

Prayer as A Manifestation of Personal Integrity: An Islamic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Prayer (*ṣalāh*) is a core act of worship in Islam that not only constitutes a ritual obligation but also functions as a primary mechanism for the formation of personal integrity, moral character, and Muslim identity. This article analyses the role of prayer as a manifestation of personal integrity from an Islamic perspective by examining the internalization of properly performed, sincere, mindful (*khushū'*), and consistent prayer. The discussion focuses on the historical development and status of prayer in Islam, the performance of its pillars and conditions, tranquillity (*ṭuma'nīnah*), mindfulness, sincerity of intention, avoidance of ostentation (*riyā'*), and the role of consistency in observing prayer as an indicator of spiritual and moral integrity. This study adopts a qualitative approach using a conceptual library research design. This approach was chosen to enable an in-depth exploration of the meanings, values, and implications of prayer in shaping personal integrity from an Islamic perspective without involving statistical analysis. Data sources include the Qur'an, the Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), classical works by authoritative scholars such as Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, as well as contemporary academic and scholarly literature. Data were analysed descriptively and interpretively through content analysis to identify key themes related to the relationship between prayer, integrity, moral conduct, and the formation of Muslim character. The findings indicate that prayer performed with sincerity, commitment, and comprehensive internalization functions as an internal control mechanism that cultivates self-discipline, honesty, trustworthiness, and social responsibility. Prayer also serves as an effective spiritual safeguard against immoral and wrongful behaviour, thereby contributing to the development of a balanced Muslim personality in spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. In conclusion, prayer that is deeply internalized not only strengthens the relationship between humans and Allah SWT but also serves as a fundamental foundation for nurturing Muslims who possess integrity, noble character, and a strong personal identity in daily life.

Keywords: Prayer, integrity, morality, Muslim character, self-development

INTRODUCTION

Prayer (*ṣalāh*) is a core act of worship in Islam that holds a very high status and serves as a central pillar in shaping the personality and identity of a Muslim. The obligation of prayer does not merely function as a sign of a servant's obedience to the commands of Allah SWT but also operates as a comprehensive form of spiritual education encompassing spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. Its position as the second pillar of Islam after the declaration of faith (*shahādah*) demonstrates that prayer is foundational to the development of faith and the moral integrity of a Muslim individual. Therefore, a deep understanding of the concept of prayer is essential to ensure that it genuinely contributes to the formation of personal integrity and noble character.

From a linguistic perspective, Azizan and Sa'ari (2010) explain that the term *ṣalāh* carries the meaning of supplication, referring to a servant's plea to Allah SWT for goodness, blessings, purification of the soul, and

forgiveness. In addition, prayer also conveys meanings of invocation and mercy, illustrating the reciprocal relationship between the servant and the Creator. The term is derived from *al-ṣilah*, which means connection or bond, referring to the continuous relationship that links human beings with Allah SWT. This relationship is not confined to ritual performance alone, but encompasses spiritual, emotional, and moral dimensions that shape the entirety of a Muslim's life.

Interestingly, prior to the advent of Islam, the Arab community had already used the term prayer to denote supplication and appeals to God. This usage is also recorded in several Qur'anic verses, indicating that the concept of prayer existed before Islam, though it was later strengthened and perfected by Islam with a more comprehensive and systematic meaning. Islam positioned prayer within an organized framework of worship, complete with pillars, conditions, and etiquettes designed to educate individuals to remain constantly aware of the presence of Allah SWT in every aspect of life.

From a technical (juristic) perspective, Muslim jurists define prayer as a series of specific actions and utterances that begin with the *takbīrat al-ihrām* and conclude with the salutation (*salām*), performed as an act of worship to Allah SWT in accordance with the pillars, conditions, and etiquettes prescribed by Islamic law. This definition emphasizes that Prayer goes beyond a physical ritual movement or verbal recitation, but an act of worship that demands perfection in intention, understanding, and internalization. Accordingly, a properly performed prayer should have a significant impact on the formation of moral character, self-discipline, and daily behaviour of a Muslim.

In the context of character formation, integrity is one of the core values strongly emphasized in Islam. Mat Saad and Awang (2017) define integrity as awareness, knowledge, and strong commitment to noble values that are consistently practiced achieving excellence at both individual and organizational levels. Integrity is not limited to honesty in speech, but also encompasses harmony between principles, intentions, and actions. Samah and Don (2020) further emphasize that individual integrity can be observed through the internalization of values such as trustworthiness, honesty, responsibility, justice, and tolerance in social interactions.

From an Islamic perspective, integrity is not merely a moral value or social ethic, but rather a requirement of faith and a manifestation of one's belief in Allah SWT. A Muslim with integrity ensures that all actions align with the principles of Sharī'ah, whether in the performance of specific acts of worship such as prayer or in daily affairs such as work, financial dealings, social interactions, and leadership. Integrity in Islam is also closely related to the concept of *ihsān*, which refers to performing deeds with full awareness that Allah SWT is constantly observing every human action.

In the context of prayer, integrity is manifested through the proper observance of its pillars and conditions, sincere intention solely for the sake of Allah SWT, and the presence of mindfulness and spiritual awareness. Prayer performed with integrity is not carried out carelessly or merely to fulfil an obligation; rather, it is an act of worship undertaken with full commitment, discipline, and internalization. This is consistent with the word of Allah SWT in Surah al-ʿAnkabūt (29:45), which affirms that prayer functions as a deterrent against immoral and wrongful conduct, thereby reflecting its role in shaping the moral and ethical integrity of a Muslim.

