

*In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious Ever Merciful*

## “Prayers are the Key to Bliss and Fortune”

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Chapter 2, Verse 187:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ  
إِذَا دَعَانِ ۗ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

*“And when my servants ask thee about Me, say, ‘I am near.’ I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he prays to Me, so they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way.”*

“Ghair mumkin ko yay mumkin say budul dhay thee hay // Aay meray fulsifiyo zooray du’a dhaiko tho.”

*“With prayers, the impossible becomes possible. O my philosophers, witness the power of prayers.” -- Poetry of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II (ra)*

Respected Naib Ameer Sahib and Dear Brothers and Sisters –

*Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatohu.*

On any given day, in every corner of the world – from villages to big cities, from rooftops to basements, from Bangkok to Berlin – before every prayer five times everyday, over a billion Muslims listen

attentively to what the President of the United States once referred to as “one of the most beautiful sounds in the world” – that is, the *adhan* or call for prayer. There is virtually not a single moment in a 24-hour period in which thousands of *muezzins* around the world are not reciting the *adhan*.

Of course, all of us know the *adhan* by heart – indeed, every Muslim parent recites the *adhan* in the ears of every newborn. And within the wording of the *adhan*, perhaps the most familiar refrain to any Muslim are two simple phrases uttered consistently and perpetually for over 1,400 years – “Hai alus salat” (“come to prayer”) and “Hai alul falah” (“come to success”) – repeated twice in every *adhan*.

All of us here in this hall – and indeed, each and every one of the over billion Muslims in the world – tacitly accepts when they hear the *adhan* that prayers lead to bliss and fortune. But upon closer reflection, that belief in and of itself is not simply a belief, it is a claim – a challenge, really, to all of humanity, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. What is that challenge? That if a human wants to obtain bliss and

fortune in this very life, there's only one way or path to accomplish this, and that is through prayer.

But if we push the premise of this belief and analyze the lifestyle of many Muslims in the world today, we see some dramatic contradictions. What really is our yardstick for bliss and fortune? What does it mean to be happy and successful in America? Happiness and success are often defined in material or tangible terms. For example, having a high paying job, obtaining a higher degree, owning a home, owning a car, amassing wealth and assets, diversifying your stock portfolio. And for many around us, none of these material measures appears necessarily to be the result of prayers. Ask many of your friends and colleagues, and most will immediately cite "efforts," "hard work" or simply "luck" as the source of their happiness and fortune, not prayers. "You work hard, you succeed" is a phrase you often hear around most office buildings and university halls. Indeed, prayers are an afterthought, or in many cases, not even a thought at all.

Perhaps more tellingly, prayers are sometimes perceived as getting in the way of success. For example, many prominent atheists, such as

Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris or Bill Maher, perceive prayer as a “meaningless babble to an imaginary friend.” They attempt to scientifically disprove the perceived positive effects of prayers and suggest that those who pray are delusional.

In these times and with these attacks, it behooves all of us to understand just exactly how and why prayers can lead to bliss and fortune. Indeed, this very question is perhaps the most important question of the modern age.

Fortunately for our Community, we don't have to turn very far for an answer. Our founder, whom we believe is the messiah and reformer of Islam, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani (as), assumed the massive task of defending the concept of prayer from criticism. Indeed, one of the central missions for which he came was to revive an Islam that had grown dead for 1,400 years. He reintroduced Muslims to a living God and a living faith by showing the rational force behind the concept of prayer.

And he did so by taking on the most famous contemporaries of his age. The exact same attacks leveled by prominent atheists today were

brought over a century ago in India by a famous philosopher, statesman and intellectual giant, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (founder of Aligarh Muslim University). Sir Syed Khan questioned the meaning of prayer. He said God does not speak to anyone anymore; that our *taqdeer* or fate is predetermined, so there's no use in praying to alter a pre-planned life. The Promised Messiah (as) took strong exception to this line of attack on. In defense, he penned a celebrated and widely acclaimed book in 1893, *Barakatud Dua* ("The Blessings of Prayer"), in which he systematically rebutted each of Sir Syed Khan's arguments.

From Sura Al-Fatiha to Sura Al-Nas, the Qur'an lays great emphasis on prayer. It mentions "worship" 152 times, "prayer" 99 times, "prostrating" 74 times and "bowing" 15 times. Indeed, the Quran states that the very purpose of man's creation is *ibadat* or to worship Allah.

