagree, thus causing ikhtilāf and division and fitnah as occurs now. If the Muslims were left on what they traversed since the time of the Prophet until today this would be better for the people and unite their word.

Thirdly, making this year a “year for [congregational] prayer” – this is also void, for continuity with the congregational prayer is of the fruits of knowledge, īmān and taqwā and this is not done by such sudden flash behaviour, rather by teaching, reminding and cultivation within Masājid and Madāris.

Fourthly, fun and cool for the youth – this negates the reality of this act of worship and the intent for which the act of worship was legislated, as mentioned prior. “Fun and cool” events for youth are via permitted worldly means such as sport and relaxation, as for using acts of worship in this way, or gathering for it, then this is from clear misguidance and corrupting the deen and effacing its realities.

¹² Reported by al-Bukhārī in his Saheeh and Muslim.

I ask Allāh to show us the truth for what it is and suffice us to follow it, and show us the bātil for what it is and suffice us to stay away from it, and all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds, and may prayers and peace be upon the seal of the Prophets and Messengers.

Written by

Abd al-Haqq Turkmani

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The Following masheikh have read this research and approved of it and advised to distribute it:

1. His excellent the Sheikh Sa'ad bin Abdur Rahman al Hussein, from the blessed land of Mekka.
2. The honorable Sheikh, Dr. Sa'ad bin Naasir al Shiethri, a previous member of the committee of major scholars in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, also a member of the council of chambers of the Knowledge International University in Riyadh.
3. His excellence the Sheikh, Dr. Fahad bin Sulaimaan al-Faheed, teacher at the faculty of Usool ud Deen (foundations of the religion) in the Islamic University of Imam Muhammed bin Saud in Riyadh.
4. His excellence the Sheikh, Dr. Muhammed Ahmad Lo, Dean of the College for Islamic Studies, Dakar, Senegal.