

Define the meaning of the prayers and its different categories. Also describe the spiritual, moral and social impact of prayers.

1. Introduction

Prayer, often referred as Salah or Namaz, is the obligatory worship of Islam. It is the second pillar of Islam after Shahada; it is often mentioned in Quran, making it one of the most emphasized worships in Islam. There are certain ways and etiquettes to perform prayers. Additionally, while there are certain categories of prayers, including Fardh, Sunnah and Nafl, not all of them are obligatory. Having great importance, prayers affect the life of a believer immensely. Not only does it have spiritual effects like closeness to Allah, reward and psychological relief, it also greatly influences moral character. While socially, prayers show unity, strength and non-discriminatory and equality based image of Islam.

2. What is the meaning of prayer

a. Etymology:

Prayer is an English word which has its root in Latin. It means beg or ask earnestly. While in Arabic it is called Salah which means pay homage or bowing. Additionally, Muslims use different words for Salat depending on their language. People of Asia call it Namaz, which is a Persian word.

b. Why do Muslims offer prayers?

The ultimate reason behind offering Salah is that it is commanded by Allah. It is a way to express His authority as a Sovereign. Also, it denies polytheism. While Shahadat is realization of Allah's sovereignty, prayers are offering prayers is a way to express it in action. Therefore, not only Allah, but His messenger and Nabis before Him had put emphasis.

In this regard Allah's prophets had said:

Fear God and obey me

(Tubhat : 63)

Moreover, Apart from an order it is a gift that Allah gave to His messengers SAW, on the Night of Miraj. Therefore, Prayers are both an order and a gift whose only beneficiary is the one who offers them.

c. The concept of worship in other religions:

Islam is not the only religion where concept of worship exists. In fact, all the mainstream religion have certain prayers

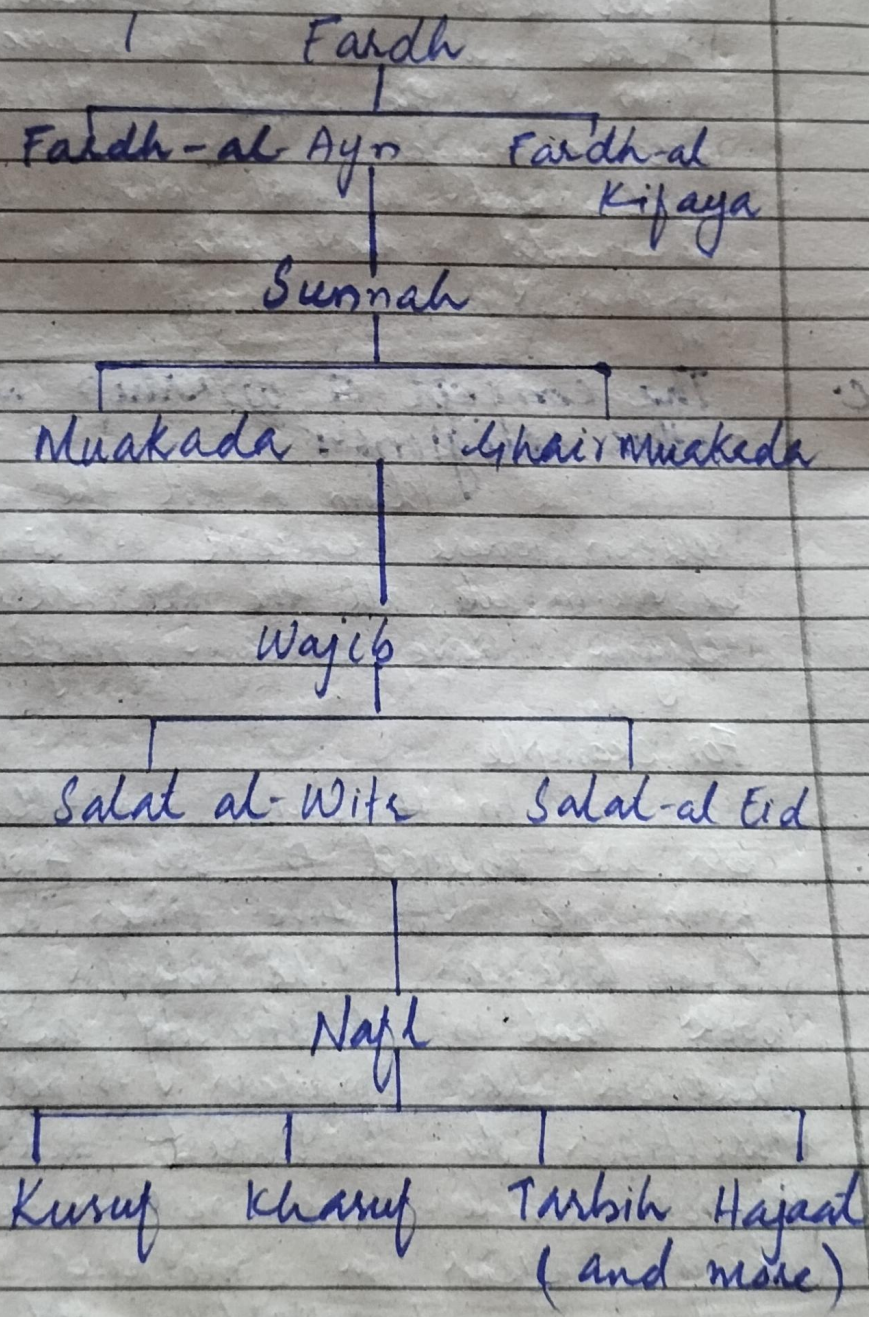
For example:

In Hinduism, its followers are obliged to do "Aarti" from one to five times a day, whereas, the religion of book that is christianity and Judaism have prayers to perform. Christians do Eucharist and Baptism while jews perform three daily prayers in morning, afternoon and Night respectively.