Not only did the Promised Messiah (as) advocate for these Quranic principles, he also waged an intellectual war against scholars who mocked and jeered Muslims for believing in the power of prayer. Indeed, the Promised Messiah (as)'s defense of prayer is unmatched among Muslim scholars. He offered deep and brilliant insights on the

physical and spiritual effects of prayers, the conditions of acceptance of prayers, ways to overcome frustration in unanswered prayers and the intricate relationship between prayer and planning.

Addressing those who criticize the need for prayer, the Promised

Messiah (as) writes:

*“Prayer is a wonderful thing. It is a pity that those who pray aren’t aware of the true manner of prayer, nor are they acquainted with the ways of the acceptance of prayer. The truth is that the very reality of prayer today has become strange. There are some who deny the effectiveness of prayer altogether and there are others who don’t deny it, but because their prayers aren’t prayers in the true sense, their condition is worse than the prayers of even those who altogether deny the effectiveness of prayer. Their practical condition has pushed many others to the verge of atheism. The first condition for prayer is that a supplicant should not get tired and become a prey to despair that nothing will happen. Sometimes it is seen that a prayer is carried on until it’s about to be accepted and then the supplicant gets tired and the result is failure and frustration. Frustration results in the denial of the effectiveness of prayer and gradually culminates in the denial of God. It is sometimes asked that if there is a God who accepts prayer, why haven’t those prayers been accepted that have been offered over a long period? If those who think in this manner and stumble were to reflect upon their lack of perseverance, they would come to know that all of their frustration is the result of their own haste and impatience, which generates an ill concept of the powers of God and results in despair. So one should never grow tired of prayer.”*

Here, the Promised Messiah (as) draws a direct link between impatience in prayer and creeping atheism. Indeed, we see this play out today – we often fall prey to instant gratification, a selfish desire to see instant results of our efforts. If prayers don't produce instant results, we gradually grow skeptical of the need to pray and eventually discard prayers altogether. The Promised Messiah (as) warns us of losing sight of the forest from the trees.

The Promised Messiah (as) also shared to the world example after example of the power of prayers at work. In particular, he cites to the examples of the great prophets of God who were the recipients of miracles through prayer. For example, on the basis of prayers alone, Hadhrat Ibrahim (as) remained unharmed and unscratched in the pit of the fire; Hadhrat Nuh (as) was saved from the great flood; Hadhrat Loot (as) and Hadhrat Yunus (as) were protected from crises; and Hadhrat Isa (as) was delivered from the cross. Yet the Promised Messiah (as)'s most cherished example is that of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). Describing the connection between prayers and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), the Promised Messiah (as) writes:

*“Are you aware what was the wonderful event that happened in the deserts of Arabia, that hundreds of thousands of the dead came alive within a few days, and those who had been corrupted through generations took on Divine color, and the blind began to see, and the tongues of the dumb began to flow with Divine insights, and such a revolution took place in the world which no eye had seen and no ear had heard before? It was the prayers during dark nights of one who had been wholly lost in God which created an uproar in the world and manifested such wonders as had appeared impossible in the case of that unlearned helpless one, Muhammad (sa).”*

Indeed, one could spend a lifetime studying examples of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). For purposes of my talk today, I share with you just one example to help illustrate how Allah accepted the prayers of Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) and changed defeat into fortune.

During the early years of his calling, when the persecution against Muslims had reached its height in Mecca, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) journeyed to Medina with his Meccan companions to spread the message of Islam. The Muslims lived peacefully in Medina, and the message of Islam began to spread in the city. Back in Mecca, the leaders of the Quraish were angered by the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) since they had made extraordinary preparations to kill him and halt the progress of Islam. They also knew that the



Muslims were getting closer to controlling the trade route to Syria, which was of immense importance in the region.

The Meccans were searching for an excuse to attack the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). In those days, it so happened that a caravan of 1,000 camels filled with goods and armaments, led by Hadhrat Abu Sufyan (ra) (who was opposed to the Prophet (sa), but accepted Islam later in his life) and 40 men, was travelling from Syria to Mecca and had to pass through Medina. Hadhrat Abu Sufyan (ra) was concerned that the caravan was vulnerable to attack and seizure by the Muslims, so he immediately notified the Quraish leaders in Mecca. The Meccans now had the excuse they were looking for to kill the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) and immediately assembled a mammoth army of 1,000 war-ready men. These men were heavily armed and cheered on to battle by most of Mecca. They set out to Hadhrat Abu Sufyan (ra)'s caravan.

