

# Positive Effects of Believing, Prayer and Spending in Charity on the Inner Peace of Believers

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show the majesty of faith and rituals in the spiritual happiness of man. Believing, worshipping and giving charity are the core of Islam as well as the basis of spiritual presence. In the Holy Qur'an, it is explained that the man who realises those three elements is one who believe and behave conscientiously. For this reason, the Qur'an espouses that when Islamic virtues and rituals are carried out, the spiritual context of the soul calms down and gets peace. Faith gives internal presence to man, worshipping gets man closer to the divine existence, giving charity leads to harmony between man and his environment, and makes him follow the co-operative law of the cosmos.

**Keywords:** Psychology; soul; Believing; Worshipping and Giving charity

## Introduction

The issues concerning psychology and the nature of the soul are the concerns of theologians rather than psychologists. In this field, the theologians seem to be more competent than psychologists. *Bertrand Russell* expresses this fact as follows "According to its derivation, "psychology" should mean "the theory of the soul," but the soul, though familiar to theologians, can hardly be regarded as a scientific concept. No psychologist would say that the subject-matter of his study is soul, but when asked to say what it is, he would not find it easy to give an answer" (Russel, 1961). The topic "soul" concerned the theologians during the historical process. For example, the word 'soul,' when it first appeared in Greek thought had a religious implication

(Russel, 1961). In the Egyptian culture priests were physicians of the soul (Fromm, 1950).

Even today, modern psychology could not progress concerning the idea of the dimension of man's soul. In fact, modern psychology functions within the context of explaining man by rules but man cannot be explained through rules. It is understood that modern psychology cannot recognize the soul deeply and discover its boundaries by this methods. Fromm (1950) expresses this fact as follows: academic psychology, trying to imitate the natural sciences and laboratory methods of weighing and counting, dealt with everything except the soul. It tried to understand those aspects of man which can be examined in the laboratory and claimed that conscience, value judgements, the knowledge of good and evil are metaphysical concepts, outside the problem of psychology. It was more often concerned with insignificant problems which fitted an alleged scientific method than with devising new methods to study the significant problems of man. Psychology thus became a science lacking its main subject matter, the soul. Psychology concerned with mechanisms, reaction formations, instincts, but not with the most specifically human phenomena: love, reason, conscience and value (Fromm, 1950).

May (1953) ironically touches on psychological deficiency in making a link between Pavlov's conditioned response and human psychology "We were then congratulating ourselves that the child could be conditioned out of fear, superstition and other problems by techniques not essentially different from the way the dog's saliva is conditioned to flow every time the dinner gang rings." Additionally, May

(1953) says that practically everyone who puts pen to paper in those days shared the same oversimplified view of the human being.

All of these are true observations. Also, according to this writer, the discipline of psychology alone is not licensed to discuss the field of soul alone. It would be much more fruitful if psychological methods were supplemented with those of theology. The man's soul is a metaphysical one. Not that the concept of soul came from a metaphysical sphere to man, it is to be considered within the context of Islam, a religion which also comes from a metaphysical sphere. Hence, from its metaphysical dimension to man, the subject of soul is the topic of celestial religions. Therefore, the writer argues that the best explanation of man and the best definition of happiness should be found in the Islamic religion combined with a psychological methodology.

### **Positive Effect of Believing, Prayer and Spending in Charity on the Inner Peace of Believers**

In the Quranic world, when one believes in Islamic virtues and rituals, when they are carried out, the spiritual context of soul calms down and gets peace. Faith gives internal presence to man, and worshipping gets man closer to the divine existence and giving in charity leads to harmony between man and environment and makes him follow the co-operative law of the cosmos.

### **Believing**

Believing changed the course of history. It is the biggest elixir and source of power which removes mountains from their own places, supports base for going into dangers fearlessly. Faith is a very important thing in Islam, as well, as in the belief system of Islam and its values knit around the believing in God. Believing in God has very positive effect on the human spirit. According to Said Nursi (1979, 2001),

obedience to God inside the human heart is the great castle of God keeping individuals from the punishments of this world and the next world. One who goes out of this castle is surrounded by fears. If one who obeys God cannot get away from these fears and get secured, and if one is rebellious, he will keep fears instead of security, then he becomes sad. Those who fear God will be sure of everything about the world and those who are not will be afraid of everything. As the man is weak, his disasters are great, his needs are unlimited and the burden of his life is extreme. If he does not support the powerful God and does not trust nor deliver to Him, his heart remains in torment. The troubles overwhelm him.

