

## Impact of Religious Prayer (Salah) on Psycho-Physical Health: A Short Review

Wakeel Ahmad\* and Mohammad Ghufuran

\*Department of Psychology, Kumaun University Campus, Almora, Uttarakhand, India

Received March 16, 2020; Revised May 29, 2020; Accepted May 31, 2020

### ABSTRACT

In this paper we reviewed past and recent study that what impact of religious prayer on psycho-physical health. We reviewed that over the past decades, researchers have found that religious prayer and religious faith provide the human positive relation with God, human make the self-confidence by prayer. Because it increases confidence and power of the human being and brings peace of mind inside them. If a person prays in God's love, then he does not have such anxiety and the positive energy is produced in the person. Therefore, being absorbed in the love of God provides positive happiness to the person. Based on the current review, it has been found that prayer has a positive effect on health.

**Keywords:** Islamic religious prayer, Christian religious prayer, Psycho-physical health, Muslims, General health, Life satisfaction, Optimism

### INTRODUCTION

Prayer is the first way through which God is remembered. There is a different way of praying in all religions but everyone has the same purpose. There are maximum numbers of Muslim and Christian peoples all over the world but some Asian countries such as India and Nepal have a high number of Hindu religions. Therefore, this paper attempts to review the research conducted mainly on Islamic and Christian religious prayer. From time to time, religion related research has been done in psychology. The effects of Prayers on the physical and mental health have been shown by psychologists in various ways through their research. The psychologists continuously pursuing research of the effects of prayers on the human health. Investigators in this area have conceptualized and measured religion in many different ways. However, by far the most common approaches centered on self-reported religious behaviours. Investigators typically distinguish between aspects of organizational religious involvement (e.g. participate in the mosque, church etc. for perform collective prayer) and non-organizational services (e.g. frequency of private prayers in the home and office).

The word "Salah" does not only mean prayer, because pray basically means to address a prayer to Allah or another deity, according to the Oxford Dictionary, "Salah" is a word with a broad meaning, which does not only mean prayer, but also means goodness, righteousness and godliness. According to Barks [1], no single word in English fits for the word Salah,

which is "a devotional heart-surrender" that incorporates prayer, supplication, grace and blessing. Salah, in the true sense is programming or conditioning. The prayer conditions us to stay away from forbidden and shameful actions, and encourages us to do righteous and sensible actions. Since we humans have free will, this conditioning will help and enable us to stay away from forbidden things, and enjoin on what is not forbidden.

In Islam performing religious practices are very frequent. In Islam religion it is obligatory for its followers to offer salah (prayer) collectively and individually five times daily in an organized and way. For this purpose, believers of Islam are required to collect in the mosque five times each day and offer their prayer in congregation under a religious head called Imam. The timings of these prayers are spaced fairly evenly throughout the day.

**Corresponding author:** Wakeel Ahmad, Department of Psychology, Kumaun University Campus, Almora, Uttarakhand, India, Tel: +91 9457875132; E-mail: psychoworld6@gmail.com

**Citation:** Ahmad W & Ghufuran M. (2023) Impact of Religious Prayer (Salah) on Psycho-Physical Health: A Short Review. J Psychiatry Psychol Res, 6(1): 342-347.

**Copyright:** ©2023 Ahmad W & Ghufuran M. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

For Christians, prayer is an everyday part of life, although its benefits are often given. Like that, did you know that prayer has research proven psychological and physical benefits? While prayer should not just be about psychological and physical benefits, it is gratifying that scientific research supports the experience of so many Christians: According to the University of Maryland Medical Center, individuals who have been reported to have strong religious beliefs report lower levels of anxiety and depression, lower blood pressure, better immune systems, fight with epidemic and recover faster from surgery.

According to Pargament [2] religion can be analyzed and explained in terms of psychological, social, physical and evolutionary terms, but this does not “invalidate the significance of religion as a legitimate phenomenon of interest”. In other words, an evolutionary account of the way religion influences subjective well-being does not imply there is nothing more to religion than evolutionary forces at play. Pargament bemoans the reductionist tendencies of many social scientists when studying religion. To illustrate the uniqueness of religion, Pargament gives several examples of how religious motivations and religious coping are especially strong versions of their secular equivalents.