The trade caravan had reached Badr (approximately 200 miles from Mecca and 80 miles from Medina). At that point, Abu Sufyan (ra) told the Meccan army, 1,000 strong, that his caravan had not yet been attacked by the Muslims, and that there was no need for conflict. But

the Meccans, led by Abu Jahl, had already come quite far and were eager to defeat the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) and end Islam's progress.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa)'s army only had 313 men, most of them unskilled and inexperienced. Realizing the daunting task ahead of him, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) took great care to seek counsel from many of the Ansar around him. One after another, his Meccan followers stood up and assured the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) of their loyalty and zeal. Every time the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) heard from a Meccan Muslim, he asked for more counsel and more advice. The Muslims of Medina had thus far been silent. Finally, one of them, Hadhrat Al-Miqdad bin Amr (ra), stood up and said:

*“You ask for our counsel because you think that when you came to us, we agreed to fight on your side only in case you and your fellow emigrants from Mecca were attacked in Medina. But now we seem to have come out of Medina, and you feel that our agreement does not cover the conditions under which we find ourselves today. But O Prophet of God, when we entered into that agreement we did not know you as well as we do now. We know now what high spiritual station you hold. We care not for what we agreed to. We now stand by you, whatever you ask us to do. We will not behave like the followers of Moses who said, ‘Go you and your God and fight the enemy, we remain here behind.’ If we must fight, we will and we will fight to the*

*right of you, to the left of you, in front of you and behind you. True, the enemy wants to get at you. But we assure you that he will not do so, without stepping over our dead bodies. O Prophet of God, you invite us to fight. We are prepared to do more. Not far from here is the sea. If you command us to jump into it, we will hesitate not.”* (Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi, and Hisham).

The Syrian caravan had left Badr into a safe zone outside of Muslim control. But the Meccans camped in the dry grounds of Badr poised to fight the Muslim army. Having the support of both the Meccan and Medinite Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) advanced to a stream near Badr and camped there for the night. Significantly, the land adjacent to the stream was all sand and unsuitable for battle.

You can just imagine this scene. On one side, on proper land, stood over 1,000 skilled Meccan warriors fueled by hatred to stop the spread of Islam. On the other side, near water and sand, stood 313 mostly unskilled and untrained Muslims who were suddenly thrust into a dangerous battle with seemingly insurmountable odds. It was the most vulnerable moment for Muslims in Islam’s young history.

The anxiety among the Muslims was palpable. In the Muslim camps, a sense of intense uneasiness set in. They looked distraught and deflated. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) also shared this anxiety and uneasiness. But in this most vulnerable moment on the eve of the first battle in defense of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), dressed in his war clothes, retreated to his tent and spent the entire night in prayers and supplication. Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (ra) relates that over and over again, with a loud and tearful voice, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) began to recite the following prayer:

*“O my Allah, over the entire face of the earth at this moment, there are only these three hundred men who are devoted to you and determined to establish your worship. O my Allah, if these three hundred men die today at the hands of their enemy in this battle, who will be left behind to glorify your name?”* (Tabari).

It is said that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) made this prayer the entire night before battle. He prayed with such passion and anguish that, after hearing his loud cries for several hours, Hadhrat Abu Bakr (ra) came into his tent, *“O Prophet of God, enough. Please stop. Allah will surely accept your prayers.”*

At dawn on the day of battle, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) came out of the tent and announced to 313 Muslims present that Allah had revealed to him that “*The hosts will soon be routed and turn their backs in flight.*” This revelation is captured in the Qur’an in Chapter 54, Verse 46.

Allah heard the supplication of His Prophet (sa). Rain came overnight. The sandy part of the field which the Muslims occupied became wet and solid. The dry part of the field occupied by the enemy became muddy and slippery. During the night the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) had a clear intimation from Allah that important members of the enemy would meet with their death. He even had individual names revealed to him and the exact spots at which they were to drop dead. They died as they were named and dropped dead exactly as it had been foretold.

Look at the power of prayers! Almost certain defeat changed to victory, bliss and fortune. Indeed, the prayers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) during the Battle of Badr saved Islam from extinction and became the source of Islam’s expansion.