If life does not have belief or continues without belief, this short life with little enjoyment and pleasure, all of man's sorrow will drag him into anxiety. And for that he cannot get any pleasure from his enjoyment, as there are intelligence and thought in man, in contrast to animal. Thus, modern man relates to the past and future. The fears that come from the past and the future affects his present enjoyments and pleasures and make him anxious and destroy him (Nursi, 1979).

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said "There is a piece of flesh inside man's body. *Until it is purified, the whole body remains impure. That piece is the heart (qalb)*" (Muslim, 1992; Ibn Maca, 1992; Darimi, 1992; Hanbal, 1992).

*Bediuzzaaman Said Nursi* says "If the light of thought is not illuminated with the light of the heart and blended with it, it is darkness and breeds tyranny. If the white of the eye, which resembles day, was not together with its black pupil, which resembles night, the eye would not be the eye; it would be unseeing. Similarly, if the black core of the heart is not present in white thought, it lacks insight" (Nursi, 2001). This situation brings about intrinsic faith, constructs to provide calmness and peace inside the heart. Nevertheless, Ibrahim b. Ethem says that "if kings and sultans know this psychological

beauty surrounding us, they will absolutely wage war by their swords to get this kind of mood” (Al-Jawzaiyya, 2001; Al Qardawi, 1991).

### **Solat (Worship, Prayer / Devotional Obligation)**

*The Solat* statement includes *The Supplication (Du'a)* and *Solat (Praying)* together. In the Arabic language *Solat (worship)* means to bring the meaning of *supplication (dua)*. For example to say “*Sallaytu alayhi*” is coming to the meaning of “*I supplicate to the God for Him*” Just as in some verses, *Solat* expression is used as *Dua*. For example, “*Invoke blessings (Salli) upon them. Your blessing (Solat) will surely bring them peace*” (*At-Taubah, 9/103*) and “*God and His angels shower their blessings (Yusallune) to the Prophet .O believers you should also send your blessings (Sallu) on him*” (*Al-Ahzab, 33:56*).

However, generally *Solat* is used for worshipping. *Raghib al-Isfahani* says that the entitling of *Solat* as *Solat* is because its origin and supplication and the expression of it as *Solat* is similar to entitling of anything by some-parts which itself includes (*Al-Isfahani, n.d*). In fact these two elements correspond to different needs of the human soul.

### **The Supplication (Du'a)**

The word *Du'a* (Pray) comes closer to the meaning of calling, wishing and crying for help but in Islamic tradition it means a person's giving his whole self to God and presents his physical and spiritual needs to him. *Du'a* is the personal expression of one's individual desires, needs and anxieties. In fact the main purpose of *Du'a* is to be in the meaning of supplying the needs of people for God and to make supplication to God. Then we can say *Du'a* is a dialogue with God. The need of prayer is a natural one. Psychologically speaking, prayer is instinctive in its origin. Prayer as a means of spiritual illumination is a normal vital

act by which the little island of our personality suddenly discovers its situation in all of life (*Iqbal, 1982*).

Generally, according to Muslim psychologists worshipping is a regulator and equalising systems on personality and character (*Najati, 1993;1997*). In the context of worshipping if they act according to the consciousness, they help improve man both inside and outside. As man consciously worships God, he feels that he is in front of God, he feels that all of time he is in front of God and His control regulates the man's behaviours. Here in the context of the place of worshipping, helps man to overcome his difficulties and this psychological effect result in man's sincerity of worshipping.

### **Solat (Prayer)**

Islamic faith includes *Solat (prayer/dhikr)*, which is one of the beautiful directions of Islam as a religion. Prayer is communication between the temporal and spiritual domains. In its most common usage, the word implies petition of the individual before the Creator (*Perry, 1971*). By the *dhikr* man cleans his soul's dirt and purges his negative elements. For this reason, by *dhikr* man step-by-step goes away from his troubles and the illness of the soul. Prayer has a great power which a person makes with all his might, makes a sour heart sweet, a sad heart merry, a poor heart rich, a foolish heart wise, a timid heart brave, a sick heart well, a blind heart full of sight, a cold heart ardent. It draws down the great God into the little heart, it drives the hungry soul up into the fullness of God and hence, brings together two lovers. God and the soul are in a wondrous place where they speak much of love (*Perry, 1971*). Especially *dhikr* is recognised by all Sufis as the most direct means of alleviating the soul's illness.