3

What are the categories of Prayers?

Prayers are divided into certain categories, which are given below:



a. Fardh

Fardh are obligatory prayers which means on one hand they it secure great reward but on the other hand failure to perform it leads to punishment. However Fardh prayers are of two types, which are described below:

i. Fardh al-Ayn:

There are ^{two} types of prayers which are obligatory on individual and only he/she will be held accountable in case of inconvenience.

Example: Five daily prayers including Fajr, Zuhur, Asr, Maghrib and Isha.

ii. Fardh-al-Kifaya

These prayers are obligatory on a community level which means if some of the community members offer them, the whole community will be rewarded for that.

Example: Janaz-e-Namaz

Sunnah

Sunnah are the ^{pro} additional prayers performed by Allah's last Prophet (SAW).

However, there exists a different of opinion among scholars relating to sunnah. There are two types of sunnah: Muakadah, those performed on regular basis and thair-Muakadah, which are not performed on daily basis. Example: Tarwiah, it is sunnah however, on rakkah, scholars have different opinion.

Wajib:

Wajib prayers are of two types. However, some scholars consider them as sunnah while other state they are wajib.

i. Salat-ul-witr:

Salat al witr are offered after the isha's prayers. According to some scholars they are optional. It may varies in number between odd number 3 to 11.

ii. Salat al-Eid:

Two Rakkah offered in the morning of Eid-al-Fitr

Udud Adha. They are consisted of two Rakkah with some additional Takbirat.

d. Nafl Prayers

Nafl prayers are also called supererogatory prayers. They are neither compulsory nor obliged upon an individual to offer. However, its various types are offered at various occasions, seeking help of Allah Almighty. Besides, Prophet (PBUH) Himself had offered them.

Moreover, Nafl prayers cannot be offered at following occasions: sunrise, true noon and sunset. It is to prevent the practice of sun worship.

Types of Nafl Prayers

1. Kasooq, offered during lunar eclipse
2. Kharooq, offered during solar eclipse
3. Tasbeeh offered to seek forgiveness of previous sins.
4. Safar offered to seek protection of Allah during travel.
5. Tawba, and more.

What are the impacts of Prayers?

Spiritual impacts of prayers

Namaz helps acquire great reward

It is in the Imān of muslims that this life is not permanent and they have to do good deeds in order to get reward and place in Jannah. Therefore, Namaz is a great way to acquire reward. Prophet PBUH had said:

Namaz is the key to Jannah. Hadees, Sahih muslim

Fear of Allah, only:

Prayer frees a muslim from worldly compulsions. He only fears Allah, who is the creator of the world. In this regard Allah in Quran states:

I am God and there is no other god. So fear me and

and keep up with the prayers
for my remembrance.

- iii Creates nearness between Allah
and His servant:

Prayers are greatly empha-
sized and loved action of
Allah. He loves those who offer
prayers and the believers also
look upon His divine connection.
In Quran following verse shows
how a believer perceives
Allah's connection with him.

Allah is sufficient for us,
and He is the best disposer
of affair - (al-Imran: 174)

6 Moral Impacts of Prayers:

- ii Protects from evil:

Prayers repel evil.
One who perform them gets
protected from numerous evil
endeavours such as gambling,
alcoholism, lies etc. Allah
Himself in Quran says

surely, Namaz prevents men
from evil and lewdness
(Al-Ankaboot)

ii. Inculcate punctuality.

Prayers are performed on time and one who performs them grows a habit of punctuality not in worship but in his daily life also. Quran states:

Surely Salah is the time ordained for the believers.
(An Nisa)

iii.

Bring the characteristics of Patience and Perseverance.

Salah, other than Allah's commands, is a way to seek His help. When believers, with true heart offer them a sense of patience and perseverance gets in their heart and they only share their troubles with Allah only. For them Allah in Quran says:

They seek God's help with patience, perseverance and prayers.

(Al-Baqarah)

c. Social impacts of Prayers

i) Portrays a non-discriminatory nature of Islam:

Prayers are obliged on every believer regardless of gender, colour, wealth. Thus, when Muatin calls upon Azan they turn towards mosque without any hesitation. Rich or poor, black or white and cripple or ~~cripple~~ healthy, stand together before their Allah and give witness of His sovereignty. Quran says:

Oh believer, turn to Him in repentance, be mindful of Him and establish prayers and do not be polytheists.

(Al-Quran)

ii) Political train people

Muslims community centre is mosque. They get together here and discuss political matters. In any case of inconvenience they ~~together~~ together go against it.

For example: Arab Spring in Arab world was started in

nesses and bring revolution.

iii. Social unity

Namaz unites people. It shows all muslims are brother as was said by Prophet (P.B.U.H)

Certainly, all muslims are brothers

Additionally Allah in Quran says:

Obey Allah and His Messenger and fall into no disputes, and lest you lose heart and your power depart and be patient and persevering - (An-Arafat)

Conclusion

Above discussion shows meaning of Namaz and its categories. Also, it shows that it is a way to express Allah's sovereignty in Action. While expressing it, individual gets impacted immensely. Not only it inculcate Allah fear but also gives great reward while it also makes people ~~is~~ punctual and patience. Along with it also have great social impacts, making it a reason to be a core in islamic believe.