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## Role of Prayer in Establishing Family Foundations and Dealing with Social Disasters, Based on the Teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (as)

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### Abstract

Prayer is the establishment of values and the prevention of the disintegration of the personality of individuals and members of society. Prayer should be sought more in its capacity and constructive effects in various educational and social dimensions, and not limited to individual supplication. The family system, as the first social rule and the best place for preserving human dignity and ensuring the psychological tranquility of its members, has now suffered from various moral disorders and social misconduct, the most important factor of which must be sought in the element of weakness of faith and neglect of prayer and remembrance of God. Therefore, deep and comprehensive attention to the most important requirements of prayer can be considered highly effective in strengthening faith and reducing moral and behavioral damages, especially in the realm of the family. The elucidation of the relationship between prayer and the family, with an emphasis on highlighting the role of prayer in strengthening the family system and combating moral and social offences, can be deemed as the most important issue of this article.

**Keywords:** Ahl al-Bayt (as), Deviations, Family Foundations, Functions, Prayer, Social Disasters.

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## 1. Problem Statement

Prayer is the practical ideology of Muslims in which they express their beliefs, thoughts, desires and patterns. Prayer is a routine of every morning and evening. The first obligatory duty in the morning is prayer and in the evening the last obligatory act is also prayer. Prayer is the most fundamental need of man in life, in which the celestial soul, trapped in his earthly body, connects him with the heavens and places him in a space of peace and security, free from all the worries and concerns of life on the earth. In Islamic culture and knowledge, prayer is referred to as the pillar of religion, the flag of faith, the flag of Islam, the remembrance of religions and prophets and the central axis for the acceptance of all human actions. Therefore, the Holy Religion of Islam, in order to reform human society and for the cultivation and purification of souls and refine their spirit and body from impurities and moral vices, has introduced prayer as the best constructive factor for the spirit and the psyche of mankind and the strongest deterrent against moral and behavioral corruptions and imperfections, as it is stated: " إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَ لَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ ... أَكْبَرُ " (Surah Al-Ankabut/45).

Therefore, with such a comprehensive perspective on the capacities and constructive and evolutionary functions of prayer, Imam Khomeini (May God's Mercy be Upon Him) also referred to it as a center for refining and nurturing human souls, stating: "Prayer is the factory of humanization, good prayer removes obscenities and denials from a nation. Those who have been drawn to centers of corruption are the ones who do not pray." (Imam Khomeini, 1368: 7/289). However, as expressed by Martyr Motahhari, "Not every prayer and worship, but rather the correct, genuine and fully qualified one. Worship in which its essence is directed towards God, seeking forgiveness, help, and refuge in God, such prayer and worship is the greatest factor in human upbringing." (Motahhari, 1359: 9104).

Therefore, the most significant and tangible effects of prayer should be considered as the human's deterrent against moral corruption and social deviance, as well as the reformation and training of individual and social behaviors of the members of a religious community. Unfortunately, today, Islamic societies, despite having rich religious teachings in the realm of personal and social life, are facing significant moral damages, ethical threats, and social abnormalities from both software and hardware aspects.

It can boldly be admitted that these threats have entirely targeted the family nucleus as the most important and fundamental center of the religious-social training system of the Islamic community; because if the family, as the primary social nucleus and the best platform for preserving human dignity and ensuring the mental tranquility of society members, suffers from moral crises and behavioral wrongdoings, naturally, other social institutions and systems will also be affected by weakness and decay, leading to rapid deterioration and disintegration in a short period of time.

In such circumstances, the most fundamental strategy to strengthen the family system against ethical damages and deviations is to reinforce the belief and faith structure of individuals in the society (family) through the means of prayer, remembrance of God, and combatting negligence and despair. This is because all the diverse educational and social functions and capacities of prayers and worshipping have not been adequately examined and recognized in the studies, research, opinions, and works of Islamic scholars as they should have been. Primarily, attention has been focused on its individual aspects and religious dimensions. Therefore, this article seeks to examine the importance and status of prayer, as well as its capacities in the realm of personal and social interactions. It aims to elucidate the effects and functions of prayer in strengthening the family system and combating ethical deviations and social crimes.

## 2. Importance and Position of Prayer:

Looking at the teachings of the Islamic religion, it can be clearly understood that among Islamic prayers, after divine recognition and submission to the Creator of existence, prayer is introduced as the greatest Islamic obligation, the highest educational institution for human upbringing, and the strongest bridge of communication between the Creator and the created. No act of worship can compare to its significance, and neglecting it, is considered disbelief. The Qur'an refers to prayer as a fixed obligation and a prescribed duty: "إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْثُوتًا..." (Qur'an, An-Nisa/103). The commentator of Al-Mizan also considers the interpretation of "كِتَابًا مَوْثُوتًا" as a fixed obligation (prayer) that is not changeable and will not be waived under any circumstances for a responsible individual (Tabatabaee, 1417:5/102).

