

BEAUTY OF PRAYER

By: Aali Akmal

It was the twelfth day of Ramadan and the thirteenth night of Taraweeh prayer in my local mosque. The floor was covered in red hira carpeting, and the ceiling was held up by columns standing shoulder to shoulder. The white walls were adorned with clocks, paintings of Masjid Al-Haram, and calligraphy about Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Men were silently standing next to each other in rows, listening to the beautifully spoken words of the Quran recited by the Imam. As soon as the Imam started reciting Surah Ya'sin, the grown men started to cry.

As I started listening to the combination of Quranic words masquerading the tears flowing down from individuals, I began to think about all the lessons I learned in Sunday School: learning how to read Quran, understanding the Quran, and memorizing surahs. As a kid, I never really understood why I had to memorize complex surahs or read Quran with correct tajweed. As I grew older, I understood why those classes were taught and the beauty behind each prayer. Prayer requires an understanding of why each surah, rukuh, and dua is recited, and why the closeness of Allah provides individuals with a peaceful refuge from the stresses of everyday life. Let's take a journey through the facets of worship and the importance

that each step holds in order to understand the importance of prayer.

Before we begin with the prayer, let me discuss the required steps that are necessary in order to pray to Allah. All Muslims have to perform Wudu, a ritual ablution which is essentially washing the hands, mouth, nostrils, arms, head, and feet prior to prayer. The anxiety and stresses of the day are washed away from the Muslim as they perform wudu. The only thing that matters between wudu and the end of the prayer is the remembrance of Allah and the acts that align with that remembrance.

Now for the prayer, Muslims either pray as a group or individually. When you pray individually, there is an automatic state of flow. Nothing else matters before or after the prayer except for complete concentration and devotion while worshipping. Worshipping Allah alone allows the individuals to have a direct relationship with their creator, praising Him, loving Him, and asking Him for guidance and forgiveness. When you pray as a group, which is defined as praying with more than one person, you get the same benefits from praying individually with the added benefit of community relief. You get a sense that the individuals to your