

Prayer Between Performance and Contemplation

Prayer is a formula for worship with concordant factors and elements and a systematic method aiming at schooling man to live righteously and happily. It is a continuous spiritual and psychological movement that aims at rising above the baseness of life and attaining a superior position by rebuilding the self with the prayer's inspiration, according to its rules and in the light of its import.

Prayer is a ritual unit composed of suitably arranged words and movements, with harmonious goals and aims, designed both a clear intention and spiritual consciousness. Every element in this formula has a psychic impact and reformative effect which it achieves along with its other aspects.

These elements and factors are to be governed by a deep consciousness, and feeling for the profound implications they embody. Otherwise the devotion literally becomes an empty formula and automatic movements devoid of any of the effects of worship or reformative motives. Eventually it becomes what the Prophet (S) describes as '*...pecking of a crow...*'

Thus, if prayer is to achieve its goal, the worshipper must ponder its every word and movement so he can realise what he says, and be cognizant of the spoken formulas and physical actions as the means through which one expresses the relationship with Allah and true feelings towards Him. Through prayers deep and cumulative effects, the personality is rebuilt and life taken on a new meaning as a result of the connection with Allah, the attempt to extend the self's horizons, and rendering the soul capable of perceiving new meanings inspired by the Creator's attributes and His messenger's teachings like mercy, justice, humbleness, forgiveness, love of goodness... etc. The moral and spiritual values thus grow and extend deeply into the human soul, becoming a means of correcting behaviour and directing life's development.

By repeating prayers and contemplating over its meanings, moral inspirations intensify, and the spiritual impulses gather to form a single redemptive current. Its effects are reflected even outside the prayer times and encompass man's entire life; his actions and attitudes.

Prayer, in addition to being a duty, becomes a training good for the human being and an instrument for shaping moral conduct, making out of the worshipper an upright individual living life, filling it with good

and benevolent deeds. This ritual devotion is actually a formula which accommodates through its words and movements (recitation, supplication, bowing, prostration, humbleness, beseeching, feeling), all Islam's teachings concerning submission and humility endeavouring to purify the soul and improving behaviour, cultivating the feelings of love for all other people, schooling mankind, and putting the human being on the right path.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/prayer-worship-and-education/prayer-between-performance-and-contemplation#comment-0>