The position of prayer in Islam is such that the Qur'an, in a general statement about prayer, mentions it as the common official program of all

divine prophets and praises it as follows: " وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا " (Al-Anbiya/ 73). According to the interpreter of the exemplary commentary, the mention of " كَانُوا " in the above verse, which implies continuity and permanence, may indicate that even before reaching the station of prophethood and leadership, the prophets were righteous servants of God to whom He bestowed new blessings (Makarim Shirazi, 1379:13456). On the other hand, in providing a detailed account, it is worth mentioning some details regarding the history of the prayer program in the curriculum of the chosen ones and divine ambassadors. It quotes as follows:

- a) The Prayer of Abraham (peace be upon him): " رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ " (Qur'an, Abraham/40) "... وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي "
- b) The Prayer of Ishmael (pbuh): " ... وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ " (Qur'an, Maryam/55)
- c) The Prayer of Shuayb (pbuh): " يَا شُعَيْبُ أَصَلَاتِكَ تَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ نَتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ " (Qur'an, Hud/87) "... أَبَاؤُنَا "
- d) The Prayer of Moses (pbuh): " إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ " (Qur'an, Taha/14) " لِذِكْرِي "
- e) The Prayer of Zechariah (pbuh): " فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي " (Qur'an, Al-Imran/39) "... الْمِحْرَابِ "
- f) The Prayer of Jesus (pbuh): " وَ أَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا " (Qur'an, Maryam/31) "... "
- g) The Prayer of Luqman (pbuh): " ... يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ " (Qur'an, Luqman/17)
- h) The Prayer of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): " وَ أَمْرُ أَهْلِكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ " (Qur'an, Taha/132) "... وَ اصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا "

In the third instance, the Holy Qur'an introduces prayer in the context of establishing the religion and the fundamental beliefs of true believers: " ...إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ " (Qur'an, At-Tawbah/18); " ... وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ " (Qur'an, Ash-Shura/13); " ... أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ... " (Qur'an, An-Nur/56). Similarly, in the Prophetic hadith, emphasis is placed on the direct connection between prayer and strengthening the foundations of the religion: " . افزَعُوا إِلَى قِوَامِ دِينِكُمْ بِإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ " (Majlisi, 1403: 78/35). "Strive with full attention in establishing the pillars of your religion through complete observance of prayer." Then, in the fourth instance, the establishment and revival of prayer are considered as primary duties and

priorities for the leaders and officials of the Islamic system: "الَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ" الَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ " ... فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ" (Qur'an, Al-Hajj/41). Therefore, in the above verse, the three key and essential pillars of worship, economic, and social aspects - namely prayer, zakat, and public supervision - are specified as the foundations of the Islamic government, each of which constitutes a pillar of Islamic rulings in its own right. (Tabarsi, 1408: 7/).

In addition to the statements of the Holy Qur'an regarding the importance and position of prayer, which has dedicated more than 80 verses to it, the infallible leaders (as) have also explained and outlined the significance and status of this indispensable monotheistic obligation as interpreters and teachers of the Qur'an. They have highlighted the essence of prayer from various perspectives. Some of their statements include:

### **2.1. Prayer, the pillar of religion and divine covenant:**

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) introduced prayer as the covenant of Allah: "الصلاة عهد الله" (Muttaqi Hindi, 7/279). Imam Ali (pbuh), in his advice emphasizing the importance of observing prayer, described it as the pillar and foundation of religion: "اللَّهِ اللَّهُ فِي الصَّلَاةِ فَإِنَّهَا عَمُودُ دِينِكُمْ" (Nahj al-Balagha, Letter 47; Nuri, 1382: 1/).

### **2.2. Prayer, the symbol of the school and flag of Islam:**

The Noble Prophet (pbuh) in explaining the importance and position of prayer among other acts of worship and schools, has designated prayer as a symbol of the Islamic school and as its emblem and raised flag: "وَجْهٌ" وَجْهٌ " الصَّلَاةُ دِينُكُمْ" (Kulayni, 1363: 3/270) He also said: "عَلَّمَ الْإِسْلَامَ الصَّلَاةَ" (Muttaqi Hindi, 7/279).

### **2.3. Prayer, the guardian of God and the divine policy of the prophets**

Imam Sadiq (pbuh) considered prayer as a form of divine guardianship on earth: "أَنَّ الصَّلَاةَ حُجْرَةُ اللَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِ" (Majlisi, 1403: 78/999). The Noble Prophet (pbuh) also regarded prayer as the definitive practice of the prophets of God that manifested in their conduct and traditions: "الصَّلَاةُ مِنْهَاجُ" الصَّلَاةُ مِنْهَاجُ " النَّبِيِّاء" (Majlisi, 1403: 82/231).

### **2.4. Prayer, the ascension of the believer and the guide on his path:**

The Noble Prophet (pbuh) mentioned in a hadith that prayer is the ladder of ascension for the believer towards God and also the provision and compass for the way of the believers in worldly and hereafter life: "الصَّلَاةُ مِعْرَاجُ الْمُؤْمِنِ" (Imam Khomeini, Surah al-Salat, 1357: 7).

### **2.5. Prayer, the most superior act and means of divine proximity:**



Imam Sadiq (as) mentioned prayer as the most beloved act to Allah in His presence: "أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الصَّلَاةُ" (Mohammadi Reyshahri, 1377: 5/297) Imam Ali (pbuh) also listed it as the greatest act and a means for the God-fearing individual to draw closer to the divine court of the Lord: "أَوْصِيَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَحِفْظِهَا- فَإِنَّهَا خَيْرُ الْعَمَلِ" (Mohammadi Reyshahri, 1377: 5/367); "الصَّلَاةُ فُرْبَانُ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ" (Majlisi, 1403: 78/999).