Prayer, therefore, plays a crucial role in shaping the personality, identity, and integrity of a Muslim. Linguistically, it refers to supplication, invocation, and a connection between the servant and the Creator (Azizan & Sa'ari, 2010). From the Sharī'ah perspective, prayer is defined as a series of prescribed actions and recitations beginning with *takbīrat al-ihrām* and ending with *salām*, performed in accordance with established pillars, conditions, and etiquettes (al-Ghazali, 2004). In the context of character development, prayer serves as a primary medium for cultivating integrity, noble character, discipline, responsibility, and obedience to Allah SWT. Integrity in Islam encompasses harmony between principles, intentions, and actions, reflecting one's moral values and faith (Saad & Awang, 2017; Samah & Don, 2020). Therefore, prayer should not be viewed merely as a routine daily ritual performed five times a day but rather understood as a form of spiritual education capable of shaping personal integrity and a balanced Muslim personality in spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. When prayer is truly internalized, it can produce individuals who are honest, disciplined, responsible, and ethically conscious in all aspects of life. Hence, this essay aims to discuss in detail how the concept of integrity is manifested through prayer, and how prayer performed with deep internalization can shape Muslims with strong integrity in their daily lives.

Research Problem

Obligatory prayer (ṣalāh) is a core practice in Islam that functions not only as a ritual act of worship but also as a medium for shaping discipline, moral conduct, and personal integrity among Muslims (Al-Qaradawi, 2001). Despite its clear obligation, current realities indicate that a segment of the Muslim community neglects the performance of obligatory prayers. This phenomenon is driven by various factors, including a lack of deep religious knowledge, life pressures and work commitments, as well as the influence of social environments that do not prioritize the practice of prayer (Ismail & Hassan, 2019). For instance, a study among university students in Kuala Lumpur found that 23% of respondents admitted to missing prayers at least once a week due to demanding academic schedules and involvement in social activities (Rahman & Yusof, 2020).

Neglecting obligatory prayer has significant implications for personal integrity. Personal integrity refers to moral consistency, honesty, and firmness of principles when facing various situations (Hassan, 2018). Obligatory prayer not only cultivates discipline and responsibility but also strengthens spiritual awareness; failure to perform prayer can weaken personal discipline, reduce sensitivity to moral and ethical values, and disrupt the consistency between words, actions, and upheld principles. This condition subsequently affects an individual's ability to make value-based decisions and diminishes personal credibility in social contexts. Recognizing the seriousness of this issue, research on the neglect of obligatory prayer is highly relevant for identifying contributing factors and its implications for personal integrity. The findings of such studies have the potential to contribute to the development of more effective religious education strategies and value-formation programs, thereby strengthening discipline, spiritual awareness, and integrity within the Muslim community (Abu Bakar, 2017).

However, despite the growing body of literature on prayer practices and moral development, existing studies tend to focus primarily on the level of prayer performance, external factors influencing neglect, or general moral outcomes. Limited attention has been given to examining prayer as an internalized spiritual process that directly shapes personal integrity through elements such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), mindfulness (*khushūʿ*), and consistency in worship. Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehensive conceptual analysis that integrates both the spiritual dimensions of prayer and their practical implications for integrity in contemporary contexts, particularly among Muslim youth and students. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring how prayer, when properly internalized, functions as a mechanism for developing personal integrity in a holistic manner (Hashim & Mat Said, 2021; Nawawi et al., 2022; Zulkifli Al-Bakri, 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prayer as the Foundation for Personal Integrity Formation in Islam

Prayer is a core act of worship in Islam that holds an exceptionally high status and serves as a primary distinction between faith and disbelief. According to al-Ghazali (2004), prayer is not merely a sequence of physical movements but a process of spiritual purification that directly connects the servant to Allah SWT. This connection fosters deep spiritual awareness and forms the foundation for the development of character and submission to divine commands. From an Islamic perspective, personal integrity arises from the awareness that every human action is observed by Allah SWT, with prayer serving as the primary medium for instilling this awareness continuously. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (2006) emphasized that prayer performed with perfection generates inner tranquillity and inner strength capable of restraining individuals from sinful acts. This aligns with the Qur'anic assertion that prayer prevents immoral and wrongful behaviour (Qur'an, 29:45). Consequently, Islamic scholars agree that prayer functions as a spiritual educational instrument that contributes significantly to the formation of a Muslim's personal integrity.

Sincerity and Mindfulness as the Core of Integrity in Prayer

Sincerity (*ikhlas*) is the most crucial element determining the acceptance of prayer in the sight of Allah SWT. Zulkifli Al-Bakri (2025) explains that sincerity entails purifying one's intention solely for Allah SWT, free from personal interests or the desire for human recognition. Without sincerity, prayer becomes an outward act devoid of spiritual value and fails to develop inner integrity. In this context, personal integrity can be understood as harmony between intention, practice, and the purpose of worship.

Furthermore, mindfulness (*khushū`*) is regarded as the soul of prayer. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (2006) described *khushū`* as a state of the heart that fully submits to Allah SWT, accompanied by inner calmness and focused bodily actions. A study by Nawawi, Hassan, and Ismail (2022) found that mindfulness in prayer has a significant relationship with emotional stability, self-control, and the development of inner integrity. These findings reinforce the view that prayer performed with sincerity and mindfulness serves as a consistent spiritual training that shapes a Muslim's personal integrity.

Prayer and Its Relationship with Moral and Social Integrity

Integrity in Islam is not merely a moral value but a creed-based obligation that demands harmony between faith, intention, and action. Nawawi et al. (2022) explain that integrity in worship refers to honesty and sincerity in performing religious acts without reliance on external supervision. Individuals who consistently maintain their prayers reflect a high level of personal integrity, as prayer requires time discipline, obedience, and consistency. Ahmad and Othman (2016) emphasized that neglecting prayer directly contributes to moral decline and ethical deviation, particularly among younger generations.