Nandal, Sharma and Yadava [3] conduct a co-relational study on religiosity and found that the positive and significant associations on economic, emotional, environmental, societal and spiritual health dimensions. The Hindu sample shows positive and significant correlation with environmental, societal and spiritual health. In Muslims group, significant positive and negative associations can be seen on economic and environmental health respectively. Significant and positive associations can also be seen on economic, environmental, mental, societal and spiritual health in Sikh group. On the other hand, the Christian group does not show significant associations with different health dimension except spiritual one. Multiple regression analysis indicates that religiosity came out as significant contributor in case of spiritual health in total, Hindu and Sikh groups and where as in mental and societal health for Sikh group.

The study carried out using multiple regression [4] revealed that extraversion and intrinsic religious orientation were positive predictors of happiness, in contrast to Neuroticism which predicted happiness negatively. Also results showed that Religion orientation played the mediation role between these relationships. This explanatory model is elaborated in the article. Kaneez and Ansari [5] in their a study found that spirituality and religious beliefs help prevent physical and mental illness, reducing symptoms severity and relapse rate, and enhancing recovery from diverse set of ailments. Spiritual transcendence (connectedness with God) has been found to play crucial role in coping with illness. Similar results were found in other studies. Believing in God has been found to be positively related to well-being in the large majority of the studies conducted on this subject. The recent focus of the

religion-happiness literature has been to identify the specific ways in which religion increases well-being.

It is no surprise then that the average religious person tends to live a longer, healthier life than the average person [6,7] suggests that most research equated health and well-being with the absence of physical disease or mental disorder. Well-being in across the life needs to be defined broadly and includes the domains of cognitive, behavioural, and social functioning, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. These domains include positive thought processes and positive health behaviours. These domains include positive thought processes and positive health behaviours. Researchers [8] conducted a study and a significantly positive relationship was found between religious beliefs and optimism, i.e. the students’ optimism was increased with a rise in religious beliefs. This is in agreement with the findings of Sethi and Seligman [9]. They concluded that individuals who engage in religious behaviours because of its perceived personal significance will show more cognitive flexibility and open mindedness towards Christian belief contents, a stronger adherence to this message, higher well-being and more frequent engagement in specific religious behaviours.

In the study conducted by Ahmad and Ghufan [10] significantly greater life satisfaction and lesser general health problems like hypochondria, anxiety/insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression for subjects who were regular at collective religious prayers than for those subjects who were not attending the collective prayers regularly. Thus, the regular participation in the collective religious practices emerged as the factor that may enhance the life satisfaction of old age people, whereas the nonparticipation in collective religious practices may cause to develop somatic symptoms, feel more anxiety/insomnia, cause social impairment and lead experience severe depression in the old age. Another study has shown that elderly Muslim subjects who are regular in performing prayer (Salah) of five times a day were significantly hardier, and they have better psycho-physical health than who do not participate in such prayer (Salah) regularly [11,12]. They conducted another study and concluded that the religious practice (Salah) can influence on improving the anxiety and QOL in Muslim government teachers. Therefore, the Muslim government teacher who perform regular five-time prayer (Salah) daily live the greater qualities of life and they have low anxiety level but Muslim government teacher who do not perform prayer five time regularly face the more anxiety and they have the low qualities of life.

Religious peoples have more family support than peoples who are not religious because religion is as peace. Those who practice regular religious prayers have peace and a good atmosphere in their homes. Because regular prayer destroys negative mental energy and provide positive mental energy. When there are happiness in the family, then everyone supports each other of the family is taken care of more. Thus,

the religious people who regularly pray, they have more support of the family. Smith [13] investigate that noted the rise of a therapeutic relationship with the divine where God becomes largely a purveyor of goods and services meant to satisfy the emotional and psychological needs of adherents. This increasing correspondence of emotion and faith makes the link between prayer and mental health all the more relevant and compelling. Peoples who perform regular prayer they have more social support because when person makes regular prayers and takes part in religious activities, he connects other peoples, his social connection strong. According to Morisson and Bennet [14] Social support is one of the most important functions of social relationships which are strongly associated with health and illness outcomes. Social support can be characterized as the perception and actuality that a person is cared for, has assistance available from other people, and is part of a supportive social network. Both religion and social support play an important role in functioning individuals in the sphere of mental health. Examining the relationships between religiousness and mental health, Harold G. Koenig notes that approximately 80% of research on religion/spirituality and health involves studies on mental health which has stronger associations with religiousness than physical health. As regards mental health religious beliefs tend to boost positive emotions and counterbalance negative emotions, serving as both life-enhancing factor and a coping resource [15].