## 2.6. Prayer, the means of expelling Satan and purifying sins:

In the monotheistic perspective of Imam Ali (pbuh), prayer is a strong tool for combating and suppressing Satan and his objectives. As he said: "الصَّلَاةُ مَذْحَرَةُ الشَّيْطَانِ" (Amadi, 1378: 2/222), and in another statement, he describes prayer as the cause of Satan's blackening: "الصَّلَاةُ تُسَوِّدُ وَجْهَ الشَّيْطَانِ" (Amadi, 1378: 2/223). Furthermore, in another hadith, he considers prayer as a stronghold and fortress against Satan and his temptations: "الصَّلَاةُ حِصْنٌ" (Amadi, 1378: 2/223). Imam Ali (pbuh) in another saying, refers to the position of prayer as a means of cleanliness from impurities and sins and as a cleanser of human existence from sins: "الصلوة صابون" (Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 1404: 2/313) and "الصَّلَاةُ... إِنَّهَا تَحْتُ الدُّنُوبَ حَتَّى الْوَرَقِ" (Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 199) (Har'ami, 1409: 3/7).

## 2.7. Prayer, the scale of measurement and the key to Paradise:

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) on one hand, in a hadith, considers prayer as the measure and scale of people's actions, and on the other hand, he introduces it as a means of granting prayers and the basis for accepting other acts and worship of Muslims: "الصَّلَاةُ مِيزَانٌ" (Kulayni, 1375: 1/267); "الصَّلَاةُ إِجَابَةٌ لِلدُّعَاءِ وَ قَبُولٌ لِلْأَعْمَالِ" (Kulayni, 1375: 1/270). He also, in other hadiths, explains the importance and eschatological position of prayer in the other world and the resurrection, saying: "الصَّلَاةُ مِفْتَاحُ الْجَنَّةِ" (Payande, 1378: 270); prayer is the key to Paradise and also the companion of the worshiper in the grave: "الصلوة انيس في قبره" (Majlisi, 1403: 82/1). Just as in another hadith, prayer is the first question in the resurrection: "أَوَّلُ مَا يُحَاسَبُ" (Payande, 1378: 208), which is included in the series of worship acts and religious rulings: "موضع الصلاة من الدين كموضع الرأس من الجسد" (Kulayni, 1375: 1/).

## 3. Obligations and Essentials of Prayer

Just as the wise teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) emphasize the necessity of understanding and awareness of the status and position of prayer in detail, obligations and essentials regarding the right and truth of

prayer have also been mentioned. It is clear that the comprehensive understanding and observance of all aspects of these obligations will undoubtedly have a direct and significant impact on the growth and increasing development of the worshippers. It is evident that these obligations, apart from the essential requirements related to the prerequisites and outward etiquettes of prayer such as ablution, attire, and the place of prayer, which of course have their own validity and importance, are crucial. Therefore, the most important obligations and essentials of prayer that have been emphasized and focused on in the statements of the infallible (as), are as follows:

### 3.1. Avoidance of negligence in prayer and abandoning it

One of the most important teachings of religious scholars regarding the requirements of prayer is to avoid any kind of negligence or abandonment of the prayer. If performing the prayer is likened to the pillar of religion, the flag of Islam, and the key to Paradise, then surely any laxity in establishing prayer and also leaving it aside has severe, heavy, and irremediable consequences and punishments as explicitly warned by the teachings of the school of divine revelation and emphasized by the Imams (as). The Holy Qur'an warns those who show arrogance and disdain towards worship and servitude to God, promising them the fire of Hell, stating: "إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ..." (Surah Al-Mu'min, 60) This is while, according to the Qur'an, the most significant reason for sinners and criminals to end up in Hell is neglecting prayers and staying away from the ranks of worshippers as they are confessing in front of the questioning of the inhabitants of Paradise, they said: "يَسْأَلُونَ \* عَنْ ... \* " (Surah Al-Muddathir, 4340). "المُجْرِمِينَ \* مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ \* قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has also, in explicit hadiths, considered intentional abandonment of prayer as the boundary between faith and disbelief, and has deemed the one who neglects prayer as a disbeliever: "بين الايمان والكفر ترك الصلوة" (Mohammadi Reyshahri, 1377: 5/403); "مَنْ تَرَكَ الصَّلَاةَ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ" (Tawisrkani, n.d., 394). In another statement, he equated the abandonment of prayer by the negligent individual with the destruction of his religion, holding such individuals accountable for their indifference towards those who do not pray and expressing indifference and apathy towards them, considering their death equivalent to the death of a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian even if they

are in an Islamic state: " مَنْ تَرَكَ الصَّلَاةَ لَا يَرْجُو تَوَابَهَا وَلَا يَخَافُ عِقَابَهَا فَلَا أُبَالِي أَنْ يَمُوتَ " (Mohammadi Reyshahri, 1377: 5/403).

Therefore, attention to and valuing of prayer is a sign of reverence for religion and remembrance of God, while neglecting and belittling it is a sign of weak faith and a source of joy for Satan. Hence, the Prophet of God (pbuh) stated in another hadith: " مَنْ ضَيَّعَ الصَّلَاةَ فَهُوَ لِغَيْرِهَا أَضْيَعٌ " (Har Ameli, 1409: 3/19). He also said: "The one who ruins his prayer will be alongside Qarun and Haman on the Day of Judgment. Woe to the one who does not take care of his prayer." (Har Ameli, same source). He then said: "Whoever belittles prayer is not of my nation" (Har Ameli, 1409: 3/15). Imam Ali (pbuh) also considers the biggest thief to be the one who neglects and steals his prayer: "إِنَّ أَسْرَقَ النَّاسَ مَنْ سَرَقَ صَلَاتَهُ" (Majlisi, 1403:84/242).