*The fact has been supported as such: “It seems probable that in spite of all that science may do to the contrary; men will continue to pray to the end of time, unless their mental nature changes in a manner which nothing we know*

*should lead us to expect*” (Iqbal, 1982). Ghazali (1998a, 1998b) says that all human organs enjoy the acts which are consistent with its nature. Eye enjoys looking at the beautiful landscape; aural enjoys hearing the nice voices. Likewise, heart has been created for Allah and enjoys Allah.

According to Sufism when a man makes *dhikr* he is at rest and has returned to the fitratallah wherein upholds the trust and thus fulfils its covenant. This is due to the fact that by the light of the *dhikr* it sees the true relation between the servant and his Lord (Lumbard, 1999). The virtues of *dhikr* are numerous. For example, one is this according to *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi*:

*“Everyone wants a solace and seeks a pleasure in order to be saved a little from the upheavals of life and its heavy burdens, and to take a breather; everyone searches out something familiar and friendly to banish the loneliness. The social gatherings in civilized life afford a temporary, but heedless and drunken familiarity, intimacy, and solace for one or two out of ten people. However, eighty per cent live solitary lives in mountains or valleys, or are driven to distant places in search of a livelihood, or due to agencies like calamities and old age which make them think of the hereafter, they are deprived of the sociability of man’s groups and societies. The situation affords them no familiarity, friendliness, or consolation (Nursi, 2001).*

Therefore, the true solace and intimacy and sweet pleasure of such a person is, being turned to his heart in those distant places and desolate mountains and distressing valleys, to work it by means of the remembrance of God and reflective thought. Saying: “Allah!”, it is to become familiar with Him with his heart, and through that familiarity to think of the thinks around him, which were regarding him savagely, as smiling on him familiarly, and saying: “My Creator, Whom I am recollecting, has innumerable servants here in my place of solitude, just as He has everywhere. I am not alone; loneliness has no meaning.” Through his belief, he receives pleasure from that familiarity.

He understands the meaning of the happiness of life, and offers thanks to God” (Nursi, 2001).

As told above *Solat (Prayer)* is the biggest *dhikr*. For this reason, if a man performs prayer (*solat*), he will feel beauty in his soul after prayer. His soul cannot take break its boundaries after prayer. This âyat explains the reality “*Those who believe and find peace in their hearts from the contemplation of God: Surely there is peace of heart in the contemplation of God*” (Ra’d, 13:28).

The hearts of those who believe are described in this âyat as finding a calm, sweet rest in remembrance of God. Hearts get peace, calmness and break from their sorrow by Allah. As the beginning and the end finishes to Allah, the whole causes are based on Allah. The possible chain of existence ends at Allah. Allah is one who there is nobody above him and has not anything farther side from him, because Allah is the One who is far from the end and the quantity both in existence and in conscience has nothing forward from him. *Ibn Atâ’illâh* says that prayer is a cleansing agent for the heart from the stain of iniquities, and an opening to the door of the Mysteries. Prayer is the place of confidence and the wellspring of intimacies; in it widens the scope of the Mysteries, and in it shines the rays of the Luminaries (Perry, 1971).

There is the prayer in every country (every religion) but shows in each one the other’s structure. In this subject, as meditation and Yoga rituals do not reach the hillside of prayer (*solat*), they cannot connect man to the cosmos and the other world, and cannot convey man to a horizon; but the prayer raises the man to Divine World (Boorstein, undated ). *Muhammad Iqbal* says about the same subject: “The ‘Heart’ is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of *Rumi*, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception. The total reality, which enters our awareness and appears on interpretation as an empirical fact, has other ways of invading our consciousness

and offers further opportunities of interpretation. The revealed and mystic literature of mankind bears ample testimony to the fact that religious experience has been too enduring and dominant in the history of mankind to be rejected as mere illusion. Religious experience are facts of human experience and, in the capacity of yielding knowledge by interpretation, one fact is as good as another (Iqbal, 1982). We are not yet in possession of a really effective scientific method to analyse the contents of non-rational modes of consciousness (Iqbal, 1982).

