

June 7, 1963

Prayer Service in Islam

I give to you as follows the words of Maulana Muhammad Ali on equality in Islam before God and Man. There has been so much difference and outright snarling of the black so-called Negroes in the society of equality with the members of non-darker-people that it is often said by the lighter skinned Muslims that Islam has no color line because of the white man's color line drawn in Christianity between white and black, and especially between the American so-called Negroes.

But there is a line, drawn by Allah between the devils and the original people. Of course, the devils are known to be pale white with blue eyes, and it is mentioned in the Holy Qur-an 20:102, as they being the people who will be gathered together for the destruction.

PRAYER

"All services rendered by words and bodily actions and sacrifice of wealth are due to Allah. Peace be on thee, O Prophet! and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be on us and on the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that none deserves to be worshipped but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger."

THE SERVICE of prayer is divided into two parts, one to be said in private and the other to be performed in congregation, preferably in a Mosque. While the private part is meant simply for the development of the inner self of man, the public part has other ends as well in view; ends, indeed, that make the Islamic prayer a mighty force in the unification of the human race.

In the first place, this gathering of all people living in the same vicinity five times daily in the Mosque, is a help to the establishment of healthy social relations. In the daily services these relations are limited to a narrow circle, i.e., only to members of the same neighborhood, but the circle becomes wider in the weekly Friday service which gathers together all Muslim members of a particular locality, and still wider, in the two great "Id" gatherings.

Thus prayer promotes social relations between the different sections of the Muslim community. Far more important than this, however, is the leveling of social differences brought about by means of congregational prayer. Once within the doors of the Mosque, every Muslim feels himself in an atmosphere of equality and love. Before their Maker they all stand shoulder to shoulder, the king along with his poorest subject, the rich arrayed in gorgeous robes with the beggar clad in rags.

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NAY, THE king or rich man standing in a back row will have to lay his head, prostrating himself before God, at the feet of a slave or a beggar standing in the front. There could be no more leveling influence in the world. Differences of rank, wealth and color vanish within the Mosque, and quite a new atmosphere, an atmosphere of brotherhood, equality and love, totally differing from the outside world ~~prevails~~ prevails within the holy precincts.

To be able to breathe, five times daily, in an atmosphere of perfect peace in a world of strife and struggle; of equality where inequality is the order of the day; and of love amid the petty jealousies and enmities of daily life, is indeed a blessing. But it is more than a blessing; for it is the great lesson of life. Man has to work amidst inequalities, amidst strife and struggle, amidst scenes of hatred and enmity, and yet he is drawn out of these five times a day, and made to realize that equality, fraternity and love are the real sources of human happiness.

THE TIME spent on prayer is not, therefore, wasted even from the point of view of active humanitarianism; on the contrary, the best use of it is made in learning those great lessons which make life worth living. And these lessons of fraternity, equality and love, when put into practice in daily life, serve as foundations for the unification of the human race and of the lasting civilization of mankind.

In fact, the five daily congregational prayers are meant, among other things, to carry into practice the theoretical lessons of equality and fraternity for which Islam stands; and however much Islam may have preached in words the equality of man and the fraternity of the community of Islam, all this would have remained a dead-letter, had it not been translated into the every-day life of man through the institution of five daily congregational prayers.

Elijah Muhammad, Messenger of Allah

(Prayer Service continued next issue.)