During the Promised Messiah (as)'s own life, we see the power of prayers on dramatic display. Allow me to share just one example:

The Promised Messiah (as) narrates an incident from 1906 about an Ahmadi from Hyderabad Deccan, Abdul Karim Sahib. Abdul Karim Sahib was a student in a school in Qadian. It so happened that one day on his way to school, he was bitten by a mad dog. His friends and classmates sent him to the Pasteur Institute in Kasauli to obtain treatment for the dog bite. After obtaining treatment for a few days, Abdul Karim returned to Qadian. A few days later, he began exhibiting the usual symptoms of rabies, which included agitation and hydrophobia (a fear of water). The Promised Messiah (as) writes that Abdul Karim Sahib's condition grew so severe and alarming that the Promised Messiah (as) was moved to pity for him. The Promised Messiah (as) grew so anguished that he began to pray ardently for Abdul Karim Sahib. All of Abdul Karim Sahib's friends had told the Promised Messiah (as) that Abdul Karim Sahib had only a few hours to live and could not overcome the rabies.

Abdul Karim Sahib was segregated in a separate house, away from the college boarding facility. A special telegram was sent to the doctors at the Pasteur Institute in Kasauli explaining Abdul Karim Sahib's symptoms and asking for instructions for treatment. Very soon thereafter, Abdul Karim Sahib's friends received a telegram response: *"Nothing can be done for Abdul Karim."* Upon hearing this news, the Promised Messiah (as) was moved in an extraordinary manner and continued to pray fervent supplications for Abdul Karim Sahib. The Promised Messiah (as) felt doubly anguished; first, because Abdul Karim Sahib was an outside Ahmadi visitor; and second, because the Promised Messiah (as)'s opponents would viciously mock and jeer him if Abdul Karim Sahib were to pass away. The Promised Messiah (as) himself describes how his heart was filled with great agony and restlessness for him. *"I began praying with supernormal concentration – a kind of concentration that cannot be achieved through human efforts alone, and the kind of concentration that could awake the dead. When the condition of attendance in the presence of Allah reached its ultimate point, and agony saturated my heart to its brim, then Abdul Karim Sahib*

*began to respond. Instead of fearing from water and running away from light, his health took a dramatic turn for the better. That very night he performed wudhoo (ablution) with water and joined congregational Salat. Within only a few days, he was back to complete health. Allah revealed to me that Abdul Karim Sahib's symptoms of agitation had not appeared in him as a presage of death but actually for the purpose of demonstrating a Divine Sign. No one could fathom how the symptoms of rabies could disappear so suddenly. It was as if a dead man had been revived, and this only through the power of prayers."*

Remarkably, Abdul Karim Sahib lived for another 28 years before passing in December of 1934.

The power of prayers is not simply limited to prophets of God. Indeed, the Promised Messiah (as)'s companions and descendents of companions were often the recipients of the blessings of prayers in extraordinary ways. I wanted to share only three examples for you today.

The first example concerns Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) – a pious sahabiya of the Promised Messiah (as). Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) was married to Hadhrat Nasrulla Khan (ra), another sahaba of the Promised



Messiah (as). Together, they bore their first child, a son they named Zafar. Zafar was a source of great pride in their household and was beloved by both parents. Just a few months after Zafar was born, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) traveled to see her parents at Dutta Zaidka – a village at a distance from Duska (Sialkot). Her parents were naturally delighted to meet their grandson. Just a day or two after Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) had arrived at the village, she had heard about a Hindu widow who lived in the village. Her name was Jai Devi. Jai Devi had earned a reputation for being a witch and someone who was known to blackmail ignorant and superstitious women. The two had occasion to meet, and Jai Devi demanded that Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) give her some clothes and provisions or risk being the victim of her witchcraft. Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) responded: *“You are a poor widow. If you were to ask for charity, I’d be happy to give it to you. But I don’t believe in witchcraft or sorcery. I believe in Allah alone as Master of life and death and don’t recognize any other power in these matters.”* Jai Devi responded: *“Well, you had better think again. If you desire your baby to live, you will have to comply with my demand.”* No sooner had Jai Devi

walked out of the door, Zafar, the baby, suddenly vomited and began to cough blood. He lost consciousness and died a few hours later.

Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) immediately went into sajdah and prayed:  
*“O Allah, you do give and you do take away. I submit to your will.  
Bestow steadfastness on me.”*

She then returned to Duska as a grieving mother.

A few years later, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) had a second child, another son, Rafiq, who had all the wonderful traits of their first son who had died, Zafar. Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra)’s father told his daughter that it would be wise not to back to Dutta Zaidka until Rafiq got older. So she remained in Daska until Rafiq was about two years old. But it so happened that one of Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra)’s relatives had passed away in Dutta Zaidka, so she had to travel there to convey her condolences. She left on the condition that she’d come back only after a week.