Purification of the outer organs accompanied inner purification. When we think of lemon, our mouth gets watery, so there is a correlation between body and soul. For this reason, anyone who seeks the nearness of God always tries to remain pure both outwardly and inwardly. The Qur'an says: "*Prayer prevents transgression of passions and the grave sins*" (*Al-Ankabut, 29:45*). As when a man stands in front of God five times every day and has its consciousness, he cannot have the courage to commit wrongdoing. By praying, the intimate God-man relationship is deepened and makes man a person who is spiritually strengthened. Therefore, it would appear that one of the important roles of Islamic prayer is to act as a protection against the defilement and contamination that affect man's life. When a man lives his life with consciousness of his link with the Lord, he acquires an inward disposition to absorb God's attributes and obtains the capacity to resist evil.

### Spending in Charity

Islam encourages human beings to live in goodness and charity, and not to live in opulence (Baqara, 2:83, 219; Ali Imran, 3:124; Hadid, 57:7, 10; Anbiya, 21:90). Islam makes the community a virtuous society, that is, its men's duty is to compete in good and charity and they do not compete in earning property. This phenomenon can be seen in Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) community. The people of this community spent their life and property for men's happiness, instead of having spent

their life on valuable activities. These activities give man a very beautiful psychological feeling and good mood.

*"Those who believe and do right, have happiness, and an excellent resting place"* (*Ar-Ra'd, 13:29*)

There are beauty, good news and bearer for believers and good makers. There is pleasure and brilliance of eyes for those who believe and do right. These verses say that God makes happy people who make goodness and makes miserable people who act in bad behaviour. This explanation is true according to the comment in *Tâ-Hâ, 124; An'am, 127* too. These âyat show us that the owner of goodness has a good psychological condition and the owner of bad deeds has a bad psychological condition. This dimension is the evidence of goodness that they are the source of good psychological feelings.

According to Muslim Scholars, there is an effect of actions on the heart positively and negatively (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1381, *Al-Jawzaiyya*, 1983; 1990; 2001). God commands that by favour of goodness, one can get imminent peace and calmness, but sin brings about psychological anxiety. by saying that one's heart finds peace by means of blessing which calms down human desires we can also say that sin causes disturbance in human desires and creates hesitation in the heart. This means that there can be troubles in one's psychological mood because of sin. As a word 'Birr' / Goodness originates from 'Barr' that is, broadness in actions of goodness (Al-Isfahani, n. d., 1980). Based on this relation, it can be said that in Islamic literature 'Birr' may have some metaphors for the broadness of the heart.

From the concept of *Birr* is *Tax / Zakah (Alms)* and *Zakah* prescription is necessary for every rich man. '*Zakah*' is the most important thing in giving charity. '*Zakah*' is an action of *Birr (Goodness)* (*Bakarah, 2:177*) and as a meaning in the dictionary is 'goodness in benefits'. In other words, '*Zaka'sh-Shey'u*' means "Nama

fi As-Salah / increases in benefits” (*Ibn Taymaiyyah, 1983*). The entitling of *zakah* as *zakah* is because of its inclusion of hope, blessing and cleansing of self. (Al-Isfehani, undated). The Qu’ran isolates the illnesses that cause harmful effects for human that will remove the defects of the heart and will. As the body returns to its natural mood, the heart and will return to human nature it comes from birth. The heart is subsequently nourished by faith and the Qur’an (Ibn Taymaiyyah, 1983).

## Conclusion

As a result, it appears that faith, rituals and virtues envisaged by celestial revelation are issues that cannot be disregarded in the creation of calm individuals and society. This implies that the matter of faith can be a prescription of liberation for a great deal of young people who are alcoholic and drug addicts because of dissatisfaction. For this reason, investigation of the writer’s hypothesis on celestial religions related to the happiness of people with the most recent data from the field of psychology is a crucial subject. If such a study is conducted, a great distance will be covered in terms of recognising the spirit of our restless people, some questions about its mysteries may be cleared, and their weaknesses revealed and the possible ways to their happiness may be found.

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