This understanding is further supported by Mokhtar et al. (2026), who highlight that acts of worship such as fasting function as comprehensive spiritual training that cultivates honesty, self-discipline, accountability, and social awareness. Fasting nurtures integrity by encouraging individuals to maintain ethical behaviour even without external monitoring, reflecting a deep sense of God-consciousness (*taqwā*). In this regard, both prayer and fasting serve as complementary mechanisms in strengthening personal and social integrity. Therefore, prayer serves as the foundation for moral and social integrity. Individuals who safeguard their prayers are more inclined to exhibit honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility in daily life due to continuous awareness that all actions are evaluated by Allah SWT.

Prayer as a Manifestation of Moral Character and Personal Integrity

Moral character (*akhlāq*) represents the outward manifestation of an individual's inner state. Al-Ghazali explained that moral character is a quality deeply rooted in the soul that produces actions spontaneously without coercion (Hussein, 2019). In this context, consistently performed prayer functions as spiritual training that cultivates humility, patience, and discipline, which are subsequently reflected in daily behaviour. Contemporary studies demonstrate that high-quality prayer contributes to the formation of a balanced Muslim character across spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions (Nawawi et al., 2022). Furthermore, consistency in prayer trains individuals to value time, honour commitments, and regulate behaviour key elements in the development of personal integrity. Hence, prayer can be viewed as a tangible manifestation of a Muslim's personal integrity in everyday life.

Empirical Support for the Concept of Prayer and Personal Integrity

Empirical studies further support the role of prayer in shaping integrity and student character. Hashim and Mat Said (2021) found that internalization of prayer that meets the Prayer Quality Standard not only enhances academic excellence but also influences students' self-discipline and sense of responsibility. This indicates that high-quality prayer reflects a strong level of personal integrity. Studies by Bidin, Baharuddin, and Mustari (2015), as well as Mohd Mansor et al. (2021), emphasize that understanding of prayer, family support, and institutional environments play crucial roles in shaping prayer consistency among students. This consistency serves as an indicator of worship integrity that ultimately influences moral conduct and social behaviour.

Additionally, studies by Tengku Jamil and Yusoff (2024), Husen Ismail et al. (2025), and Abu Bakar, Nordin, and Hashim (2024) demonstrate that consistent prayer practices have a significant relationship with the development of self-leadership, *taqwā* values, and noble character. Meanwhile, the study by Abu Bakar, Hamsah, and Seron (2024) shows that religious intervention programs such as "Oh My Solat" are effective in improving prayer quality and consequently strengthening students' personal integrity.

Overall, this literature review demonstrates that prayer represents a manifestation of personal integrity in Islam. Prayer performed with sincerity, mindfulness, and consistency not only fulfils religious obligations but also creates harmony between faith, intention, and action. The integration of spiritual and practical dimensions positions prayer as a primary instrument in shaping personal integrity, moral character, and Muslim identity.

Nevertheless, further research is required to examine more deeply how prayer can function as an indicator of personal integrity in contemporary contexts and amid the challenges of modern life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library-based research design to examine the role of prayer (*ṣalāh*) in shaping integrity, moral character, and the personality of Muslims. A qualitative approach was chosen because the study is conceptual in nature, emphasizing a deep understanding of the meaning, values, and implications of prayer from an Islamic perspective, without involving statistical data measurement (Creswell, 2014). A library-based research design is suitable for Islamic studies, as it allows systematic analysis of authoritative texts and the perspectives of both classical and contemporary scholars (Neuman, 2014).

The study's data sources are entirely secondary. The primary sources consist of the Qur'an and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which provide the foundational references for understanding the concepts of prayer, sincerity, consistency, and integrity in Islam. Additionally, works of prominent scholars, such as *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* by Imam al-Ghazali and the writings of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, were referenced to strengthen discussions related to spiritual dimensions, moral conduct, and soul development through prayer (Al-Ghazali, 2004; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2006). The study is further supported by academic books, journal articles, and contemporary scholarly works that discuss integrity and Muslim character in the context of modern education and life (Nawawi et al., 2022; Zulkifli Al-Bakri, 2025).

Data collection was conducted through systematic reading, evaluation, and selection of literature based on relevance to the study objectives. The collected data were analysed using content analysis, involving the identification, classification, and interpretation of main themes related to prayer practice, sincerity of intention, avoidance of ostentation, mindfulness (*khushū'*), and consistency in worship (Krippendorff, 2018). The analysis was descriptive and interpretative, aiming to explain the relationship between prayer and the development of integrity and moral character in Muslims comprehensively.

In addition, this study applies a thematic analysis procedure to further organize and interpret the data systematically. The process began with data familiarization, where the researcher repeatedly reviewed selected texts to gain a holistic understanding of the content. This was followed by initial coding, in which relevant statements, concepts, and arguments related to prayer and integrity were identified and labeled. Next, these codes were grouped into broader categories to form preliminary themes, such as sincerity (*ikhhlās*), mindfulness (*khushū'*), discipline, consistency (*istiḳāmah*), and moral awareness.