### 3.2. Establishing prayer at the earliest time and having the presence of heart:

In accordance with the ethical and religious teachings derived from the words of revelation and the sayings of the Ahl-al Bayt (as), the mere performance of prayer in any form and at any time or place has not been valued. In addition to fulfilling the prayer, observing the prayer times along with attention and presence of heart has also been repeatedly emphasized and referenced by them. Imam Sadiq (pbuh) considered one of the criteria for evaluating the Shiites to be the extent of their protection of prayer times, stating: "امْتَحِنُوا شِيعَتَنَا عِنْدَ مَوَاقِيتِ الصَّلَاةِ كَيْفَ مُحَافِظَتُهُمْ" (Qummi, n.d., 244).

The virtue and importance of praying at the earliest time is to such an extent that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in another hadith has described the virtue of praying at the earliest time as being like the virtue of the Hereafter over the world, saying: " فَضْلُ الْوَقْتِ الْأَوَّلِ عَلَى الْأَخِيرِ كَفَضْلِ الْآخِرَةِ عَلَى الْهَيْهَاتِ " (Mohammadi Reyshahri, 1377: 15/401). In another hadith, he has considered this virtue better for a believer than his wealth and children: " فَضْلُ الْوَقْتِ الْأَوَّلِ عَلَى الْأَخِيرِ خَيْرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ مِنْ وُلْدِهِ وَ مَالِهِ " (Mohammadi Reyshahri, same source). According to his statement, when the time for prayer arrives, the doors of heaven are opened, and the deeds and invocations of the believer ascend towards the Lord, and this ascension of deeds is better for him than any wealth and children: " إِذَا دَخَلَ وَقْتُ الصَّلَاةِ فَتَحَتْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ لِصُعُودِ " (Hur Ameli, 1409: 3/87). Therefore, in Islamic teachings, delaying prayer times is strongly discouraged, and severe consequences are outlined for it, to the extent that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) in his hadith deprives

those who delay their obligatory prayers from his intercession, saying: " لا يُبَالُ شَفَاعَتِي غَدًا مَنْ أَخَّرَ الصَّلَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ بَعْدَ وَقْتِهَا " (Saduq, 1376: 326). Imam Reza (pbuh) also considers 'Sahoon' as the ones who are negligent of their prayer times as mentioned in the verse " فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ \* الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ " (Al-Ma'un/5-4): " يَقُولُ عَنْ وَقْتِهِمْ يَتَعَافَلُونَ " (Majlisi, 3: 83/20).

In addition to observing the prayer times, having presence of heart and focusing on the remembrances and actions of prayer are also among the other necessities of this important divine obligation. The Holy Qur'an mentions the believers who are humble and present in their prayers, emphasizing that through this humility of the heart and mental presence in prayer, they are the people of felicity and salvation: " فَذُوقُوا فَلَاحَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ \* الَّذِينَ " (Al-Mu'mininun/2-1). The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) emphasizes the importance of having presence of heart in prayer, saying: " إِذَا قَامَ الْعَبْدُ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَكَانَ هَوَاهُ وَ قَلْبُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى انْصَرَفَ كَيَوْمَ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ " (Fayz Kashani, 1383 AD: 1/382). Then, in another hadith regarding the quality of achieving presence of heart in prayer, he advises as follows: " صَلِّ صَلَاةَ مُوَدَّعٍ " (Majlisi, 1403: 84/264); In addition to introducing the component of the farewell prayer, he speaks in another hadith about a method that helps to achieve more humility and presence of heart in prayer, which is to see God and be seen by God: " اَعْبُدِ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ " "فَإِنْ كُنْتَ لَا تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ " (Majlisi, same source); Therefore, in his advice to Abu Dharr regarding the necessity of humility and awe in prayer, he says: " يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ رَكَعَتَانِ مُفْتَصِدَتَانِ فِي التَّفَكُّرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ قِيَامٍ لَيْلَةٍ وَ الْقَلْبُ سَاهٍ " (Tabarsi 1397 AD: 2/467); In this regard, Imam Sadiq (pbuh) says to his companion Fazayl ibn Yasar: "The extent to which a servant's prayer is elevated towards God is when it is performed with a present heart and focus. If the presence of the heart is half, then half of the prayer is accepted; if it is one-third, then one-third; and if it is one-fifth, then one-fifth ascends." (Imam Khomeini, Forty Hadith, 1368: 362).

### 3.3 Praying in congregation (congregational prayer)

By examining the statements and practices of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) regarding prayer and congregational prayer, it can be explicitly claimed that the importance of praying in congregation and establishing congregational prayers, if not more important and emphasized than other prerequisites in prayer such as praying at the earliest time and having the presence of heart, will certainly not be less. This is because the Islamic ritual is significant

from a social aspect and, considering its blessings and abundant effects in creating unity, cohesion, and solidarity, it emphasizes and relies on this aspect in many of its programs.

Indeed, the performance of obligatory daily prayers in congregation and as a group is one of these programs. The Holy Qur'an commands the establishment of congregational prayers: "وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَنَا" (Al-Baqarah/43). On the other hand, it highlights the prominent qualities of the hypocrites as their laziness and excessive indifference during prayers: "وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى" (An-Nisa/142). The importance of congregational prayer can be understood from the Islamic narrations which state that the reward of a person who leaves their home or waits in the mosque for congregational prayer is equal to the one who was engaged in prayer during that time (Mutaqqi Hindi, 1419: 8/326). It is narrated from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) that praying in congregation, even just for one day, is better and superior to a prayer that is performed at home for forty years (Har Ameli, 1409: 5/374).

