

Q) Define the philosophy of Salat and explain its importance in light of the Quran and Sunnah. Also state its impact on the life of an individual and the Community.

I) Introduction:

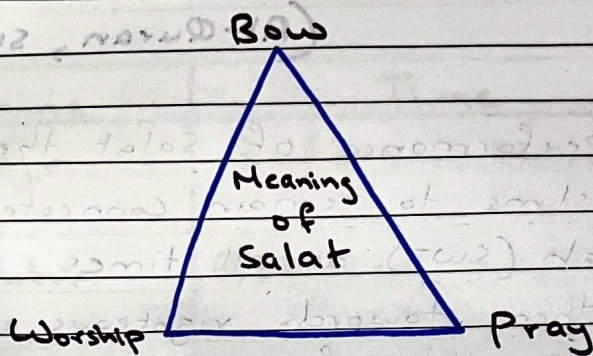
Salat is one of the many forms of Islamic worship (ibadah), and the second most important pillar of Islam. It helps purify not only the soul of an individual, but also his/her practical life. As such, all mature Muslims are required to practice this religious ritual five times a day, and its importance is such that it can only be omitted under a few circumstances. The basis of Salat is the fact that human beings are creatures of Allah Almighty, and thus, His bond-servants. Allah (SWT) thereby, asserts in the Glorious Quran:

“وَأَقِمُوا الصَّلَاةَ”

“And keep up the prayer”

(Al-Quran, 24: 56)

2) The Philosophy of Salat:



The word 'salat' is an Arabic term and refers to bow, worship, and pray. This literal meaning, however, is not usually considered precise enough as it can indicate several different ways of worshipping the Exalted Lord, Allah Almighty. For this reason, Muslims around the globe use different terms to refer to Salat, with for instance, the Indo-Iranians using the Persian word 'Namaz' (نماز).

The main reason why Muslims perform Salat revolves around the true purpose of their existence, that is, to worship Allah Almighty alone (Tawhid). The Noble Quran provides that:

“And I (Allah) created not the jinn and the mankind except that they should worship

Al-Me (Alone)

(Al-Quran, 11:56)

This performance of Salat then helps Muslims to remain connected with Allah (SWT) at all times, which inclines them towards righteous actions and prevents them from indulging in evil actions.

3, Al-Isra' Wal-Miraj: The Night of the Miraculous Journey

Al-Isra' Wal-Miraj (the night journey and ascension) is a miracle second only to the revelation of the Glorious Quran. It was on this night (27th Rajab) that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was transported from Makkah via a white beast called al-Buraq (bigger than a donkey and smaller than a mule) into the Divine Presence. In this meeting, the Lord of the universe, Allah Almighty, gave Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his Ummah the gift of Compulsory Salah. At first, so fifty prayers everyday were made compulsory, however, upon the request of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), they were reduced down to five.

3a) The Five Compulsory Prayers :

	Name	Time
1)	Fajr	Before Sunrise
2)	Zuhr	Between mid-day and afternoon
3)	Asr	Afternoon
4)	Maghrib	Immediately after sunset
5)	Isha	When the twilight is over and just before dawn

4) Importance of Salat in Light of the Quran and the Sunnah:

Salat holds such significance that it ~~is~~ is the first thing that an individual will be held accountable for on the Day of Judgement. The Quran speaks of it for more than a hundred times, and in comparison with other forms of Islam worship, such as Hajj (Pilgrimage) and Sawm (Fasting), it must be performed five times a day.

: Moreover, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) once expressed that Salat forms the basis of the Din of Allah and those who uphold Islam, uphold Islam, and those who leave Salah, leave behind Islam. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) asserted that:

“Between a man and polytheism and disbelief there stands his neglect of prayer”

(Holy Prophet (PBUH))

: The reason for this is that daily prayers are a way for Muslims to maintain close connection with their Lord, and it is only through Salah that their supplications are answered. Allah (SWT) affirms this in the Noble Quran by stating:

“I am indeed close to them: I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me”

(Al-Quran, 2:186)

This, thus, highlights the importance

of Salat that one must acknowledge.

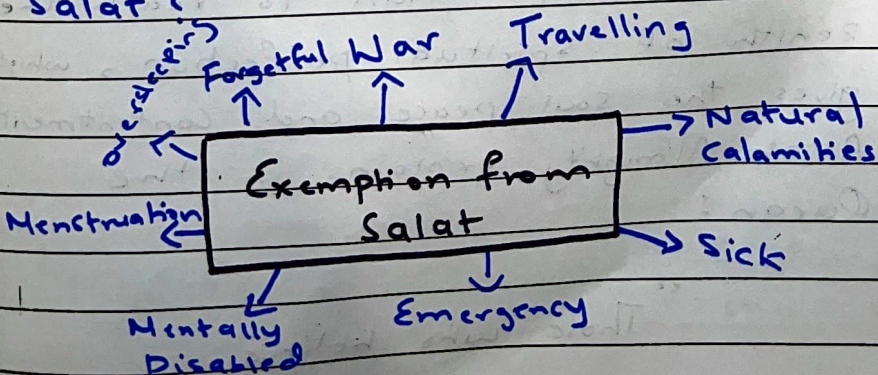
4a) The Significance of Friday Prayers:

The Holy Quran invokes the significance of Friday prayers as a sacred day of worship in a chapter known as Al-Jumah, meaning the day of congregation which is also the word for Friday in Arabic. This day includes an hour in which all supplications are accepted. Thus, emphasising the unmatched significance of Friday prayers, Allah stresses in the Glorious Quran:

“O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for Jumah, come fast to the remembrance of Allah”

(Al-Quran, 62:9)

4b) Under what circumstances is an individual exempted from Salat?