Subsequently, the researcher conducted a theme review and refinement process, ensuring that each theme accurately represented the data and was supported by authoritative sources. Themes were then clearly defined and organized into a coherent structure that reflects the relationship between prayer and personal integrity. Finally, the findings were interpreted through a conceptual and Islamic analytical lens, integrating insights from classical scholars and contemporary studies to produce a comprehensive understanding of prayer as a mechanism for integrity development. This step aligns with the interpretative nature of qualitative research, emphasizing meaning-making rather than quantification (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The choice of methodology is appropriate because the study does not aim to produce empirical generalizations but rather emphasizes normative and conceptual understanding of Islamic teachings. The library-based approach allows the researcher to synthesize the perspectives of classical scholars and contemporary academics holistically, in alignment with Islamic scholarly traditions. Through this method, the role of prayer as a medium for building integrity, moral character, and Muslim personality can be explored more deeply and authoritatively.

DISCUSSION

History of Prayer in Islam

Prayer (*ṣalāh*) is the pillar of religion in Islam and one of the five obligatory pillars that every Muslim must perform. This act of worship serves not only as a connection between the servant and the Creator but also as a

foundation for self-discipline and social cohesion. The history of prayer predates the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as this form of worship existed since the times of earlier prophets. The Qur'an explains that prayer was mandated for Prophet Muhammad during the event of *Isrā' and Mi'rāj*, where he was instructed to perform five daily prayers (Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra', 17:78; Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:43). Furthermore, the Qur'an mentions that prayer was practiced by previous prophets, including Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Musa, and Prophet Isa (peace be upon them), indicating the continuity of this worship throughout human history (Nasr, 2003).

At the early stage of Islam in Mecca, Muslims faced challenges and persecution from the Quraysh. Prayer was often performed secretly in homes, caves, or open spaces, especially while Muslims were a minority. The command to pray at that time marked the early formation of spiritual identity and self-discipline, requiring every Muslim to perform worship at prescribed times despite difficulties. After the migration (*Hijrah*) to Medina, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) built the Prophet's Mosque (Masjid Nabawi), which became a centre for religious, social, and educational activities. The mosque was not only a place for congregational prayer but also served as a hub for teaching Islamic law, community discussions, and strengthening the Muslim community. During this period, the prayer times were clearly established Fajr, Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha and the prayer pillars (*arkān*), such as intention (*niyyah*), opening Takbir (*takbiratul ihram*), bowing (*ruku'*), prostration (*sujūd*), testimony (*tashahhud*), and salam, were detailed. Congregational prayer was emphasized as a practice that nurtured Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyyah*) (Rahman, 2010; Al-Bukhari, n.d.).

After the passing of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the companions preserved the practice of prayer as taught by him. Caliph Abu Bakr as-Siddiq ensured that the Sunnah of prayer continued to be observed, while Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab introduced mosque prayer schedules and appointed legitimate Imams to lead prayers in wider areas. Caliph Uthman ibn Affan emphasized the standardization of Qur'anic recitation, which also influenced the uniformity of prayer recitation across Islamic territories. These measures demonstrate that prayer is not only an individual ritual but also a social practice that maintains Muslim unity (Nasr, 2003; Rahman, 2010).

In the development of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), various schools emerged that interpreted prayer regulations based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools have minor differences in the sequence of pillars, specific recitations, and the method of performing congregational or individual prayers. For example, the surah recited after Al-Fatihah in the second unit (*rak'ah*) may differ between the Hanafi and Shafi'i schools. However, the core principles of prayer intention, pillars, timing, and purpose remain consistent. These differences illustrate the flexibility of Fiqh law in adapting prayer practices to societal contexts without compromising spiritual values and worship discipline (Rahman, 2010).

Beyond ritual and legal aspects, prayer plays a role in spiritual and social education. Through prayer, Muslims learn to manage their time, maintain discipline, and strengthen their relationship with Allah. Congregational prayer fosters bonds among community members and develops social awareness of equality and collective responsibility. The history of prayer shows that it is not merely an individual practice but also a vital instrument in shaping a disciplined and organized Muslim society, from the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the caliphs and subsequent generations (Nasr, 2003; Rahman, 2010).

As Islam spread worldwide, prayer continued to be practiced daily by Muslims, reflecting its historical continuity, spiritual significance, and social role. This continuity makes prayer not only a ritual act of worship but also a symbol of Muslim identity and a reinforcement of moral and ethical values in everyday life. The long history of prayer from the era of the prophets, the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the companions, the caliphs, to the development of Fiqh schools underscores that prayer is a universal practice relevant to every generation of Muslims (Nasr, 2003; Rahman, 2010).

Prayer as a Symbol and Proof of Sincere Faith

In Islam, prayer (*ṣalāh*) is an obligatory act of worship (*fard*) for every accountable Muslim without exception. Its obligation is not merely a ritual requirement of Islamic law (*sharī'ah*); rather, it represents a sublime covenant between a servant and Allah, serving as clear evidence of the sincerity of a Muslim's faith and

devotion. The special status of prayer in Islam is evident from its direct prescription during the *Isrā' and Mi'rāj* event, without the mediation of Angel Jibril (Gabriel), which emphasizes that prayer is a fundamental foundation in building faith and a person's relationship with Allah (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

The importance of prayer as a benchmark of faith is reinforced through the words of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), meaning: "The covenant between us and them is prayer. Whoever abandons it has truly disbelieved" (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 2001; Al-Nasa'i, 1991). This hadith illustrates that prayer functions not only as a religious obligation but also as a clear divider between faith and disbelief. In this context, prayer is a practical manifestation of faith, not merely a verbal declaration or a conviction hidden in the heart. True faith requires proof through action, and prayer is the most consistent and significant act in a Muslim's life (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2006). For a Muslim who sincerely seeks Allah's mercy and approval, maintaining prayer is proof of religious honesty. Prayer demands a commitment of time, self-discipline, and ongoing sacrifice, whether in ease or difficulty, health or sickness. The willingness to perform prayer consistently (*istiqāmah*) demonstrates a servant's fidelity to their sacred covenant with Allah and reflects the sincerity of faith manifested through action (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

