

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2026

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

Produced by:

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Study 7: Prayer — Introduction

The Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said:

“Islam is based on five (things): **Bearing witness** that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and keeping up **prayer**, and giving the **charity** (*Zakāt*), and the **pilgrimage**, and **fasting** in Ramadan.”

(Bukhari, hadith 8)

- The fundamental religious duties recognized by Islam for the individual are:
 - Prayer
 - Charity (*Zakāt*)
 - Fasting in Ramadan
 - Pilgrimage to Makkah.
- Among these, prayer no doubt occupies the most important position. It is given the greatest prominence in the Holy Quran. Charity comes next to it. Right at the beginning of the Quran, Muslims are described as those who believe in God, keep up prayer, and spend their wealth, talents and energies on charitable works. It says:

“...who believe in the Unseen (God) and keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them” — 2:3

- Prayer was the first duty which God commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to perform. Although prayer and charity are often mentioned together in the Holy Quran, prayer is always mentioned first.
- The keeping up of prayer is the frequently repeated command of the Quran. It has also been generally recognized as the first and foremost duty of a Muslim.

- There are several reasons why prayer has been given this importance:
 1. It is really the first step in the onward progress of a human being. But it is also the highest that he can rise to, it is his *mi'rāj*.
 2. Prayer keeps you away from evil.
 3. It helps you to realize that God has placed His own qualities within you. That realization creates the urge within you to do service for humanity, for no personal gain, because this is just what God does for humanity. It also makes you acquire the best morals.

4. Prayer is also the means of levelling all differences of rank, colour and nationality between people. It is the means of bringing about cohesion and unity among people, which is the necessary basis of a living civilization.
- What prayer really aims at is stated in the very beginning of the Quran. There we are told that a Muslim, who wants to tread the road to self-development, must accept certain principles and carry out certain duties:

ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ ۚ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾

الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾

وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَا اُنزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَمَا اُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۗ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾

اُولٰٓئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۗ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾

“This Book, in which there is no doubt, is a guide to those who keep their duty, who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them, and who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are sure.

These are on a right course from their Lord and these it is that are successful

(*mufliḥūn*).” — 2:2–5

- The word *falāḥ* means ‘success’, and from it the word *mufliḥūn* means ‘those who are successful’.
- This word, whether relating to this life or to the next, carries with it the idea of the complete development of your inner faculties, and the achievement of both material and moral greatness.
- This is the full self-development of a human being. This self-development is reached, according to the Quran, by the acceptance of three principles:

1. the existence of God
2. His revealing Himself to humanity by sending His messengers,
and
3. the Hereafter,

and by the exercise of two duties:

1. the keeping up of prayer, or seeking closeness with God, and
2. the spending of your wealth for others, or the service of
humanity.

- Prayer is given such a prominence in Islam for the self-development of man that in the call to prayer (the *Adhan*) the words “come to prayer” are immediately followed by the words “come to success (*falāḥ*)”. This shows that self-development is attained through prayer. On another occasion, using the same word, the Quran says clearly:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾

“Successful (*aflaḥa*) indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers”. — 23:1–2

- The words occurring at the beginning of the Quran, as quoted above, that Muslims are those:

“who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them”

give us the three requisites of a true Muslim in their natural order:

1. A belief in God, the great Unseen Who cannot be perceived by the physical eye,
2. Keeping up of prayer,
3. Spending out of what God has given.

- The third requisite naturally follows the second. This shows that prayer leads to the service of humanity. In one of the earliest revealed chapters of the Quran, it is stated that a person’s prayer is useless if it doesn’t lead to doing service of humanity:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٢﴾

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٤﴾

“So woe to the praying ones, who are unmindful of their prayer, who do good to be seen, and refrain from acts of kindness.” — 107:4–7

- Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said:

“Remember that the person who finds no pleasure during the prescribed prayers has not tasted the sweetness of faith. Prayer does not consist of making physical jerks and movements. Some people pray like a bird rapidly dipping its beak to pick up food, and that’s the end of it. Then they raise their hands and make long supplications to Allah. The time which was given for putting their petition before Allah, they pass as quickly as they can, like a ritual and custom, and then after departing from the presence of Allah they start making their pleas to Him.”

(Malfuzat, vol. 2, p. 145)

END OF STUDY 7