

Muslim Prayer in America: Its Meaning and Practice

With Zeyneb Sayilgan, Ph.D., ICJS Muslim Scholar

ICJS
COURSE

WEDNESDAYS | MAY 4, 11, & 18 2022

IN PERSON OPTION
10 AM-NOON @ICJS

VIRTUAL OPTION
7-8:30 PM EDT VIA ZOOM

Free—Register Today!



Course Outline

- ❑ **Class 1: Theological Foundations:
Prayer in the Qur'an**
- ❑ **Class 2: Practical Embodiment:
Prayer in the Life of Prophet
Muhammad**
- ❑ **Class 3: Culture and Context:
Prayer in American Muslim Life**

[Diyanet Center of America, Lanham MD](#)

**Optional
Mosque Visit**

**22 May, 2022
@4pm**



Course Objectives

- ❑ Gain basic religious literacy on Islam's most important ritual
- ❑ Become aware of the challenges for cultivating a Muslim prayer life
- ❑ Appreciate the universal aspects of Muslim prayer
- ❑ Reflect on how to envision an interreligious society

Today's Agenda

7:00-7:05 p.m.	Introduction
7:05-7:10 p.m.	Course Outline and Objectives
7:10-7:30 p.m.	Theological Foundations: The Qur'an
7:30-7:45 p.m.	Small-group Discussion
7:45-8:05 p.m.	Prayer in the Qur'an
8:05-8:25 p.m.	Small-group Discussion
8:25-8:30 p.m.	Plenary

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Muslim Prayer

Five Times a Day



Major Sources for Muslim life

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The Qur'an - The Word of God (*kalāmullah*)

- Arabic : “Recitation” or “Reading”
- From Archangel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad
- Gradual revelation from 610-632 CE in Mecca and Madina
- Final codification in 652 CE
- 600 pages (114 chapters; 6,000 verses)
- Meccan and Madinan chapters
- Translations are already interpretations
- 15% of global Muslim population is Arab



Five Pillars of Islam

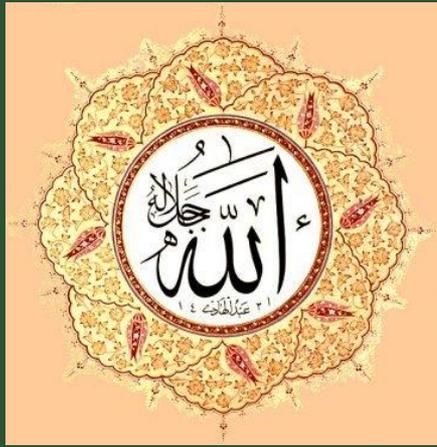
Declaration
of faith

Obligatory
prayer

Compulsory
giving

Fasting in
the month of
Ramadan

Pilgrimage
to Mecca



Why worship God?

O humankind! worship your Lord, **Who has created you** and those before you, so that **you become God-conscious**. [He] who made for you the earth a resting place and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to God equals knowingly (Qur'an 2:21-22)

Rather, worship God and **be among the grateful** (Qur'an 39:66)



Worship in the Qur'an

- Knowledge of God (*ma'rifatullah*)
- Love of God (*mahabbatullah*)
- Worship of God (*'ibadah*)
- **Inward and outward** dimension of free surrender to God (Islam):

Faith (iman) is a knowledge in the heart, a voicing with the tongue, and an activity with the limbs (Prophet Muhammad)

Small Group #1

- Do you have a prayer life or a spiritual practice of meditation? If yes, describe it. If not, why not?
- Please share a few observations from the assigned chapter on prayer - the *Salat*



Salat or Salah in Arabic means:

- ❑ Connection
- ❑ Contact
- ❑ Communication

Prayer in the
Qur'an





Prayer as a Universal Act of Creation

*Do you not see that God is exalted by whomever is within the heavens and the earth and [by] the birds with wings spread [in flight]? Each [of them] has known his [means of] **prayer** and exalting [Him], and God is Knowing of what they do. (Q 24:41)*

*The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. **And there is not a thing except that it exalts God by His praise**, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving (Q 17:44)*



Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make hearts among the people incline toward them and provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful. (Q 14:37)

Prayer as Abrahamic Practice

My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and [many] from my descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication. (Q 14:40)



And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], “Do not worship except God; and to parents do good and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give the alms-tax (Q 2:83)

And God had already taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We delegated from among them twelve leaders. And God said, “I am with you. If you establish prayer and give the alms-tax (zakat) and believe in My messengers and support them (Q 5:12)

And We inspired to Moses and his brother, “Settle your people in Egypt in houses and make your houses face the prayer direction and establish prayer and give good tidings to the believers.” (Q 10:87)

Prayer of Moses and the Israelites



Jesus on Prayer

[Jesus] said, “Indeed, I am the servant of God. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and the alms-tax (zakat) as long as I remain alive And [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant. (Q 19:30-32)

And he used to enjoin on his people prayer and alms-tax (zakat) and was to his Lord pleasing. (Q 19:55)



Prayer as Remembrance

Indeed, I am God. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance. (Q 20:14)

And when you have completed the prayer, remember God standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, re-establish [regular] prayer. Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times. (Q 4:103)

Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer and stand before God, devoutly obedient. (Q 2:238)



And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to God] (Q 2:45)

O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, God is with the patient. (Q 2:153)

Who, when God is mentioned, their hearts are in awe, and [to] the patient over what has afflicted them, and the establishers of prayer and those who spend from what We have provided them. (Q 22:25)

**Prayer as
Mental
Support**





Prayer prevents Immorality

Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of God is greater. And God knows that which you do (Q 29:45)

So be patient. Indeed, the promise of God is truth. And ask forgiveness for your sin and exalt [God] with praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning. (Q 40:55)

[Adhere to it], turning in repentance to Him, and be conscious of Him and establish prayer and do not be of those who associate others with God (Q 30:31)

Certainly will the believers have succeeded: They who are during their prayer humbly submissive. And they who turn away from ill speech. (Q 23:1-5)



*So, Woe to those performers of Salat,
[But] who are heedless of their prayer –
Those who make show [of their deeds]
(Q 107:4-6)*

**Qur'an warns
of hypocrisy**

Salat - Prayer as:

- Act of Remembrance
- Act of Gratitude
- Universal performance
- Expression of stewardship
- Prophetic Legacy
- Source of Strength and Patience
- Purification and Means for Repentance
- Protection from Immorality
- Character Development

Conclusion

Small Group #2

- Review together how the Qur'an portrays the ritual prayer.
- Specifically, what do you make of the Qur'an's claim that prayer is a universal act - performed by all creation and all messengers?