Prayer also symbolizes submission and absolute obedience to Allah. Each unit (*rak'ah*) contains phrases of devotion affirming the concept of *tawhīd ubūdiyyah* (monotheism in servitude), particularly through Surah Al-Fatihah, verse 5: "It is You we worship and You we ask for help" (Al-Qur'an, 1:5). Repetition of this verse in every unit serves as a continuous declaration of faith, reinforcing the understanding that all worship and reliance are directed solely to Allah. Prayer's uniqueness lies in its frequency five times daily constantly reminding humans of their absolute servitude and dependence on Allah. No other worship is prescribed with such regularity, making prayer the clearest symbol of sincere faith in a Muslim's heart (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2006). The readiness of the heart to submit to this command without compulsion reflects true sincerity of faith.

The Qur'an further affirms that prayer is a key feature and identity of the truly faithful. Allah says in Surah Al-Anfal, verses 2–3: "Indeed, those who believe are the ones whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned, and whose faith increases when His verses are recited, and they put their trust in their Lord; they are the ones who establish prayer" (Al-Qur'an, 8:2–3). These verses clearly show that prayer is an indicator of a living and flourishing faith in a believer's soul.

Faith without prayer becomes weak and fragile due to the severance of the spiritual connection between a servant and their Creator. Conversely, by maintaining prayer, faith continues to grow and shine, serving as a source of spiritual strength and guidance in facing life's challenges. Prayer acts as a light that illuminates the soul, guiding individuals toward obedience and away from negligence and sin (Al-Ghazali, 2004). In conclusion, prayer is the most explicit and tangible symbol of a Muslim's sincere faith. It is not merely a sequence of recitations and physical movements but a comprehensive declaration that the heart, body, and soul are fully submitted to Allah. Through prayer, a servant consistently proves their faith, renews their covenant with Allah, and manifests sincere devotion in all aspects of life.

Prayer as the Pillar of Religion

Prayer as the pillar of religion not only upholds the structure of a Muslim's faith but also plays a direct role in shaping integrity, moral character, and personality. In Islam, integrity refers to the harmony between faith, intention, and action, while moral character (*akhlāq*) is the external manifestation of strong faith and internalization of worship. Therefore, properly performed and deeply appreciated prayer produces individuals with integrity and noble character, as it trains humans to be constantly aware of their responsibilities as servants and vicegerents of Allah on earth (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

From the perspective of self-integrity, prayer functions as an internal control mechanism, fostering honesty, trustworthiness, and discipline in daily life. Performing prayer consistently five times a day trains a Muslim to manage time, obey rules, and fulfil obligations set by Allah. Awareness that every prayer is performed in the presence of Allah generates a sense of *muraqabah* the consciousness of being watched by Allah which forms the foundation of strong personal integrity (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2006). Such individuals are naturally inclined to avoid deceit, corruption, and betrayal, knowing that every action will be accounted for.

Prayer also plays a crucial role in shaping noble character. Allah says that prayer prevents indecency and wrongdoing (Al-Qur'an, 29:45). This verse explains that prayer, performed with mindfulness and deep devotion, can establish a spiritual fortress that restrains one from sin and evil. Virtues such as patience, humility, honesty, and responsibility are developed through continuous spiritual training in prayer, particularly through recitation of Qur'anic verses, supplications, and remembrance (*dhikr*), which remind humans of Allah's greatness and their own limitations as servants.

In terms of personality development, prayer serves as a holistic educational process, balancing spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of a Muslim. Each pillar and movement in prayer contains educational elements that teach submission, obedience, and discipline. For example, standing, bowing, and prostrating train humans to humble themselves before Allah, eliminating arrogance. Personality cultivated through quality prayer produces individuals who are calm, polite, and able to regulate their emotions and behaviour in social interactions (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

Additionally, congregational prayer contributes to the development of socially integrated personalities. Muslims learn values of equality, leadership, obedience, and cooperation by standing in rows together regardless of rank or status, reinforcing justice and brotherhood. These values extend into society, making prayer the foundation for building a morally upright and integrity-based community.

In conclusion, prayer as the pillar of religion not only supports individual worship but also serves as a cornerstone for holistic development of integrity, character, and personality. Prayer performed with sincerity and mindfulness produces individuals who are honest, trustworthy, disciplined, and morally upright. Strengthening prayer in Muslim life is therefore crucial to building a faithful, ethical, and high-integrity society, in line with Islamic law.

Prayer Prevents Immorality and Wrongdoing

Prayer serves as a strong spiritual fortress protecting Muslims from engaging in indecent and immoral acts. Its role as a preventive mechanism is emphasized by Allah in Surah Al- 'Ankabut, verse 45: "Indeed, prayer prevents indecency and wrongdoing. And the remembrance of Allah is greater" (Al-Qur'an, 29:45). Prayer performed with mindfulness, devotion, and spiritual awareness creates an inner barrier against sin. Those who maintain consistent prayer are protected from major sins such as adultery, theft, alcohol consumption, and other immoral acts. Quality prayer instils fear of Allah (*khauf*) and shame from committing sin, controlling impulses that could lead to destruction.

