

## Science and Daily Prayer Farid Younos

Muslims perform prayer five times daily at sunrise, mid-day, afternoon, sunset and night time. Daily prayer in Islam is mandatory. I was asked by one of my TV talk show viewer if she could pray altogether because her time is very limited during the day.

In this short essay, we try to answer the following questions:

1. Does God need our prayers?
2. Why is prayer mandatory?
3. Why do we need to pray at specific times?
4. What is the impact if we do not perform prayers on time?

The foundation of Islam is knowledge. Islam and science are tied together. Hence, we have to know that all acts prescribed for us in the Qur'an have scientific values. These values will have an impact in our lives.

According to Aristotle (384 B.C-322 B.C), the Greek philosopher, mankind is "hylo-morphic." This means that mankind is made of (hyle) "matter" and (morphe) "form." This theory, later developed in theology as "spirit" and "body." The spirit of mankind according to the Qur'an comes from God. In two verses, the Qur'an says, "They ask you concerning the Spirit. Say: The Spirit comes by the command of my Lord: Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, O mankind!" (Qur'an 17:85), and also, "But He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him His Spirit." (Qur'an, 32:9). The above two verses acknowledge the fact that mankind is made of spirit and matter, and this spirit could be mind or soul of human being, and the source of human energy. The health of and happiness of our spirit is with prayer. Let's see what science says about it:

"All matter is comprised of energy, and human beings are matter. Moreover, we have a brain that generates its own energy, its own electromagnetic field. If all electromagnetic fields are interconnected through this zero-point field, then so must the energy of our minds, our thoughts. This would explain such things as telepathy, where the thoughts of one person can be projected and picked up by another many miles away, or explain how a strong enough desire can manifest itself into reality. It is because our thoughts create a disturbance in this universal field of entanglement, shifting things around in the manner being so willed until an end result comes up that matches up with what the thought pattern desired.

Since all energy is connected into this zero-point field, and all matter is comprised of energy, it follows that every organism everywhere is in perpetual quantum communication via this field. An ongoing communication by which our thoughts can have a physical effect. In the same way that measuring the state of an object alters the state of that object, we are sort of measuring our world with our thoughts and, in so doing, changing it, changing its state. We are the ruler[Khalifa] being held up to the Universe. Our thoughts manifest themselves in our reality. Prayer is a moment where the mind is silenced and directed. We are at our point of power ready to manifest. We are speaking to God, to the universe, to the same energies that creates worlds from nothingness. Observe your thoughts as our reality is a reflection of their tambour. Change your thoughts; change your life." (HUFFPOST Religion: How Does Prayer work? By Peter Baska. Viewed March 8, 2016 at 4:42AM).

God does not need our prayer. It is we that need Him, having His spirit in us to energize us, to revive us, to keep us moving as a living organism. And as a source of energy. And this is why prayer is mandatory so mankind could bring a balance between mind and matter. By prayer we are aligned altogether. It is only prayer (source of energy) that makes our totality as human being.

Another principle of prayer is time. We need to pray on time, but why?

It is interesting enough that the connection of mind and body or the total existence of human soul and mind is related to the sunrise and sunset times and the rotation of the earth on its axis. The five daily prayer times are set according to sunrise, mid-day when the sun is at its zenith, afternoon when sun crosses the meridian, sunset and total darkness (night).

As we know the earth rotates on its axis almost every 24 hours. This is called “Sidereal Rotation.” Also, the time needed for the sun to re-emerge in the same spot is 24 hours. “Earth’s sidereal rotation is responsible for the pattern of sunrises and sunsets that we are so familiar with. Using celestial objects as a reference point, the Earth rotates at a rate of 15°/h (or 15’/min) in a western direction. If viewed from space above the North Pole, Earth would appear to be rotating counter-clockwise. Hence the Sun rises in the east and sets in the west.” (Universe Today: How Does the Earth Rotate by Matt Williams. Viewed March 8,2016 at 5:15 AM)

According to the Qur'an mankind is part of nature and nature is part of mankind. Therefore, mankind is a natural entity. This is because law of nature and law of God is one and the same according to Islam. Having said this, Muslims are required to prostrate when the earth shifts and tilts its position on its axis. It is at this moment that prayer is due. The Qur'an says, “For such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times.” (Qur'an 4:103). It is at this “stated times” that the soul will be impacted and reach felicity and happiness. The main reason for prostration is not only submission to the Only God, but also mankind comes from earth and goes back to earth.

If we pray at stated times as prescribed, then we get the full benefit spiritually, mentally and physically. If we miss prayers and perform it later, we only get the reward of remembrance of God as His servant. God wants Muslims to enjoin prayer on a stated time because it is at that time that he/she gets full benefit, comfort, tranquility and peace of mind. In our hectic life and working in a non-Muslim society that fellow citizens have a right on us and we have to respect their time and meet their demand, we can easily pray morning at home, mid-day at our lunch break, afternoon either in our afternoon break or later and sunset and evening prayers at their prescribed times. The only prayer that we tend to miss and that is highly recommended by the Prophet is afternoon prayer and that is also possible to pray on time if we take a break. Usually, organizations in the United States do have two breaks; one in the late morning around 10:00 am and another in the late afternoon. Prayer is spread during the day from morning to evening for our own advantage based upon the rotation of the earth on its axis.

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