It must, however, be noted that individuals must make up for the missed prayer/s by offering the Qada prayer, with the exception of those who miss it due to menstruation or a mental illness.

5) Impacts of Salat on Individuals:

Salat offers an enormous number of spiritual, moral, and physical benefits to individuals as elucidated below.

~~Say~~ Spiritual Impacts of Salat:

Say Salat Establishes Direct Communication with Allah (SWT):

Prayers establish a direct link between man and his Creator. In fact, the Arabic word for Prayer, 'As-Salah' itself means connection.

Sby Prayers Give the Soul Peace and Contentment:

Salat helps man to reach the zenith of spiritual perfection, which gives the soul peace and contentment. Allah Almighty explains in the Quran:

Those who believe

Date: 3/03/24

and whose hearts
find comfort in the remem-
brance of Allah. Surely
in the remembrance of
Allah hearts find
comfort."

(Al-Quran, 13: 28)

Scy Salat Washes Away Sins:

"(Satan wants to)...

...dvert you from the remem-
brance of Allah and from
prayer"

(Al-Quran, 5: 91)

The above verse from the Glorious Quran reveals that the primary focus of the Satan is to lure man to disregard Islamic practices and indulge in evil actions. In this context, prayers work to counter the Satan and help man remain on the right path. Apart from this, prayer is the perfect way to seek forgiveness from the Exalted Lord, Allah Almighty.

sdj Prayers Cure our Problems:

(As our relationship is strengthened

with Allah (SWT) via Salat, Allah
 in fixes all our worldly problems.
 Allah (SWT) states in the Quran:

“ إِنَّ نَازِئَاتِنَا قَرِيبٌ ”

“ Verily, the help of
 Allah is always
 near ”

(Al-Quran, 2: 214)

Sec) A Believer Attains Psychological Stability and Peace of Mind:

By performing Salat, a believer attains psychological stability and peace of mind as Allah allows him to approach Him whenever he wishes without any restrictions. This is best captured by al-Ghazali who stated that:

“ God distinguishes Himself from the Sultan insofar as He opened the door, removed the veil and permitted man to communicate with Him through prayer, whatever be the circumstances... ”

(al-Ghazali)

Sd) Salat Shields Against Evil: 102

Unlike the Angels (who do good only) and Satan (who does bad only), man, with his intelligence and freedom of choice, is capable of doing both good and evil, or changing from good to evil and vice versa. Prayers, in this context, enable man to control his worldly desires and remain on the right track. The Quran, thus, provides:

“Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing”

(Al-Quran, 29:45)

Se) Individuals who offer Salat Become Humble:

Salat helps individuals realise that everything they possess (such as wealth) has been given to them by Allah (swt) as an amanah (trust), due to which they never get haughty, proud, or arrogant.

Sf) Salat Teaches Man Punctuality:

Prayer makes a man punctual as he has to offer the 5 prayers everyday at appointed times.

Sg) Salat Makes a Believer Hard-working and Disciplined :

Due to the above, a believer becomes a hard worker and consistent in everything that he does. The Glorious Quran praises this quality in the following words:

“Those who remain steadfast to their prayers.”

(Al-Quran, 70:23)

Sh) Salat keeps an Individual Clean and Pure :

Salat keeps an individual clean and pure as it not only purifies the soul, but also maintains the outer physical cleanliness by making Wudu (ablution) a necessary prerequisite for offering prayers.

Si) Prayer Has a Plethora of Health Benefits :

In every posture of performing Salat, there are certain health benefits. For example, the bowing position tones stomach muscles, the abdomen, and the kidneys. It also makes the spine supple and

flexible, whilst also nourishing the nerves. Moreover, in doing Sujud, the chances of getting a headache, spasm, ache, etc are minimised due to the fact that the electrostatic charges are dissipated and discharged.

6) Impacts of Salat on the Community/Society

6a) Unites Muslims:

Prayer unites Muslims as although individual prayers are not forbidden, Islam encourages Muslims to pray in a communal setting (Mosque), with all Muslims gathered in rows, shoulder to shoulder, faced towards the Kabaha.

6b) Salat Promotes Egalitarianism in Society:

Islam promotes human equality (and) social equity by uniting Muslims through the worship of Allah, as discussed above.

6c) Prayer Fosters Brotherhood:

In light of the point above, Islam declares all Muslims, white and black, Arabs and

non-Arabs, rich and poor, and so on as brothers. The Quran provides that:

“Certainly all Muslims are brothers”

(Al-Quran, 49:10)

6d) Prayers Ensure Collective Peace and Social Justice:

As a result of the Islamic concept of unity and brotherhood, Muslims are encouraged to be kind to one another and maintain peace in all spheres of life. Allah, thus, states in the Quran:

“إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

“God commands justice and fair dealing”

(Al-Quran, 16:90)

7) Conclusion:

In conclusion, Salat, as the second most important pillar of Islam, is crucial for Muslims to realise the true purpose of their existence and remain dedicated to

Date: 3/03/24

the teachings of the Glorious Quran and the Sunnah. It is the primary means to establish a close relationship with the Exalted Lord and Sustainer of all times, Allah Almighty. This ensures that man is not only successful in this dunya (world), but also in the Hereafter. Therefore, one must always remain steadfast to his/her prayer and acknowledge the significance of the beautiful gift given by Allah (swt) to mankind: Salat.