Imam al-Ghazali in *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* asserts that prayer performed with sincerity and presence of heart leaves a profound impact on a believer, motivating them to avoid all prohibitions of Allah (Al-Ghazali, 2004). He explains that the essence of prayer lies in presence of heart, bodily devotion, and soul's submission to Allah. When performed properly both externally and internally, prayer becomes a strong inner fortress against the whispers of desire and the temptations of Satan.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah also states: "Prayer prevents sin to the extent that a person maintains it" (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2006). This highlights that prayer's effectiveness in preventing wrongdoing does not depend solely on the number of units performed but on sincerity of intention, adherence to the law, and heartfelt mindfulness. A soul constantly facing Allah through prayer develops heightened spiritual sensitivity, making sin feel heavy and shameful, as the believer realizes Allah's constant observation. Thus, prayer is not only the pillar of religion and symbol of steadfast faith but also an effective moral fortress and protector of the soul against immorality. Those who maintain prayer properly gain inner strength to resist all forms of sin, preserving their purity and moral excellence. Quality prayer is therefore the key to moral clarity and spiritual integrity for every Muslim.

Sincerity and Obedience in the Worship of Prayer

Sincerity, or *jiddiyyah*, refers to the attitude of carrying out responsibilities with full commitment, promptness, perseverance, and continuous effort, without procrastination, while exerting maximum effort to achieve the best results (Haluan, 2012). In the context of worship, sincerity reflects the purity of intention and the diligence

of a servant in fulfilling the commands of Allah SWT. This trait is crucial because sincerity in worship trains the soul to be disciplined, focused, and consistent in carrying out religious obligations.

Obedience, on the other hand, refers to an individual's willingness to accept and comply with rules, directives, and established regulations. According to Blass (1999), obedience is the behaviour of an individual that demonstrates compliance with rules, commands, or imposed conditions. In the context of worship, obedience means performing acts of worship in accordance with the guidelines of Islamic law (*Shariah*), such as observing the pillars and conditions of prayer, performing it within its prescribed time, and carrying it out in an orderly manner. Sincerity and obedience in maintaining the prayer reflect a high level of integrity within a Muslim. A person who is sincere and obedient in performing prayer demonstrates deep responsibility toward Allah SWT and a strong awareness of the importance of prayer in their life. This attitude fosters self-discipline, not only in worship but also in other aspects of life, such as work, trustworthiness, and social interactions.

Moreover, sincerity and obedience in prayer also influence the quality of the worship itself. A person who is truly sincere strives to perfect the pillars of prayer, improve recitation, maintain devotion (*khusyu'*), and observe proper etiquettes. This demonstrates that prayer is not carried out carelessly but as a genuine act of devotion seeking Allah's pleasure. Hence, sincerity and obedience in prayer not only reflect individual integrity but also form the foundation for building balanced character and morality in line with Islamic values.

Performing the Pillars of Prayer Perfectly

One of the main ways to achieve sincerity (*jiddiyah*) and obedience in prayer is by performing the pillars and conditions of prayer perfectly as prescribed by Islamic law. Perfect prayer does not depend solely on intention or desire to worship but also requires strict adherence to each pillar, condition, and etiquette of prayer. The perfection of prayer reflects a Muslim's discipline, responsibility, and integrity in fulfilling Allah's commands. A valid and perfect prayer begins with ensuring personal cleanliness and purity before performing it. This includes performing ablution (*wudu'*) to remove impurities, wearing clean clothing, covering the body properly, and ensuring the prayer area is clean. Allah SWT says in Surah al-Ma'idah, verse 6:

"O you who believe! When you intend to perform prayer, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe over your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles" (Al-Quran, 5:6).

This verse clearly indicates that purification is a condition for valid prayer and emphasizes the importance of cleanliness in Islam, especially when standing before Allah SWT. A Muslim must also know, understand, and perform the thirteen pillars of prayer to ensure the prayer is valid and accepted. The first pillar is intention (*niyyah*), which must be done sincerely solely for Allah SWT to draw closer to Him. Intention is the heart's pillar and serves as the foundation for acceptance, reflecting honesty and sincerity. The remaining pillars include standing (*qiyam*), *takbiratul ihram*, reciting Surah al-Fatihah, bowing (*rukuk*), standing after bowing (*i'tidal*), prostration (*sujud*), sitting between prostrations, final sitting (*tahiyat akhir*), reciting the final *tahiyat*, sending blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, giving *salam*, and performing all actions in proper sequence without omitting any (Al-Ghazali, 2004).

To achieve perfect prayer, every recitation and movement must follow the conditions set by *Shariah*. For example, Surah al-Fatihah must be recited correctly with proper pronunciation and *tajwid*, as mistakes that alter the meaning can invalidate the prayer. Each movement in prayer should be performed with calmness (*tuma'ninah*), pausing briefly at each pillar. *Tuma'ninah* prevents haste in prayer and helps cultivate devotion and maintain the quality of worship (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2006).

The thirteen pillars can be classified into three main categories: the heart's pillar (*qalbi*), the verbal pillar (*qauli*), and the physical pillar (*fi'li*). *Qalbi* includes heart-based acts like intention and sequence, *qauli* includes verbal recitation like *takbir* and *tahiyat* audible to oneself, and *fi'li* includes physical movements such as bowing and prostration. All these pillars must be performed comprehensively and in balance to ensure the prayer is perfect both outwardly and inwardly. In conclusion, adherence to the pillars and conditions is a prerequisite for ensuring the validity and acceptance of prayer. Failure to perform any pillar correctly may

nullify the prayer. Performing prayer perfectly reflects sincerity, obedience, discipline, and integrity in a Muslim who upholds Allah's commands.

Performing Prayer with Devotion (*Khusyu'*)

Sincerity and obedience in prayer are also manifested through the presence of devotion (*khusyu'*), which is a crucial element determining the quality and effectiveness of prayer. A person who is devoted in prayer demonstrates that they are genuinely sincere and obedient. According to Harakah Daily (2017), *khusyu'* in prayer means humility and attentiveness, focusing one's mind entirely on Allah SWT, accompanied by calm and orderly physical movements. Imam Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah explains that *khusyu'* is the state of the heart standing before Allah SWT with full submission, humility, and high hope in Him (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 2006).