In the school of Islam, congregational prayer serves as a means to promote unity among the rows, bring hearts closer, strengthen the spirit of Islamic brotherhood, facilitate social cooperation among Muslims and is considered as one of the most exceptional aspects of human gatherings. On the other hand, congregational prayer demonstrates the immense power of Muslims, discourages hypocrites, and strikes fear in the hearts of disbelievers in a way that congregational prayer is a display of presence in the political and social scene and a deep bond between the Imam and the community. Despite all the effects and functions that congregational prayer has in Islamic societies, some individuals remain indifferent to its importance and effects, missing out on the opportunity to participate. This is while the consequences and irrefutable outcomes of neglecting and absenting oneself from congregational prayer have been elucidated in the theoretical views and practical logic of the infallible (as).

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "Greet the Jews and Christians, but do not greet the Jews of my nation! It was asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, who are the Jews of your nation?' He said: 'Those who hear the call to prayer and the call to establish prayer but do not attend congregational prayer (without a valid excuse).'" (Majlisi, 1403: 84/260). He also said: "مَنْ حَقَرَهُ فَإِنَّمَا يُحَقِّرُ اللَّهَ" (Saduq, Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih, 1404: 1/377).

Additionally, a narration informed Imam Ali (pbuh) that there are some people in Kufa who reside near the mosque but do not attend the congregational prayers of the Muslims in the mosque. Imam became very angry and said: "They must either join our congregation or pray with us in the mosque, or they must move away and distance themselves from the vicinity of the mosque in a way that they are neither our neighbors nor we are theirs." (Hur Ameli, 1409: 3/86). This is despite Imam Sadiq (as) stating: "هم رسول الله باحراق قوم في منزلهم لا يصلون بالجماعة" (Toserkani, n.d.: 4/205).

### 4.3 Prayer and Family

In Islamic teachings, just as prayer is mentioned as the pillar of religion and the divine covenant, the family system and the bond of marriage are also mentioned as a strong and firm covenant. The Qur'an explicitly states: "وَ أَخَذْنَا مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا" (Qur'an, An-Nisa/21). Therefore, the Qur'an, by using the term covenant with the verb "أَخَذْنَا" and the descriptor "غَلِيظًا" that is used for the covenant of the prophets, also employs it for the covenant of marriage. This is while sociologists, psychologists, jurists, and scholars of educational sciences have had various definitions of the concept and term of family, indicating the breadth and effects and multifaceted functions of this remarkable phenomenon in various aspects of individual and social life.

In Islamic culture, the family serves as a means for the production and upbringing of generations, creating intimacy and understanding, unity and harmony, completion and evolution, and spiritual and mental tranquility for humans. In fact, the family acts as the center of gravity for all human teachings and upbringing from childhood to the end of one's life, and a person, by virtue of their social nature, will never be separate or independent from the embrace of the family and the core of personality formation and growth; otherwise, they will lose their primary and essential identity and essence and will not have a refuge or shelter for themselves. From this perspective, one can acknowledge the mutually beneficial relationship and constructive interaction, as well as the shared mission of the two inseparable phenomena of prayer and family, by considering the positive effects and functions of each on the personal and social life of a Muslim. This is while prayer, as the first divine obligation, serves as a source of tranquility for all hearts "أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ" (Qur'an, Ar-

Ra'd/28), and the most important means of remembrance of God “أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ” (Qur'an, Taha/14), the most beloved acts to God “لِيَذْكُرِيَ” (Saduq, Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih, 1404: 1/210), and the cornerstone of worship “مَوْضِعُ الصَّلَاةِ مِنَ الدِّينِ كَمَوْضِعِ الرَّأْسِ مِنَ الْجَسَدِ” (Payande, 1378: 624), and has been introduced as the center for reforming and educating the deviant behaviors of humans “إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَ...” (Qur'an, Al-Ankabut/45).

Family is introduced as the first social foundation for individuals, a source of tranquility and a bond between all its members, an identity provider, a creator of happiness, a tutor, and a reformer. In summary, prayer and family, as trustworthy and sacred mentors, and solid and secure shelters, have a common mission in training and guiding the human race towards achieving desired and real happiness and perfection. Therefore, the direct and reciprocal relationship between prayer and family is established among fewer social phenomena and religious rituals; prayer and its constructive effects, directly and indirectly, play a role in strengthening and reinforcing the foundation of the family, enhancing the interaction and cohesion of its elements and members. In return, the family system also strives to develop and promote the culture of prayer and its practical effects and functions more effectively. Thus, it is humans who are constantly learning and experiencing, but the role that is inscribed on the book of the chest and the clean page of this ritual in childhood and within the family nucleus is a lifelong companion and soulmate until the last breath of life. Therefore, wise men have likened learning in childhood to engraving on a stone, saying: “العلم في الصغر كاتقش في الحجر” (Ghazali, 1319: 38).

Imam Ali (as) writes to his dear son, Imam al-Mujtaba (as): "The heart of a child is like a barren land, it accepts whatever is presented to it. For this reason, I have disciplined you more so that your heart does not become hard and your mind does not become preoccupied" (Nahj al-Balagha, letter 31). Imam Sadiq (as) also emphasizes the necessity of teaching religious matters to children at the appointed time, saying: "Teach your children about religious matters before others (like the Murji'ah sect) influence them (Al-Kafi, 1363: 6/47). Therefore, the family is the best environment for raising children, and the relationship between children and the family is the strongest and most important relationship. Satisfying the inner desires and nature of the child, as well as their growth in various dimensions, is only

possible in the warm and loving embrace of the family. Indeed, no school or kindergarten can replace the place of the family. On the other hand, parents should engage children's minds in seeking answers from within themselves by creating questions about God, the Day of Judgment, worship, and other topics. This will lead them to think about important matters and reach significant conclusions. Later, when they share these conclusions with us, let us present our teachings to them in a new, pleasant, and understandable form.

