

Question 4: Why Should We Worship Allah? What Is The Philosophy of Prayers, Fasting And Hajj?

Question: When Allah doesn't require the worship of anybody, why should we worship Him? He is needless and all are dependent on Him. If Allah needs our worship, then it is not agreeable to His divinity and Godhood.

Answer: Now its answer can be given in two ways: one in brief and the other in detail.

The brief answer is that when the purpose of this worship is to fulfill the needs of Allah and by obeying Him we give some benefit to Him, then the question arises that Allah is unlimited and away from all defects and needs; then what is the need for our worship, but the purpose of worshipping Him would be to elevate ourselves, then the worship would be a means to elevate ourselves and for goodness and it will a favor and guidance from Allah to make us reach perfection through worship.

The detailed answer is as follows: Worship, supplication and whatever deed is performed for pleasing Allah, more or less it has the effect on the person and society also. In fact these are the highest training and ethics in the school of Islam because:

- a) The worship of Allah creates a sense of thankfulness, respect and honor. To realize the value of the source from where man gets the valuable divine blessings is a sign that the person was deserving of them.
- b) The worship of Allah elevates the soul of man. What else can be more elevating that he gets connected to the total perfection and that is Allah, and for the duties of worship and the affairs of this life we ask help from the unending and unlimited power and acquire that much capability that we can communicate with Him.

These benefits are present in all the worship acts, which are performed correctly, and other worship acts like Prayers, Fasting and Hajj etc have their own benefits and effects. We shall discuss the secrets of the most important Islamic worship acts in brief, so that it becomes clear that worship and supplication benefit us and Allah is not in need of them.

1) Prayers and its gainful effects

Prayers is the cause for the remembrance of Allah and the remembrance of Allah disciplines the mind and self, controls inordinate desires and reins the rebellious soul.

The person who prays is always in the remembrance of Allah. In the remembrance of that same Lord Who is aware of our small and big deeds. And those things, which are present in our souls, and the thoughts, which pass through our mind. He is well informed and aware about them. The least effect of Allah's remembrance is that a person is able to balance his desires. As a person who forgets Allah and is ignorant about reward and punishment, is in intellectual darkness.

The person, who is negligent about Allah, doesn't think about the results of his deeds and character and to fulfill his inordinate desires and inclinations he doesn't recognize any limits. The five times prayers remind us about Almighty Allah and remove the darkness of negligence from our souls.

Undoubtedly the person in whose existence, there is the rule of inordinate desires on his nature, which have a strong base in him – the best way to control these desires is to remember Allah and to remember the punishment of those sins and to remember those accurate accounts in which there is no possibility of mistakes. That is why the holy Qur'an says that one of the purposes of Prayers is to remember Allah:

Surely I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance¹

(2) Away from Sins

It is necessary for a Worshipper to pray correctly and see that it becomes acceptable. He should refrain from sins. For example the conditions for performing it is (for example the water of ablution and Ghusl, the dress in which a person prays and the place where he prays) legitimate. 7

These things demand that a person should not go near haraam (Prohibition) and should refrain himself from all types of haraam while doing business, because it is very difficult that a person would remain away from haraam during Prayers and on other times he becomes careless.

We come to know that the following ayah points towards this:

Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil,²

Especially when a worshipper ingrains in his mind that the condition for the acceptance of Prayers is that he should fulfill the rights of Zakat and help the needy, should not backbite, refrain from pride and jealousy, should refrain from wine and alcohol and with attention, presence of mind, and true intentions should present himself in front of Allah, then a true worshipper will surely follow these rules. Due to this the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

The Prayers is like a stream of clean water, in which a person washes himself, if a person washes himself five times a day he will never become dirty, In the same way a person who prays five times a day and washes his heart with the clean spiritual spring, his heart and soul will never be filled with sin.

(3) Cleanliness and Protection of Health

As the worshipper sometimes washes his whole body and as usual performs ablutions many times in the day and night, and before doing Ghusl and ablution cleans his body from all impurities and all kinds of dirt, that is why he should necessarily be a clean person. From this point, Prayers protects the health of a person and helps him in keeping himself clean, which is very important in one's life.

(4) Discipline and self Restraint

For every Prayer there is a fixed and special time, and for a person who wants to pray it is necessary that he should pray within the prescribed time, therefore this helps a person to become disciplined and self-restrained and helps him to recognize the value of time.