A few days after she arrived at Dutta Zaidka, the same Hindu woman, Jai Devi, surfaced and again repeated the same demand. Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) gave her the same response. Her father

insisted that she simply accept the demand and give Jai Devi some money and clothes to make her go away, but Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) said that this was a test of her faith and resolve, and that Rafiq would live or die only as Allah chooses.

A few days later, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) saw a dream in which an announcement had been made in the village that Jai Devi had killed her child, Rafiq. She then saw Jai Devi's face appear in her bedroom window. As soon as she awoke from her dream, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) screamed for her mother to come to the bedroom. When they opened the light, they saw that Rafiq, the baby, had vomited and purged blood. He had been knocked out unconscious.

Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) became very distraught because she knew that her father-in-law would be very upset if Rafiq had died away from home. She begged her mother to make immediate arrangements to travel back to Daska, which is about 22 miles away. That very night, all night, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) drove on a horse with her unconscious son, Rafiq, in her lap. Tears streamed down her face as she looked at her son, who sat still and unconscious with no signs of life. Knowing

that Rafiq was about to die, she immediately stopped the horse and raised both heads in deep prayers and supplication:

*“O Allah, you know well that it is not the prospect of this child’s death that distresses me. If it is your will to call him away, then I humbly submit to that will. But what I grieve over is my own future. Should Rafiq die now, there would be no future for me in Daska. Most merciful one, you are the master of life and death. Hear my humble prayer and allow Rafiq to live for 10 more days, so that his grandfather might enjoy him. Then if you desire to take him away, then I shall be resolved in your will.”*

Even as she was completing her prayer, she felt a tug at her veil and her son Rafiq cried out for his mother in a perfectly healthy voice. She knew that her prayers had been instantly answered, and her heart filled with gratitude to her maker. Upon arrival at Duska, her father-in-law was delighted to welcome back his little grandson. The next ten days passed very joyously, and he thoroughly enjoyed his grandson’s company. Then immediately after the tenth day, Rafiq suddenly began to exhibit the same symptoms, and within a matter of hours, he died. The now twice bereaved mother steadfastly bore this loss and was grateful for Allah to extend the life of her son.

Some time later, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (sa) had another dream, in which she saw the same Hindu woman, Jai Devi, appear before her. Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) told her *“Will you please stop pursuing me?”* Jai Devi replied: *“I shall come 13 days and 17 days and will not come again.”* Exactly 13 days after this dream, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) gave birth to a baby daughter. Exactly 17 days after she gave birth, the daughter died – the third consecutive death of a child. Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) interpreted the dream as a signal that the long suffering she had endured with the consecutive deaths of three children would now be at a close as Jai Devi would not come again.

Once again, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) was pregnant with a child, and once again Jai Devi appeared in her dream. This time, the Hindu woman told her: *“You will have a male child tomorrow, but you will need to take certain precautions to safeguard his life. On his birth, the baby’s right nostril should be pierced with a needle and a camel’s hair should be strung through it. In addition, a wick should be placed in a bowl out of flour, turmeric powder and melted butter and placed at the top of roof of the house. Finally, the wick should be lit on the birth of*

*the child.”* When Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) awoke the next morning, she saw that her sister-in-law had placed all of these items near her bed. She immediately grew angry and threw all of the items on the floor. She said, *“I will not have any of this nonsense. All of this is superstition. Allah is the Lord of life and death. If He bestows life on this morsel of humanity, it shall live, and if He calls it away, it must die. I shall not put my faith in jeopardy in this way.”*

At that moment in time, Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra) had rid Jai Devi from her life once and for all. And on that evening, February 6, 1893, she bore a fourth child, who she named Zafrulla. He would later grow up to be Hadhrat Sir Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan (ra) – one of the most famous personalities in Jama’at history, Pakistan’s first foreign minister, President of the International Court of Justice and President of the United Nations. As for Jai Devi – well, she lived for many years later in a quiet and miserable existence. She ultimately committed suicide by burning herself to death.

My dear brothers and sisters, witness the power of prayers at work here! Hadhrat Husain Bibi (ra)’s life was made to be miserable by a

Hindu woman, and she witnessed the consecutive deaths of three of her children. Yet at no moment during these unthinkable trials did she ever waiver in her faith in Allah and in her belief in prayers. Her conviction led her to give birth to one of the greatest statesmen of the modern era.

This is a sublime example of how prayers can lead to fortune.