We should allow children to freely engage with religious matters in the spiritual environment that we create for them. Observing the worship and prayers that older family members perform regularly day and night leaves an impression in the child's mind. This is because, considering the imitative nature of children, it is usually observed that from the age of two, a child imitates the movements of the parents and repeats some words incompletely. These actions gradually become complete, and eventually, the child stands for prayers alongside the parents. Furthermore, parents should create the background for their child's worship. Families that do not take advantage of the opportunities during childhood for this purpose usually face serious problems in adolescence and youth because delaying the performance of religious duties until adolescence or adulthood, even if one believes in religious principles, may make it difficult to follow religious teachings due to lack of knowledge and spiritual readiness. Most individuals who do not fulfill their religious duties at older ages are not necessarily disbelievers in religious principles; rather, they have not acquired the necessary training and readiness beforehand. Therefore, their will is not necessarily in line with their beliefs unless they have a stronger faith and firmer convictions. Hence, the argument of those who believe that a child should choose their own path after reaching the age of discernment and adolescence is not entirely correct (Shariati, 1384: 36).

### 5. Family Oriented Functions of Prayer

According to the Holy Qur'an, each act of worship has specific and unique effects. For instance, the effect of fasting is described as: "كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ... لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ" (Al-Baqarah/183) The effect of giving Zakat is purification and refinement of the human soul from materialism: "خُذْ مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتَ مِنْ صَدَقَاتِهِمْ وَطَهِّرْهُمْ وَنُزِّلْ بِهِمْ سُبْحَانَكَ وَأَنْذِرْ لَهُمْ عَذَابَ نَارِهِمْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقَاتُ" (At-Tawbah/103) And the effect of Hajj is the utilization of material and spiritual blessings: "لِيَسْتَهْذُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ" (Al-

Hajj/27) On the other hand, the effect of prayer is stated as restraint and protection for the worshipper against indecency and evil: " إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَ لَذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ " (Al-Ankabut/45) Yes, the special quality of prayer is that it prevents a person from sins and indecencies. However, it is observed that many worshippers, despite performing their prayers, still commit sins and disobedience. In response, it is explained that prayer naturally entails abandoning sins and disobedience, rather than being the cause of abandoning them. In other words, the prohibition in prayer is legislative, not constitutive, and it does not forcibly prevent a person from sinning but rather provides the groundwork for abandoning sins (Tabatabai, 1417: 16/209). Just as God commands people to act with justice and excellence, to be kind to relatives, and forbids indecency and transgression: " ...إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ " (Al-Nahl/90), yet some people still commit crimes. Overall, it can be boldly claimed that the most important effect and function of prayer should be sought in its preventive and restraining aspect in the educational-ethical system of worshippers, where the family system and its members are not exempt from this rule.

If prayer is performed with all its etiquettes and conditions, with full attention and presence of heart, and without any neglect or trivialization, and if the worshipper, by participating in congregational prayers continuously, shows the religious, social, political, economic, and defensive dignity and honor of Muslims to the malicious enemies, then this prayer will prevent many moral and social abnormalities and crimes. The family system, as the most fundamental social institution in Islamic society, will be the center for reforming and educating the behavior of its members and the foundation for the upbringing and advancement of future generations. Especially if the worshipper comes to believe and understand that in the light of prayer, they are in the presence of the unique Creator and are engaged in conversation with Him.

It is noteworthy that the Holy Qur'an, in mentioning the extensive functions of prayer in preventing indecency and immorality in various aspects, uses general and absolute terms, avoiding specific examples or particular domains. This broad application of the term indicates the comprehensive and extensive scope of prayer in various aspects of personal and social life, both in terms of negation and affirmation. The realm of

home and family is also one of the fundamental functions of prayer, which will be further examined and elucidated in this article.

### 5.1 Kindness to Parents

Above all rights is the right of God, and after that is the right of the parents; because after God, no one has endured as much hardship and shown as much kindness towards us as our parents. There is no sacrifice greater than serving and sacrificing for one's parents, as the existence of a person, at a certain stage of life, is indebted to the efforts of these two unique and selfless mentors. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the conscience to show affection, love, and respect towards them. For this reason, God, in His revealed book, has mentioned kindness to parents after His own worship: "... وَ قَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا" (Al-Isra/23); "وَ اعْبُدُوا" (An-Nisa/36). The Qur'an portrays the spiritual and moral significance of parents in such a way that it places gratitude towards God and gratitude towards parent side by side, commanding obedience and gratitude towards both: "وَ وَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ" (Luqman/14).

The Qur'an, in the context of emulating the Prophets and chosen ones such as Prophet Noah, Prophet Abraham, and Prophet Solomon, mentions that they prayed to God for forgiveness and mercy for their parents: "Noah/28; Abraham/41; An-Naml/19". The Qur'an considers goodness towards parents obligatory and deems opposition to one's parents as forbidden unless they call to associate partners with God, in that case obedience is not required: "وَ إِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ" (Luqman/15). The duty of kindness towards parents does not end with their passing; it is a religious and ethical obligation that continues until the end of one's life and even after the parents' death. Therefore, the Messenger of God (pbuh) regards the most honorable and virtuous person on the Day of Judgment as one who shows kindness to his parents, even after their death: "سَيِّدُ الْأَبْرَارِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ بَرٌّ وَالِدَيْهِ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِمَا" (Qummi, n.d.: 2/687) And Imam Ali (pbuh) also considers the greatest obligation to be in showing goodness and kindness to parents: "بِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ أَكْبَرُ فَرِيضَةٍ" (Aamidi, 1378: 3/132).

