

have hurt others. Prayer helps us strengthen our commitment to God & to humanity. In all of this there is peace **not** as the world gives, but the peace of God.

To raise one's hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world. Our prayer life cannot exist in a separate sphere, and our prayers must consist of more than longings or intentions. Just as faith without deeds means spiritual deadness, so prayer without work is hypocrisy. Even without deeds, our prayers must be more than self-centered pleas for personal happiness if they are to have any effect on the rest of the world.

We must include others in our prayers. That's easy for the ones we care about. But the radical; **the difficult part is to include those who hurt us...whether through backbiting, slander, or insults.** If we claim to love our enemies but then fail to pray for them, we deceive ourselves. We continue to see only our own point of view; our own "righteousness" and to ignore their perspective. Prayer breaks down the distinctions between *us* and *them*. To do violence to others, you must make them enemies. Intelligent Prayer, on the other hand, makes enemies into friends.

Gibran puts this action of prayer into a beautiful perspective. You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy and in your days of abundance.

For what is prayer but the expansion of yourself into the living ether? And if it is for your comfort to pour your darkness into space, it is also for your delight to pour forth the dawning of your heart.

And if you **cannot** but weep when your soul summons you to prayer, she should spur you again and yet again, though weeping, until you shall come laughing. When you pray you rise to meet in the air those who are praying at that very hour, and whom save in prayer you may **not** meet.

Let your visit to that temple invisible be for **naught** but ecstasy & sweet communion. For if you should enter the temple for no other purpose than asking you shall **not** receive. If you should enter into it to humble yourself you shall **not** be lifted. Or even if you should enter into it to beg for the good of others you shall **not** be heard. **It is enough that you enter the temple invisible.** God listens **not** to your words save when He Himself utters them through your lips.

Prayer in the Quranic sense can by **no** means be limited to a few rituals. It is not a sort of habit or custom. As the verse "Remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on your sides" (4:103) maintains, one can bring Allah to mind and **pray to Him at any time and**

**under all conditions**, without necessarily performing any particular ritual/ceremony. That is because what matters is **not** the outward performance but one's heartfelt sincerity & honesty. Like the case of Prophet Yaqub (p), who prayed "I make complaint about my grief/sorrow to Allah alone." (12:86) Prayer does **not** represent a mere abstract spiritual relationship between the Muslim & his Creator; a relationship that is irrelevant to the individual & the society's economic & social affairs. Prayer is **not** spiritless & **not** an unconscious uttering of formulas.

*A translation of the Call to Prayer is:*

God is most great. God is most great. (repeat)  
I testify that there is no god except God. (repeat)  
I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God.  
Come to prayer! Come to prayer!  
Come to success! Come to success!  
God is most great. God is most great.  
There is no god **except** God.

So there you are, in line, focusing your attention, about to embark on a journey, unlike any other. Prayer makes you into a traveler and a navigator, and every day, each and every time, five times or more, you are about to discover a new region within your soul. The most sublime of landscapes. Breathtaking vistas. After "viewing" such divine wonders during the moments of prayer, you return (back to earth) blessed with inner strength, spiritual light, and ineffable peace. We recognize that worship should **not** cease when we leave the mosque. That what happened in the mosque is designed to sensitize us to God's Presence in our everyday world. We realise that the whole of life is sacramental. Prayer made it so.

**"Prayer restrains from indecency and evil."** (29:45) Our communications, live & digital, is littered with verbal bombs. Think before you launch your weaponized discourse. Defuse the words in your arsenal; the improvised explosive rhetoric: verbal terrorist. Life is in exchanging ideas & ideas require more than a fistful of ugly four-letter words. In the absence of such ugly words our harshness, our acidic/caustic phrases are also indecent & evil.

**Guide us along the straight path** is a supplication for **perfection in conduct**. Let's look forward to our next prayer, when our souls can take flight with the Pilot who has the Highest Wisdom and the most Radiant Beauty. The Prophet (p): "Prayer is the faithful's ladder to sublimity." A Miraj...wherein we see many signs & wonders. **We Pray. We are Perfected. It's Rapture!** Was your prayer just a **mirage?**

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**Worship renews us spiritually & gives definition & dimension to our lives**

# The Prayer

The urge to worship is an innate yearning of the spirit that rises spontaneously from a sense of **Gratitude.**

It's the place where the veil opens completely between the visible and the Invisible. It's the presence of heaven on the spot that you stand. It touches you in your soul...which unfolds like a lotus of countless, dazzling petals. It's an amazing journey with huge transformations possible...**if** you truly understood. **Prayer** feeds your spiritual hunger...the deeper longings of the soul. **It's an anaesthetic that calms down the stresses of the mind.** Prayer allows you to withdraw into that inner sanctuary where you find **calm vs. chaos;** **stillness vs. desperation;** **peace vs. lonesomeness.** Prayer stills your **primal restlessness.** It brings great visions to realization. Your face is enraptured in your faith.

**Selfish clingsings debar you from the possession of the stainless realities for which you pray.**

## Prosperous Quran: 87:14-15 are those who purify themselves and remember their Lord and PRAYS.

Prayer helps one to focus on perfecting the mastery of human nature and life in three critical areas: **individual well-being, social harmony, & an accelerated evolution of consciousness**. These three bases form the foundation of overall human development, the guiding lights of the arts/sciences. Through generations of applying these three basic domains of life, extraordinary accomplishments in the maintenance of physical vitality, fostering of sensitive & effective relations between people & development of latent mental powers, including spontaneous insight & foreknowledge, are recognized as **by-products of praying properly**. These developments, once realized, are not to be guarded possessively but put to the service of humanity. The beneficial results of its application by individuals are **not** to be paraded proudly before others but to be diffused in an inconspicuous yet effective manner.