Allah SWT affirms this in Surah al-Mu'minun, verses 1–2: "*Successful indeed are the believers, those who humble themselves in their prayers*" (Al-Quran, 23:1–2). This verse shows that *khusyu'* is a defining characteristic of true believers and a key factor in their success. To cultivate *khusyu'*, a Muslim should instill a sense of servitude, humility, fear, and complete reliance on Allah SWT during prayer. Preparation before prayer is essential, including choosing a quiet, clean, and distraction-free place and calming the mind. Understanding and reflecting on the meanings of the recitations enhances devotion. For instance, the phrase *Allahu Akbar* signifies Allah's greatness, teaching humility and awareness of His absolute majesty. When one comprehends the meaning of every recitation and movement, devotion deepens, transforming prayer into a living spiritual dialogue between the servant and the Creator.

In conclusion, sincerity and obedience in prayer cannot be separated from devotion. *Khusyu'* demonstrates that prayer is performed with awareness, discipline, and obedience to Allah SWT. It reflects the strength of faith and the quality of the relationship between a servant and their Lord. Therefore, prayer performed with devotion and perfection is highly valuable, purposeful, and foundational for building moral character, integrity, and personality in a believer.

Sincerity and Avoiding Ostentation: The Core of Spiritual Integrity in Prayer

An essential element in embodying integrity in prayer is the sincerity of intention and the effort to avoid ostentation (*riya'*). Integrity in prayer is not limited to the perfection of outward movements such as bowing and prostration but includes honesty of the heart, purity of intention, and consistency, whether witnessed by others or not. In Islam, intention is the foundation of all acts and the primary determinant of whether an act of worship is accepted or rejected by Allah SWT. Hence, prayer without sincerity risks becoming an empty ritual that does not contribute to the development of moral and spiritual character.

Sincerity as the Foundation of Integrity in Prayer

In the context of prayer, sincerity determines the value and acceptance of worship. Acts performed solely for Allah SWT reflect the integrity and spiritual authenticity of the worshipper. Zulkifli Al-Bakri (2025) explains that sincerity means performing actions solely for Allah SWT without seeking praise, recognition, or reward from humans. This principle aligns with Allah's command in Surah al-Bayyinah, verse 5:

"They were only commanded to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion" (Al-Quran, 98:5).

This verse emphasizes that the primary purpose of worship, including prayer, is to draw closer to Allah SWT with sincerity. Without sincerity, prayer becomes a mere routine that does not reflect true submission and obedience. A sincere individual maintains prayer even when busy, tired, or unobserved, aware that Allah SWT is always watching, which fosters disciplined and consistent worship.

Gramedia (2021) defines sincerity as purifying one's intention to draw closer to Allah SWT, free from any elements that could corrupt it. One way to train sincerity is by performing private acts of worship, such as voluntary night prayers (*tahajjud*) or *rawatib* prayers, without anyone knowing. Such acts cultivate high

internal integrity, as they are performed without seeking praise or worldly rewards, born instead from awareness and love of Allah SWT.

Avoiding Ostentation (*Riya'*) as a Safeguard of Worship's Honor

Ostentation is a dangerous spiritual disease that corrupts the value of worship and taints a Muslim's integrity. It occurs when acts of worship are performed for human praise, recognition, or admiration rather than for Allah SWT. In Islam, *riya'* is considered a minor form of *shirk*, as it associates acts of worship with something other than Allah SWT (Utusan TV, 2021). The Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

"The thing I fear most for you is minor shirk." The companions asked: "What is minor shirk, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "Ostentation" (Ahmad).

This hadith highlights the severity of *riya'*, which can nullify the reward of worship. A person who prays sincerely only in public but neglects it in private loses the integrity of their worship. This indicates insincerity and a lack of spiritual honesty, as the action changes according to human attention (Harian Metro, 2018). To avoid *riya'*, a Muslim should continuously renew intentions before and during worship and realize that true reward comes from Allah SWT, not human praise. Awareness of *riya'*'s danger helps preserve sincerity and enhances devotion (*khusyu'*) in prayer. Avoiding *riya'* safeguards the validity of worship and reflects internal honesty and spiritual integrity (Nawawi et al., 2022).

Developing Noble Character Through Prayer

Prayer plays a vital role in shaping the character and personality of a Muslim. It is not just a daily obligation but a continuous spiritual education process. Each pillar, movement, and recitation in prayer contains noble values such as discipline, patience, humility, honesty, and responsibility, which cultivate good behaviour in daily life. According to al-Ghazali, morality is a trait ingrained in the soul, producing spontaneous actions without compulsion (Hussein, 2019). Good character makes an individual honest, trustworthy, patient, and responsible. A person of noble character earns respect, trust, and admiration from society. The Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent to perfect human character, showing that ethics are a core aspect of faith. Through prayer, a person improves not only their relationship with Allah SWT but also their interactions with others. Consistent and high-quality prayer can serve as a barrier against social ills like fraud, slander, violence, and moral decay. Thus, prayer functions as a primary medium for building personality and ethics within society.

Consistency (*Istiqamah*) in Prayer as a Reflection of Integrity

A key manifestation of integrity in prayer is consistency (*istiqamah*) in performing it. A Muslim of integrity strives to maintain the five daily prayers regardless of circumstances, whether busy, tired, or elsewhere. Imam al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* emphasizes that consistency in worship is evidence of sincerity and heartfelt devotion to Allah SWT. The Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

"The most beloved deeds to Allah are those done consistently, even if small" (Bukhari & Muslim).