The Prophet of God (pbuh) has identified kindness towards parents as the factor that saves a person from destruction and the fire of Hell, saying: "If you nurture the love of Paradise in your heart, be kind to your parents,

and if you detest the fire of Hell, refrain from causing distress to your parents." (Qummi, n.d., 2/687). He also believed that kindness towards parents leads to a person's longevity, increased sustenance, and blessings in life (Majlisi, 1403: 74/85). Imam Sadiq (pbuh) also stated about the worldly and spiritual effects of kindness towards parents: "Whoever wishes for Allah to make the agonies and hardships of death easy for him, should maintain family ties and show kindness his parents." (Majlisi, same source).

Of course, the precise and deep understanding of the relationship between prayer and kindness towards parents in the family system, especially as the family-centered function of prayer, is well understood when the issue of harsh and angry looks (disobedience towards parents) is introduced as one of the main obstacles to the acceptance of prayer. Therefore, Imam Sadiq (pbuh), about having respect towards parents and its impact on the acceptance of prayer, states that: " مَنْ نَظَرَ إِلَىٰ أَبِيهِ نَظَرَ مَا قَتَ " وَ هُمَا لَهُ ظَالِمَانِ لَمْ يَقْبَلِ اللَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ لَهُ صَلَاةَ " (Mohammadi Reyshahri, 1377: 5/387).

How can someone who does not show gratitude for the efforts of their parents and behaves rudely and harshly towards them claim to be thankful and seek closeness to the Creator through their prayer? Is it not the case that a correct relationship with the Creator goes through constructive relationships with His creation? Surely, a worthy and acceptable prayer cannot have a function other than spreading the wings of humility and prostration towards parents and other family members. Therefore, with such a perspective, prayer transcends from mere individual worship to playing a key role in attracting divine love and satisfaction in the direction of honoring and strengthening the family system and social interactions among its members. In other words, an accepted and effective prayer nurtures a healthy and influential family.

### **5.2 Strengthening the Friendship between Spouses:**

Prayer, as the highest and most formal manifestation of a servant's worship with his Creator and also a symbol of the Creator's mercy towards the servant, possesses such a high and extensive capacity and subtlety that while being designated as the place of worship and pure devotion to the worshipped and the ascension of the faithful believer, it will also lead to the elevation and strengthening of marital relationships, love, and friendship between husband and wife within the family unit.

Where the Holy Qur'an introduces one of the most important characteristics and privileges of sincere and righteous prayer performers in observing trusts and adhering to their commitments and covenants: " وَالَّذِينَ " وَ الَّذِينَ " هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ (Al-Ma'ariz/32; Al-Mu'minun/8).

If in accordance with the verse: " أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي " (Ta-Ha/14); and this remembrance and divine recollection that bring tranquility to the hearts and soothe the souls of the believers. " أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ... " (Ar-Ra'd/28) and the Messenger of God (pbuh) who also introduces prayer as a divine covenant and commitment: " الصلوة عهد الله " (Muttaqi Hindi, 1419: 7/279), then the sacred covenant of marriage and the marital relationship, and consequently, the formation of the family system, must also be considered as one of the important manifestations of commitments between husband and wife, in which their children are also placed as divine trusts in front of parents, while the Holy Qur'an among the signs and manifestations of the divinity, introduces the sacred bond of marriage between man and woman and the creation of the institution of marriage, and considers this sacred and heavenly bond as the source of peace for the spouses, where God has placed love and affection between them: " وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا " وَ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا " (Ar-Rum21).

In the Islamic monotheistic perspective and worldview, marriage is not merely a normal marital relationship aimed at satisfying the desires and instincts between two opposite sexes, but rather marriage is considered a sacred covenant and a deep and pure relationship with lofty and flourishing goals for the formation of an exalted and progressive family that provides tranquility.

In this sacred bond, the husband and wife act as parents to their children, engage in childbearing and procreation, and are committed to nurturing and raising a healthy, dynamic, purposeful, law-abiding, and unified society.

Therefore, if we consider this purposeful and exalted relationship between spouses as a divine and heavenly covenant and commitment, where each member of the family, namely the father and mother, is committed and loyal to each other, and each participant in this covenant has rights and responsibilities towards the other, and in this regard, they consider their children as divine trusts and gifts, where each is obligated to educate and nurture them to carry some important social and religious

burdens of the future to the hands of their children and the future builders of their country, then we witness a religious and responsible family where no one shirks their responsibilities and mission, and divorce and separation are not sought.

Yes, all these are the fruits of an accepted and responsible prayer, a prayer in which the worshippers receive tranquility and positive energy from their worship and supplication, and they spend this tranquility and positive energy in their homes and families. In this prayer, there are such loving and intimate relationships based on affection and love between parents that, in the face of divine trust, namely their children, they fulfill their roles and effectiveness out of commitment and responsibility, and this love and affection will illuminate the warmth of their family.

This is while the relationship between a person and their parents is a relative relationship that springs from deep roots of kinship, the bond between spouses is a contractual and legal bond, and sometimes the affection between spouses even surpasses the affection for one's parents, which is what God has mentioned in Surah Ar-Rum: " وَ جَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَ رَحْمَةً"

In this verse, it speaks of the friendship and affection between husband and wife. These two sentences that come together are cohesive and coherent because if the marital relationship is not based on affection and mercy, it will not endure and will not bring peace and tranquility. (Makarem Shirazi, 2000: 16/406).

