

Define the meaning of prayer and its different categories. Also describe the spiritual, moral, and social impacts of prayers. (CSS-2016)

INTRODUCTION :

Prayer is a way in which the individual develops strong connection with God and seeks acts of kindness in spiritual and worldly matters. In the universe various religions are present and each religion teaches its believers to perform prayer through different acts. However, in Islam, prayer is known for Salah, one of the important pillar of Islam. The prayer is divided into different types, which are obligatory, voluntary, and sunnah prayers. These prayers have rewards on the earth and hereafter. Nonetheless, it also leaves the deepest impact on spiritual, moral and social life through purifying the soul with Allah's love, and fear, patience, closeness to Allah and cleanliness, which helps in choosing the right path and attaining mind stability, which results in social unity, strength, stability and harmony. Hence, Prayer is the bridge for making strong connection with Allah and help in different aspects of life.

UNDESTANDING THE MEANING OF PRAYER

MEANING OF PRAYER

IN THE LIGHT OF
HOLY QURAN

IN THE LIGHT OF
THE SUNNAH

① In the light of Quran:

MEANING OF PRAYER:

Prayer is the act of communication by humans with God. It connects spiritual beliefs through adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession. In all worldly religions, prayer is mandatory for communication with God. It is present in different forms. However, prayer is the one of the pillar of Islam called a "Salah". It is an Arabic word derived from the "Salat", meaning connect, link or communicate. So, the literal meaning of the word "Salah", is a connection or link with Allah through the ritual prayer.

In broader terms, it means maintaining a strong connection between Allah and his creatures through communication by expressing thoughts. Hence, it is the way of communication between Allah and creature.

① In the light of Holy Quran:

Allah Almighty and Holy Prophet (ﷺ) emphasizes the importance of Salah many times in the Quran and Sunnah.

In the Quran Allah says:

(i) "O believers, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient" (Al-Baqarah 2:153)

This verse shows the importance of prayer.

Moreover, Allah Almighty says in the Quran

(ii) "And establish prayer and give Zakkah and bow with those who bow (in worship and obedience)".
(Surah Al-Baqarah 2:277)

This verse shows the importance of prayer.

(iii) "Establish prayer at the decline of the sun until the darkness of the night and the dawn prayer, for certainly the dawn prayer is witnessed by angels"

(Surah Al-Isra 17:78)

This verse shows that praying Salah is mandatory for every Muslim.

(iv) "Indeed prayer prohibit immorality and wrongdoings" (Surah Al-Ankabut 29:45)

This verse shows that Salah prevents evil.

② In the light of the Sunnah/Hadith

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

① "No Salat is more burdensome to the hypocrites than the Fajr (dawn) prayer and the 'Isha' (night) prayer; and if they ~~can~~ knew their merits, they would come to them even if they had to crawl to do so." (Bukhari, Muslim, Rayad as-Salihin)

In this Hadees, Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ) focusses on the prayer of dawn and night.

② "The key to Paradise is Salat and the key to Salat is Wudhu." (At-Tirmidhi 4)

In this Hadees, Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ) gave the happiness of paradise through prayer.

③ "Between the disbelief and faith is abandoning the Salat" (Jami'at-Tirmidhi, 2618)

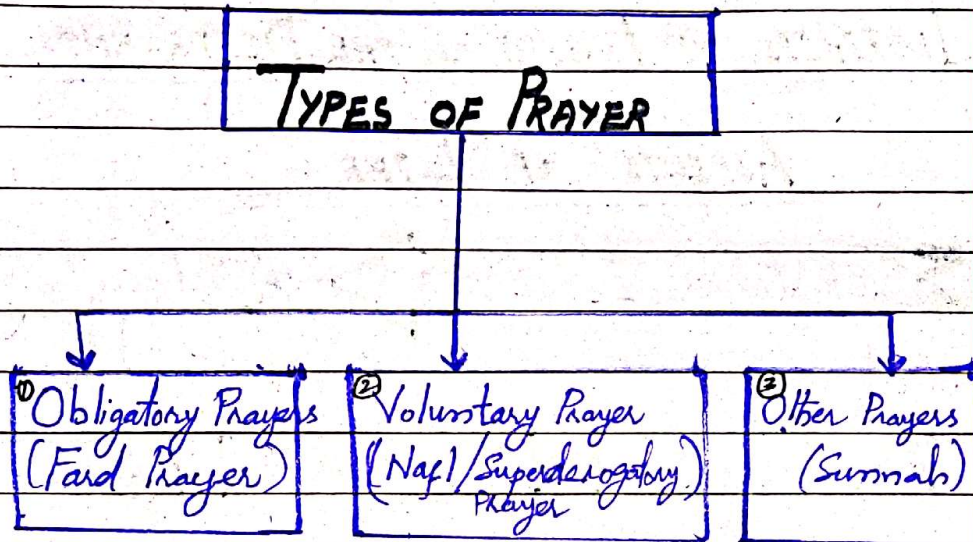
In this Hadees, Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ) said that Salat creates the difference between Muslims and Non-Muslims.

④ "The best deed is Salah at its proper time." (Bukhari, 527)

In this Hadees, Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) said that Salat should be offered on its time without any delay.

EXPLAINING DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRAYER

Before diving into topic, it is important to know the light on different types of prayers.



① Obligatory prayers/Fard Prayer

Obligatory prayers are necessary prayers which are mandatory for all Muslims to perform. These prayers are performed at particular and fixed times. These prayers are performed five times daily.

