

## The Ahlul Bayt and a Modern Muslim

The jobs of the present age have occupied most of man's time and not left for him any free time. In the age of the Mission – the first age of Islam, jobs were limited in that a man was a farmer, a trader or a manufacturer. These three jobs gave man enough free time to practice his worships as he liked and at their specified times. When the time of prayer came even if a Muslim was in the place of his work, he stopped working to offer the prayer with a tranquil soul.

As for today where governments have employed most of people for assured and defined salaries and for several hours, people are not allowed to stop working in order to offer the prayer. A student, teacher, manager, physician, nurse, worker, soldier, policeman, officials in companies, factories, and mines, the guards of borders, officer in a weather station or airport...etc. do not find free time to offer the prayer in its five prescribed times.

I myself suffered this problem when I was a teacher. My soul was upset and my conscience was confused as time did not permit me to offer the prayer in its specified time. I often missed the *Dhuhr* (midday), *Asr* (afternoon), and *Maghrib* (time of sunset) prayers especially during winter. I often offered the four prayers (in addition to *Isha* – evening Prayer) altogether in the night. Sometimes, I went back home very tired so that I could not offer them, or I offered them in spite of me.

I discovered that many Muslims gave up prayer for the reason that they were psychologically stressed, hoping that chance might permit them to offer this obligation later. Because of this, dislike came to some people who saw that the prayer was like a nightmare, which affected their ease. They began criticizing Islam of being a religion of fatigue, difficulty and hardship, and saying that Christianity had relieved its followers from many ties where they pray only one time a week; on Sunday which is a holiday.

How often the missionaries struck the right cord before a Muslim youth, claiming that their religion (Christianity) would keep pace with civilization at all ages! They say that prayer once a week and fasting (abstaining from eating meat only) for only three days in a year make their religion a religion of love and peace.

How much did these propagandas attract the Muslim youth, who suffered, in their early childhood from

the pressure of parents to perform *wudhu*' and prayer, to a terrible degree in some families? You see that some parents, especially unlearned ones, want their children to be exactly like Rabi'ah al-Adawiyyah<sup>1</sup> if they are females and like Ahmad al-Badawi if they are males. They wake them up before the dawn and tire them with prayers. They watch them day and night, and blame and punish them severely for everything. They beat them sometimes just because they forget something. They send them to government schools and burden them with duties, until they become boring, and then hate the religion while they are not yet adolescent. I do not say except what I have already seen. I saw many children from my relatives, who offered the prayer under pressure; give up the prayer when the authority of parents was no longer over them, or when they were far from the family and its ties.

Many times, I tried to convince some parents from my relatives not to beat or force their children to offer the prayer and that they must treat them kindly and leniently, to endear the prayer to them and not to make it as a nightmare to them, but I often faced their saying that the Prophet (S) had said, "*Beat them (children) to offer the prayer when they are seven years old (or ten years in some traditions)*".

In this way, the Muslim youth lose their prayer and give up on their religion, even if they do not follow the missionaries. In addition to that, the television, games and many other things take the youth away from the remembrance of Allah.

<sup>1</sup>. An exemplar in faith and piety.

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