

Prayer rituals of islam religion essay



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There are many religions of the world, mostly all consisting of a ritual of prayer of some sort. Islam is the second largest religion of the world after Christianity. Like almost all religions, Islam also has rituals of prayer. These rituals consist of purifying oneself before prayers, the call for prayer, also known as the azaan, the salah or the prayer, and reciting the holy Qur'an. These prayer rituals are a part of the daily life of a Muslim.

The salah starts right after the 'Azaan' or the call for prayer. It is recited by the 'Mu'azzin' who is the man who recites in Arabic, the call for prayer. This call is recited in Arabic. In English translation it means, 'I confess there is no God but God, I confess there is no God but God. I confess Muhammad (PBUH) is the apostle of God.' The people listening to this reply the same. The Mu'azzin says, 'Come to prayer.' The listeners reply 'I have no power or strength but from God most High and Great.' The Mu'azzin says, 'Come to God.' The listeners reply, 'What God wills will be; what He wills not will not be.' Lastly, the first two claims are recited once again to end off the call for prayer to all Muslims. The Azaan is not only a call for prayer to Muslims, it is also a reminder to all the believers that there is no God but Allah and that the Prophet (PBUH) was his messenger. This claim is also the basis of the 'shahadah' or the Islamic creed. 'The azaan thus serves a double purpose; it is an announcement of the time of prayer and at the same time an announcement of the principles of Islam and the significance underlying them. It replaces the meaningless ringing of a bell or the blowing of a trumpet by the most effective propaganda of religion that can be thought of.' (A Manual of Hadith) The azaan can be signified as the wakeup call for all believers, serving as a reminder of God.

Then comes the actual ritual of praying, the salah. This prayer consists of physical movements of the body along with holy words and phrases in Arabic. Firstly, one must be clean and pure and be standing in clean place, facing the Kaa'ba, the House of God. The prayer starts out as one stands up straight with hands by the sides, making an intention to pray. ' I have purposed to offer up to God only, with a sincere heart, with my face towards Kaa'ba.' Then, the hands are raised upto the ear lobes, reciting, ' Allahu Akbar' meaning, ' Allah is the greatest.' The hands are brought back down and the right hand is placed above the left hand. Both hands are placed below the navel for men and above the navel for women. The gaze is lowered towards the floor. In this position, recitations are made. ' I seek refuge near God from cursed Satan. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.' Following this, the first chapter of the holy Qur'an is recited. After that, the person is to recite any part of the Qur'an and as much as he/she wants to recite. Once that is said, the worshipper must once again recite ' Allahu Akbar', meaning, ' Allah is the greatest.' Then, the worshipper is to bend down as to place the palms of the hands on the knees. In this position, the worshipper must recite ' I praise the holiness of my Lord, the Great' three times and stand back up with hands by the sides. Now he/she is to recite, ' God hears Him who praises Him: O Lord, Thou art praised.' After this, the worshipper goes down on the knees and places his forehead on the floor with the palms of the hands placed on the floor next to the head. The feet are to be resting upon the toes. In this position, the person is to recite ' I praise the holiness of my Lord, the Most High.' Then, the person sits up, placing his/her hands above the knees and recites ' Allahu Akbar.' In a few seconds, the person goes back down to the bow and recites the same phrase

as the last prostration. This marks the end of the first ‘ rakat.’ (The faith of Isl’m) Depending on the time of day and which prayer is being recited, the number of rakats varies. For example, for Fajr, the prayer before sunrise, and the third prayer, there are four rakats, for Dhurr, the afternoon prayer, there are 12 rakats. There are seven rakats for the evening prayer, Maghrib, and for the last prayer of the day, Isha, there are nine rakats. The same procedure follows for every prayer.

This form of prayer is mandatory and required by all Muslims as it is one of the pillars of Islam. There is no substitute for this prayer. It is a must-do. This ritual is the most important as it provides the person to connect with God through communication. Muslims believe that through salah, they can get a chance to communicate with God directly. ‘ Among ritual worships, Salah occupies the key position for two reasons. Firstly, it is the distinctive mark of a believer. Secondly, it prevents an individual from all sorts of abominations and vices by providing him chances of direct communion with his Creator five times a day, wherein he renews his covenant with God and seeks His guidance again and again...Salah is the first practical manifestation of faith and also the foremost of the basic conditions for the success of the believers.’ (Islam In Concept) Not only does the salah keep the individual on a spiritual path and connected with God, it also keeps the body in motion and physically active, serving as a great health purpose. Being the key of all rituals of Islam, the salah serves to be the most connective and spiritual ritual of Islam.

Another type of prayer ritual is reciting the Holy Quran. The Qur’an is the holy book of Islam as compared to the Bible of the Christians and the Torah

of the Jews. Just like the Hindus recite their Bhagavad Gita and the Jews recite their Torah, Muslims also recite the Qur'an. In Islam, reciting the Qur'an is a form of prayer. Muslims claim that the Qur'an is the word of God. Therefore, it is considered a holy and prayer-like task to recite it. Not only does one have to recite the words of the Qur'an, it is also important to understand the meaning of them as well as it is written in Arabic. This is a form of worship and prayer. ' When you recite the Qur'an and contemplate its meanings, you take a positive step toward achieving happiness. Allah described the Qur'an as being guidance, light, and a cure for what is in the breasts of men. He also described it as being a Mercy.' (Don't be sad)

Reciting the Qur'an is a form of prayer because Allah Himself claims in it that it will bring blessings and happiness in life. It is described to be like a handbook for our lives that we must follow, so reciting and understanding the Qur'an go hand in hand to establish a prayer. It is very common for Muslims to recite the Qur'an or perform salah when a difficulty arises in life, whatever it may be as Qur'an and salah have been the source of guidance towards a righteous path. ' A righteous person once said: I felt a cloud of depression and anxiety was hanging over me. I picked up the Qur'an and I read it for a period of time. Then, by Allah, the depression and anxiety disappeared and happiness along with tranquility took their place.' (don't be sad) Reciting the Qur'an is a way of remembering God and keeping in mind his rules and regulations of life that are outlined in it. Along with performing salah, daily recitations keep the thought of God active in one's mind. It is also a way of seeking refuge from Satan. The Prophet (PBUH) claims that ' Allah has ordained that any man who engages himself in the recitation of Qur'an so oftenly that he finds no time for supplication I shall provide him

more without asking than those who ask.’ (Principles of Islam) From this, we can conclude that reciting the holy Qur’an is not only a way of seeking God’s guidance, it also a reminder for all believers of God’s mercy and power.

Religions of all people provide rituals of prayer. Islam offers several rituals of prayer such as the sacred washing (wudhu), call for prayer or the azaan, performing the salah, and reciting the Qur’an. Whatever the ritual may be, they all provide ways of connecting with God.

Al-Omar, Abdur Rahman. The Religion of Truth. Saudi Arabia: Maktaba Dar-Us-Salam, 51-52. Print.