Imam Ali (pbuh) advises his son, Muhammad Hanafiyyah, as follows: "Make peace with your wife completely, avoid imposing more work on her, and keep your life constantly warm, because this will bring joy and vitality to the family." (Tabarsi, Makarim al-Akhlaq, 2018:218).

Briefly, one of the effects and functions of prayer in the family system is the spirit of commitment and responsibility that sincere worshippers diligently care about, fulfilling their roles and responsibilities towards their spouse and children as a common covenant of life and divine trust for the formation and development of the family foundation, and through this sense of duty, they prevent any crises, deviations, and distortions in their family system.



### 5.3 Chastity and Control of Physical Instinct

Another function and effectiveness of prayer in the realm of home and family can be found in the issue of protecting and safeguarding chastity and controlling sexual instinct, where the Holy Qur'an depicts the clear image of true and sincere believers, portraying them as characterized by numerous ethical virtues, including the virtue of chastity and modesty, which is blended with the element of faith and righteousness: "إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ... \* وَالَّذِينَ \* " (Surah Al-Mu'minun: 6-5; Surah Al-Ma'arij: 30-29).

It is important to note that the Holy Qur'an, in describing the prominent qualities of believers, places chastity after prayer, charity, and avoiding vain talk, and even prioritizes it over the issue of trust and loyalty to covenants and agreements (Makarem Shirazi, 2000: 12/323).

Therefore, claiming faith in God and divine piety and performing prayers without observing chastity is a form of self-deception and falsehood that will have no connection with the principles of monotheism and the concept of resurrection. Indeed, chastity should be considered as the source and treasury of all valuable Islamic and ethical virtues, as all goodness and virtues emanate from it, and a person, by adhering to the essence of chastity, achieves liberation and freedom from the prison of desires and worldly and materialistic temptations.

Thus, the Master of the Pious, Imam Ali (pbuh), says: "الْعَفَافُ يَصُونُ" النَفْسَ وَ يُنَزِّهُهَا عَنِ الدُّنْيَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْعَفَافِ فَإِنَّهُ أَفْضَلُ شَيْمِ الْأَشْرَافِ" (Mohammadi Reyshahri, 1998: 8/328). On the other hand, Islamic teachings explicitly mention chastity as the highest and noblest form of worship for a believer and consider the capital of chastity and purity as the most enduring asset for a person throughout their life. Imam Hussein (pbuh) also quotes his honorable father, Imam Ali (pbuh): "أَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ الْعَفَافُ" (Naraq, n.d., 22).

While studies conducted on the verses of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions indicate that chastity has various dimensions and types, encompassing different aspects of human personality, including verbal, behavioral, and even visual and auditory aspects, observing and applying the adornment of chastity in all these aspects can be a step towards inner reformation and combating obscenity and social abnormalities.



One of the most important and effective solutions in the Islamic religion for controlling sexual instincts and taking steps towards chastity is getting married and having a family, which is considered equivalent to fulfilling half of a person's religious duties, as the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) said: "مَنْ تَزَوَّجَ أَحْرَزَ نِصْفَ دِينِهِ فَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ فِي النَّصْفِ الْآخَرَ" (Payandeh, 1378: 56).

Therefore, prayer, with its inhibitory and preventive effects, while universally advocating the observance of the principle of chastity and control of sexual instincts, presents the concept of marriage and the formation of a family as a tangible means to restrain carnal desires.

On one hand, the educational and moral developmental approach of prayer in the human and religious community can be more pronounced, and on the other hand, the backgrounds for the emergence and spread of moral and sexual corruption within families can be blocked. This is the effectiveness and efficacy of prayer within the realm of the family, as stated in the Qur'an: "... وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ يُفْرُوجُهُمْ حَافِظُونَ \* إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ" (Qur'an, 23:5-6).

In summary, sexual chastity is one of the important and key subjects that the infallible leaders (as) have emphasized and warned about, indicating the need for extreme vigilance and complete awareness, especially for the believers who perform prayers, against the traps of Satan and the sexual desires resulting from satanic temptations. Imam Ali (pbuh) has described desires as the traps of Satan: "الشَّهَوَاتُ مَصَايِدُ الشَّيْطَانِ" (Amadi, 1378: 1/99).

In another hadith, he said: "May you be ruined! Beware of letting desires enter your hearts, because it starts with servitude and ends with destruction and perdition." (Adi, 1378: 1/160).



## Conclusion

Prayer encompasses a wide range of individual and societal aspects of Islamic society to the extent that, as a worship that has social dimensions, it covers many aspects and spheres of family institution and serves as a healing remedy for addressing many flaws and difficulties prevalent in the household and family system. Based on this foundation, prayer, with its preventive and protective role against indecencies and wrongdoings, always leaves a remarkable and effective mark in serving the family system and strengthening its foundation.

On one hand, it contributes to reinforcing and strengthening the unparalleled position of parents among their children in line with the strict religious recommendations of showing utmost kindness and respect towards parents, and on the other hand, it promotes the enhancement of intimate, emotional, and marital relationships between the parents as spouses, thus preventing weakness and fragility in the common covenant between them.

The unique role and impact of prayer in reducing moral and social corruption such as identity crises, despair, and lack of hope and peace, on the one hand, and in enhancing modesty and controlling sexual instincts, on the other hand, should be considered among the functions of prayer in the realm of the family.



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