② Voluntary prayer/Nafil/Supererogatory

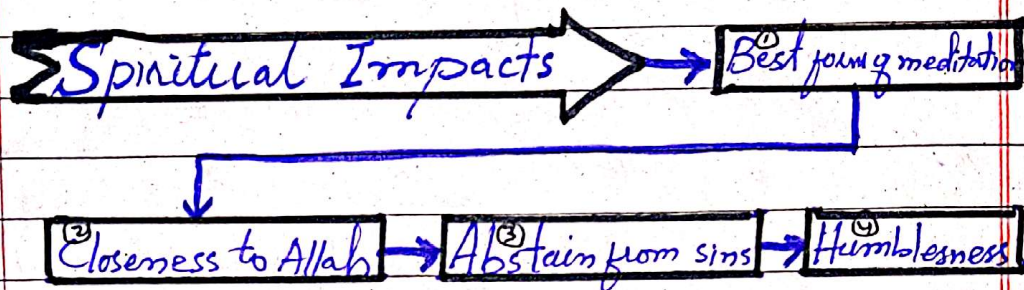
These prayers are not mandatory but the reward of offering these prayers is also high.

③ Other prayers / Sunnah :

These are spiritual beneficial prayers. The timing of these prayers is also fixed, but some of performed at anytime.

IMPACTS OF PRAYER ON THE DIFFERENT

ASPECTS OF LIFE



① Best form of meditation :

In Quran Allah says:

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah, do hearts find rest." (Surah Ar-Raid 13:28)

This verse shows prayer is best form of meditation.

② Closeness to Allah :

In the Quran Allah says:

"Who have believed and whose hearts have rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Surah Ar-Raid 13:28)

This verse shows that offering prayer and remembering Allah through prayer keep a person closer to Allah.

③ Abstain from sins :

In the Quran Allah says:

"Establish prayer at the two ends of the day and in some watches of the night. Lo! Good deeds annul ill deeds. This is the reminder for the mindful". (Surah Hud 11:114)

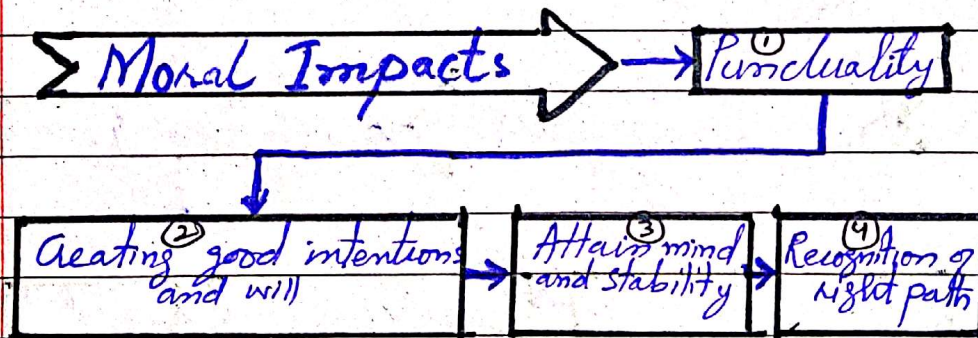
This verse shows that offering prayer regularly keeps the person farther from committing sins by reflecting that Allah is all known for a person's actions.

④ Humbleness :

In the Quran Allah says:

"Keep vigil the night long, save a little"
(Surah Al-Muzzammil 73:2)

This verse shows that prayer produces the act of humbleness in person.

② Punctuality Creating good intentions and will

"Verily I am Allah. There is no god besides Me. So, serve Me and establish prayers to remember Me". (20:14)

① Punctuality:

"Indeed prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specific time" (4:103)
This shows prayer helps in creating punctuality.

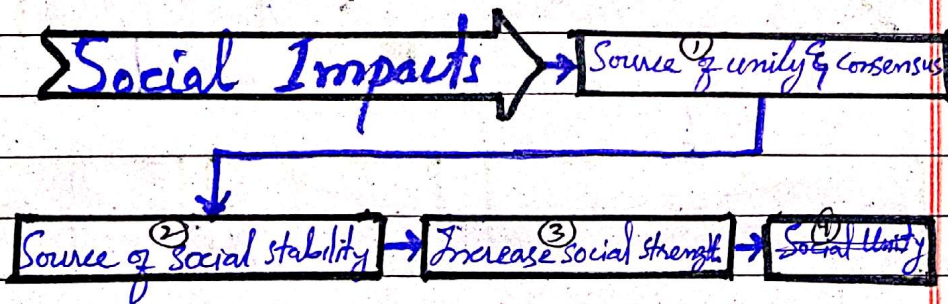
③ Attain mind and stability:

For every Muslim this is essential to attain mind and stability in their actions and choose the right path.

④ Recognition of right path:

In the Quran Allah says
"... Verily, You (O Muhammad) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the straight path."
(Al-Shura 42:52)

This verse shows that consistently praying five times a day will help the person choose the right path.

① Source of unity and consensus:

In daily life all Muslims are busy with their actions and deeds. For creating unity among Muslims, prayer plays role in gathering Muslims five times a day.

② Source of social stability :

When all Muslims stand in one place with strong unity, it will help in making social stability. Offering prayers will help in fostering social stability, so it is best source for it.

③ Increase social strength :

When unity and stability are present in a society that develops due to prayer, it will help in increasing social strengths. Prayer has powerful impact on increasing social strengths.

CONCLUSION :

In a nutshell, prayer help individuals make strong connections with God. All world religions have different kinds of prayers but in Islam, it is known that one of the important pillars of Islam is Salah, which is also divided into different types. Prayer has impacts as well, which are social, spiritual and moral.