Especially for one who prays the Morning Prayer. He must get up before the sunrise. Such a person will not only be naturally a clean person and takes the benefit from the morning breeze and also starts his day on a positive note.

These are not the only individual and training effects of Prayer; this is just an example of this great worship act of Islam.

(5) Social Secrets

The performance of Prayers in the appointed time unites the great Islamic Nation and shows the oneness of direction because Muslims in the appointed time stand towards the Qibla in a specified manner and worship Allah and this itself is the display of Unity and oneness and this worship act unites all the people.

When prayed in congregation it promotes unity, similarity and the same spirit of the rows of the worshippers shows discipline and nearness to each other, and this spiritual unity and brotherhood is not in need of any description.

Although the benefits of Prayers are not limited to this, whatever is said above explains the secrets of this great divine duty.

(6) A brief secret of Fasting

Fasting is one of the worship acts in Islam. One of the training effects of Fasting on a person is that it discontinues the rule of habit and desires and frees the person from the slavery of sensual desires.

The worst rule and most dangerous is the rule of bad habit and the slavery of desires because usually the simple habit of tobacco gives a big loss to the honor of a person and then what to say about other habits?

That person is free who is not a slave to any habit and who with his firm intentions has control over all of them. This type of freedom and spiritual perfection gives strength and necessitates the firm steps, which originate from fasting.

Fasting arouses emotions and sentiments. Wealthy and well to do people, who eat different varieties of food the whole year are unaware of people who are hungry. The person who fasts remembers the hunger of the poor and becomes aware of their distress and as a result emotions and sentiments are aroused in the spirit, and this reduces the gap between various classes of people and reminds them to fulfill the needs of the poor.

What would be a better benefit of fasting that the upper class and happy people taste hunger and thirst due to this think about the needy, who if remain in this state only, will increase the anger of their fire, which will burn down each and everything and destroy all.

Fasting in the Holy month of Ramadhan shows equality and unity because in this month the happy and poor people remain away from desires and lead similar life.

The Philosophy of Hajj

Hajj is a great Islamic worship. This is a social worship, which is performed on prescribed days of the year in Mecca. This is such a worship, which not only creates a relation between God and His creatures, but also has different effects on the Islamic society, because:

- It is a worship gathering that begins with complete celibacy and full freedom, by just wearing simple clothes, it is a sign of equality of Allah's creatures before Him and man himself keeps aside the distinctions of genealogy, language, color and wealth and stand before God without any distinction. Hajj is that worship act, which fulfils this purpose and creates the feeling among the faithful that no one should think that his status is high in the society.

· Hajj is such a huge gathering, whose pillars are formed through the representatives of the different Muslim countries. Hajj is a yearly gathering of the Muslims of the world.

The religion of Islam is not only a combination of few ethical laws and training whose purpose is just to improve spirituality and remain away from weekly or yearly gatherings of political parties. It is the opposite, that it is a heavenly and comprehensive religion which keeps an eye on all the spheres of a person's life, whether it may be ethical, social, political, economical or from a different point of view.

For this reason the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) made the political rules and invited people for the yearly gathering at Mecca, and guaranteed its existence; and due to the grace of Allah the effect of this gathering is more than the worldly political parties.

After all the worldly leaders of the present time started giving importance to such type of gathering, whereas Islam had laid this down fourteen hundred years ago and used it to derive the desired results. Muslim thinkers who naturally participate in this gathering can analyze the present condition and acquire detailed information and then exchange their views and improve the conditions of Muslims and initiate their progress.

It is a gathering, which brings together the Muslims of the world and informs them about the conditions of other Muslims. Which other gathering can give such benefits?

This gathering can help to improve the economic and social conditions of the Muslims because the scholars and expert people after performing the rituals of Hajj can peacefully, sincerely and in a spiritual atmosphere exchange their views about social and economic basics of the Muslim Ummah.

The yearly gatherings of Hajj has always opposed injustice and force and there has been always freedom movements and it creates a spirit and emotions and from Islamic history and turning towards the Revolution. This point becomes clear that the seeds of downfall of imperialism and communist governments were sowed in the period of Hajj and this land has been the source of such freedom movements.

This was one of the secrets of Hajj. According to some scholars the time has come that the world understands the philosophy of Hajj.

From whatever is said above we conclude that all the Islamic worship acts carry such secrets, which are revealed to the individuals performing the worship or on the society in which he is leading his life.

1. Surah Taha 20:14

2. Surah Ankabut 29: 45

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