In their study, research [16] found positive correlations between a set of religious- and spiritual-related variables and optimism. In addition to this, Reis and Alligood [17] found that meditation resulted in an increase in the mean score for optimism of expecting mothers. When the person becomes convinced that everything is in the control of a super natural power then life becomes easy for him and he leaves his unbearable hassles. Based on this conviction, he lives his own life positively. The negativity becomes lesser in the life of the person who remains indirect communication with Almighty during prayer. Therefore, praying has a positive effect on his life. Empirical work suggests a promising link between optimism and religious involvement. Empirical work [9] suggests that individuals with greater optimism levels reported higher levels of religious involvement.

Finally, can said that religious prayer and religious faith provide the human positive relation with God, human make the self-confidence by prayer because it increases confidence and power of the human brings peace of mind inside of it. Religious Prayer enhances human resistance against the problems and difficult life events. When peoples perform the regular prayer daily then they found the spiritual energy, good mental health and high optimism. Peoples who perform the regular prayer adopt the systematically daily routine work and their life style also been fix. Such peoples do the work on time systematically, they have believed their future. Similarly, peoples who perform regular prayer found the positive spiritual energy.

## CONCLUSION

The present reviews confirm that prayer is an important element in the lives of most of the religion followers. Religion beliefs and prayer may be helpful when integrated into the psychotherapeutic process with the people who perform religious prayer. Religion traditions contain a very elaborate system of health care. Religious beliefs and prayer can provide a meaning for life, thereby promoting psycho-physical health. Prayer and faith to God is the last strategy to help of mankind cope with life problems and stress. Prayer is a best and positive source for provider of power and stability in our lives. Prayer is the first and best way to connect with God and, it can also serve as a powerful therapy to help you successfully deal with stressful experiences.

## REFERENCES

1. Barks C (2008) The central: New and Selected Poems, 1968-2008. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
2. Pargament KI (2002) Is Religion Nothing but...? Explaining Religion versus Explaining Religion Away. *Psychol Inq* 13: 239-244.
3. Nandal T, Sharma RN, Yadava A (2013). A correlational study of religiosity and health. *J Indian Heal Psychol* 8: 75-87.
4. Moltafet G, Mazidi M, Sadati S (2010) Personality traits religious orientation and happiness. *J Soc Behav Sci* 9: 63-69.
5. Kaneez S, Ansari SA (2014) Spirituality as an aid to promote health and well-being. *Artha J Soc Sci* 13: 17-24.
6. Baco CE (2010) The strength of religious beliefs is important for subjective well-being. *Undergrad Econ Rev* 6: 11.
7. Husain A (2012) Ways of interventions in enhancing holistic well-being: Youth and Positivism. Excel India Publishers, New Delhi, pp: 54.
8. Gheinaghi A, Sanagoo A, Jouybari L (2016) The relationship between religious beliefs, social support and optimism in students of Golestan University of medical sciences. *J Adv Med Educ* 1: 43-49.
9. Sethi S, Seligman MEP (1993) Optimism and fundamentalism. *Psychol Sci* 4: 256-259.
10. Ahmad W, Ghufan M (2018) Life satisfaction and general health of elderly muslims practicing regular collective religious prayer. *Int J Ind Psychol* 6: 4-15.
11. Ahmad W, Ghufan M (2018) Impact of religious practices on hardiness and mental health of elderly muslim subjects. *Int J Ind Psychol* 6: 72-79.

12. Ahmad W, Ghufran M (2018) The impact of islamic religious practices on job anxiety and quality of life of government muslim teachers. *Int J Ind Psychol* 6: 39-45.
13. Smith C (2005) *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
14. Morisson V, Bennet P (2006) *An introduction to health psychology*. Harlow: Pearson.
15. Koenig HG (2012) Religion, spirituality and health: The research and clinical implications. *Int Sch Res Notices* 1: 1-33.
16. Salsman JM, Brown TL, Brechting EH, Carlson CR (2005) The link between religion and spirituality and psychological adjustment: The mediating role of optimism and social support. *Pers Soc Psychol Bull* 31: 522-535.
17. Reis PJ, Alligood MR (2014) Prenatal yoga in late pregnancy and optimism, power and well-being. *Nurs Sci Q* 27: 30-36.