This aligns with the concept of integrity, as consistency demonstrates harmony between belief, intention, and action. To maintain consistency in prayer, one should view it as a spiritual necessity rather than a burden. Practical measures include performing prayers at the earliest time, creating a conducive prayer environment, regularly supplicating for steadfastness, and establishing a daily worship routine.

Impact of Consistent Prayer on Developing Integrity

Consistency in prayer profoundly affects personal integrity. Someone attentive to their prayer responsibilities becomes more accountable in daily affairs, values time, keeps promises, and acts honestly. The discipline cultivated through prayer extends to social and professional life. Consistent prayer also projects a positive image of Islam to non-Muslims, highlighting discipline, moral values, and personal development, reducing misconceptions about Islam, and promoting interfaith understanding. Hence, consistent prayer reflects strong faith while cultivating integrity and true Muslim character. The summary of this discussion is presented in Figure 1 below.

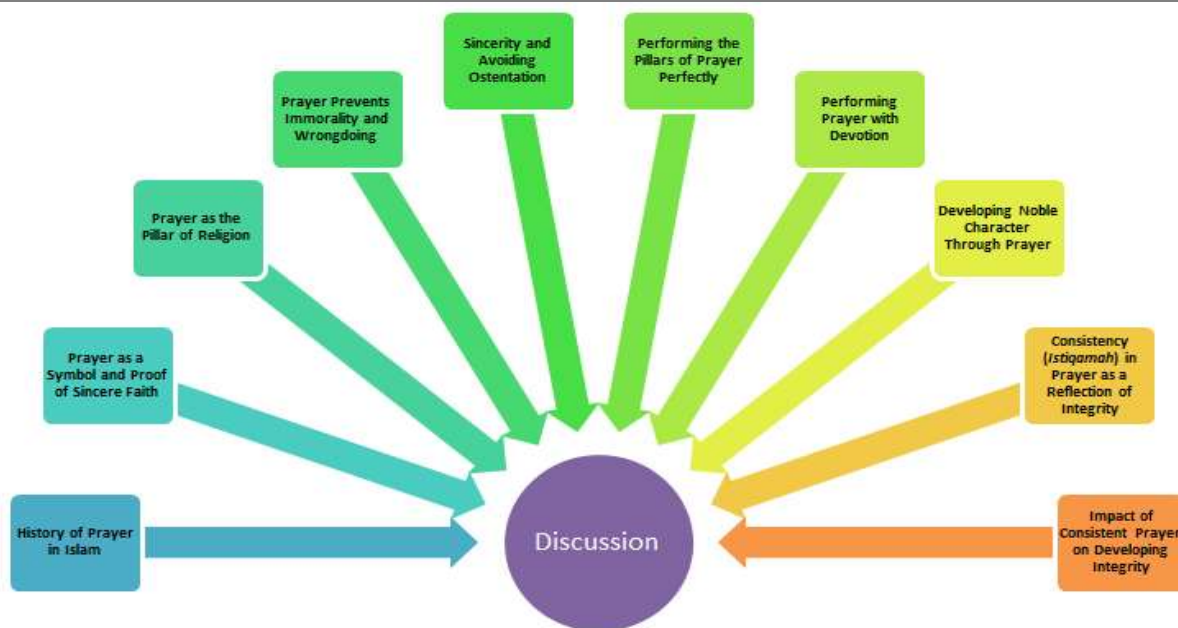


Figure 1: Summary of the discussion presented in this section

Source: Research Investigation (2026)

CONCLUSION

Overall, this discussion emphasizes that prayer is a core act of worship in Islam with a highly significant position, playing a crucial role in shaping the integrity of a Muslim. The historical prescription of prayer from the time of the prophets to the era of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the caliphs demonstrates that prayer is far more than a ritual but a continuous system of spiritual and social education. Through consistent prayer, Muslims are taught discipline, punctuality, obedience, and awareness of their responsibilities as servants of Allah SWT and members of society. Prayer is also the clearest manifestation of sincerity of faith and devotion to Allah SWT. Perfect, sincere, and devoted prayer serves as an internal control mechanism capable of preventing immoral acts, as emphasized in the Quran and by Islamic scholars. Sincerity in observing the pillars, conditions, and etiquettes of prayer, along with efforts to avoid ostentation, reflects harmony between faith, intention, and action. This harmony forms the foundation for spiritual integrity and noble character development.

Finally, consistency (*istiqaamah*) in performing prayer is a key indicator of integrity. A person who maintains prayer regardless of external circumstances is more likely to be honest, trustworthy, responsible, and disciplined in daily life. The values cultivated through prayer not only form a balanced Muslim personality spiritually and morally but also contribute to building an ethical and integrity-based society. In addition, this study contributes by conceptualizing prayer as a structured model for personal integrity development. This model integrates key elements such as sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), mindfulness (*khushūʿ*), adherence to prescribed rules (pillars and conditions), and consistency (*istiqaamah*) as interconnected components that systematically shape individual behaviour. Through this framework, prayer is understood not only as an act of worship but as a continuous developmental process that aligns spiritual awareness with ethical conduct. This structured conceptualization offers a more comprehensive understanding of how internalized worship can function as a practical mechanism for cultivating integrity in contemporary contexts, particularly in addressing moral and disciplinary challenges among Muslims. Therefore, prayer can be concluded as a manifestation of personal integrity in Islam, uniting the dimensions of faith, worship, and morality holistically, while also serving as a structured and sustainable model for the development of individual integrity.

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