**Other Religions:** Prayer need **not** be formal. It is the natural way to begin and end the day. Some pray every morning when they get up and every evening before they go to bed. Some may pray more often than that, others less. Some people pray on their knees; others use a prayer book. Some speak; some do not use words at all. Some are known to open their window each evening in order to say good night to God. Prayer must be genuine and not just an empty rite. The important thing is to make room for it, somewhere.

In the turmoil of life without & black despair within, it is always possible to turn aside & wait on God. Just as at the center of a hurricane there is stillness, and above the clouds a clear sky, so it is possible to make a little clearing in the jungle of our human will for a rendezvous with God. He will always turn up, though in what guise & in what circumstances cannot be foreseen; perhaps trailing clouds of glory, perhaps as a beggar.

**To Pray as an Ancient Jew:** In a book entitled "To Pray as a Jew" there is a lengthy explanation of the Prayers as done by the ancient Jews and **few** of the contemporary Jews. In this book the author put diagrams showing the movement and positions during

the prayer. One look at these illustrations is enough for the Muslims to realize the similarity of the prayers of the Jews then and Prayer as practiced by the Muslims.

In his comment about these positions, the author wrote: "In most contemporary congregations very few people keep to the tradition of **falling prostrate**. Sometimes it is only the prayer leader and the rabbi who does so. In more traditional congregations, however, some worshippers, men and women, will join the prayer leader and rabbi in the act of prostrating themselves. In Israeli synagogues, the practice is more widespread than in synagogues elsewhere. Since this is a position that we are **unaccustomed** to, one who has never done this before might very well demur. But once accomplished, the experience provides such a spiritual uplift that one looks forward to repeating it. Those willing to try this ancient ritual form on the rare occasions that call for it might welcome the following diagrams of the correct procedure." Stunningly...The diagrams are exactly as the Muslim prayer. Isn't it amazing that prostration is referred to as an "**ancient ritual form**" and to be done on "**rare occasions**"? **Unaccustomed to prostration?**

Muslims prostrate **daily** not rarely. **Ancient?** The earth witnesses every single day to billions, yes you read that right, billions of prostrations to the Most Exalted Lord. Do the math...500 million Muslims (leave out the babies) \* 5 times per day prayers (includes minimum 20 prostrations). Glory be to God! Billions of prostrations are more meaningful & valuable than billions of financial transactions.

It was abhorrent for the proud Arabs to "grovel" on the ground. The prostration countered their hard arrogance. The postures of their bodies would re-educate them; teaching them to lay aside their pride/selfishness. To recall that before God they were nothing. Many converts say that the prostration is the hardest thing for them to do. That's the awesome danger of pride. Putting one's face to the ground, in prayer, is the greatest act of submission. We are pressing our faces, not against the ground, but against the window of eternity. It's a proven destroyer of arrogance; of softening the heart.

**Islam:** Prayers are a direct link between the worshipper and God. There is no hierarchical authority in Islam, and no priests. The prayers are led by a learned person who knows the Quran. These five prayers contain verses from the Quran, and are said in Arabic, the language of the Revelation. Personal supplication can be offered in one's own language. Prayer is your conversation with Allah. It

## Successful Quran: 23:1-2 indeed are the believers; who are reverent during their Prayers

should, nay, **must**, flood you with hope, energy and passion to carry on your life to the best of your ability. Prayer is the best form of life insurance. They are said at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall, and thus determine the rhythm of the entire day. Although it is preferable to worship together in a mosque, a Muslim may pray almost anywhere, such as in fields, offices, factories and universities. Visitors to the Muslim world are struck by the centrality of prayers in daily life.

The discipline of prayer is crucial to maintaining a sense of peace and order in our lives. More than anything else prayer (or the absence of it) can decide the outcome of our day. Time we waste, temptations we yield to, laziness or lethargy in our work in general, any lack of discipline in our thoughts or in our interaction with others frequently have their root in our **neglect** of prayer. Although we have prayed ever since we can remember, it was only when we begin to understand prayer as a way of life as a constant attitude rather than a repetitive action that we understand the idea of truly praying. It is not merely a group of words. It is an attitude to life.

Prayer must be only for the LOVE of God. Not for the fear of Hell. Not for the joy of Heaven. It was said about the Prophet's companion Suhaib that had there been no fire or paradise he still would have worshipped God. **Is this our stance?** "O God! If I worship You in fear of Hell, burn me in it; and if I worship you in hope of Paradise, exclude me from it; but if I worship You for Your own being, do not withhold from me Your everlasting beauty." *Dua of Rabia Al-Adawiya*

Prayer is a lifeline, the only help in the face of the inevitable failures, temptations, discouragements, or periods of depression that each of us goes through. It is not always a matter of words. Part of it is a quiet turning toward God throughout the day, an upward glance, a moment or two of silence remembering someone who is sick or suffering or struggling. Part of it might be considering various concerns & questions of the day. Part of it is asking for light to see our wrongs, to recognize where we might

Call on your Lord **humbly** and **secretly** Quran: 7:55

Quran 2:45

Seek help in steadfastness and prayer. But that is **a very hard thing**, except for the humble