The second example that I wanted to share is of Hadhrat Sir Chaudhry Zafrulla Khan (ra). He narrates this incident himself in his book Tehdis-e-Naimat. In 1962, Hazrat Chaudhry Sahib as elected as the President of the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations. Before assuming the presidency, Hazrat Chaudhry Sahib was worried that one of the under secretaries of the UN, who was an expert on matters of UN procedure, Mr. Andrew Cordier, was due to retire in the 16<sup>th</sup> session. Hazrat Chaudhry Sahib had never previously presided over a general session and was very nervous that he would not be able to handle the procedural matters properly without expert guidance. In the 16<sup>th</sup> session, Hazrat Chaudhry Sahib had observed that on most days in the General Assembly, at least 4-5 points of procedural order per day were raised by member states, so he knew that he had to have a strong working

knowledge of procedure as President of the UN. He was so worried that he began to pray ardently that may Allah guide him in his task, remove all shortcomings and resolve this issue of his lack of knowledge or help on the UN procedural matters. He said that he prayed fervently for this task in every Salat. Look at the mercy of Allah. It so happened that during the two-year period while Hazrat Chaudhry Sahib (ra) was president of the UN, not a single procedural point of order was ever raised, and every session began and ended on time! It was the only period in UN history where this had ever happened. One of the important lessons of this story is that no matter how successful you've become, no matter how grand your secular status may be, only through prayers can you achieve true bliss and fortune.

The last example I wanted to share is of the son of a sahaba of the Promised Messiah (as) – Dr. Sardar Nazeer Ahmad, son of Hadhrat Sardar Abdur Rahman Sahib (ra). Dr. Sardar Ahmad was an avid Da'i ilallah who would like to perform Tabligh on most days and nights. He narrates a story that once he was employed as a doctor on a ship that was used to serve hajis (those were going to Mecca to perform the Hajj).



One year, as he was returning home after the Hajj, the ship that he was on reached the port of Aden. So he got out of the ship and began to do Tabligh to the local Arabs. He got so absorbed in his Tabligh work that he forgot to board the ship again, and when he arrived back at the harbor, the ship was gone. He immediately grew very weary because he knew the authorities would point out his gross negligence since he was legally responsible for the medical care of all those who were on the ship. That same night, he spent the entire night praying the following prayer:

*“O Allah, I was carrying out your job and was conveying your message to the Arabs. This was not my personal job. Now, when the ship has left, I am not sure what I can do. I beg you to please bring back the ship.”*

During his prayers, he fell asleep and had a dream that the ship had come back. In the morning when he awoke, he told the Arabs who he had been engaged in Tabligh with that he had this dream and that God had informed him that the ship would come back. The Arabs began to mock and jeer him for saying something so preposterous. But as the day dawned, a man came running from the dock and told Dr. Sardar Ahmad that the ship had returned. As it turned out, since it was a war time situation, the ship was under danger from submarines and did not have a

peace flag hanging from its bows. So it had returned back to Port of Aden to obtain the peace flag. Dr. Sardar Ahmad notes that in everyday experiences, even if you miss a train, it never comes back. For a ship to return was a true miracle and a direct answer to his prayers.

Each of the incidences that I've narrated illustrates how prayers are the key to obtaining true bliss and fortune. Success through prayers is not limited to prophets, companions or other saintly people. Each and every person in this hall has equal access to this beautiful tool for success. Knowing how to best utilize this tool is the task of every momin or believer.

In the end, I quote from the words of the Promised Messiah (as) in his book *Lecture Sialkot*:

*“Blessed are the prisoners who pray and do not get tired for they shall one day be released; blessed are the blind ones who persevere in their prayers for one day they shall see. Blessed are those who are in the graves and seek the help of God through prayer for one day they shall be taken out of their graves. Blessed are you who do not get tired in your prayers and your souls melt while you pray, and your eyes shed tears, and a fire is lit in your breasts and you are driven into dark chambers and desolated jungles seeking solitude, and you are rendered restless and mad and unconscious of self, for in the end you will become the recipients of grace. The God to Whom we call is very Benevolent, Merciful, Modest, True, Faithful and Compassionate to those who are*

*humble. You should also become faithful and supplicate with full sincerity and loyalty so that He should have mercy on you. Withdraw from the tumult of the world and do not make your faith a matter of personal contentions. Accept defeat for the sake of God so that you might become heirs to great victories. God will show a miracle to those who pray and will bestow extraordinary favour upon those who beg.”*

May Allah give us the strength and steadfastness to unlock the heavenly doors of bliss and fortune through prayers. *Insha'allah. Ameen.*