

The Power of Prayer

Interreligious Seminar on Prayer

The Seminar that we attended talked about the meaning and importance of prayer for the three Abrahamic religions namely: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. During the five consecutive days we tried to understand and reflect together what is prayer, why we pray, how do we pray and the significance of Jerusalem in our prayer life.

What is Prayer?



In Jewish tradition: Prayer is an invitation to God to intervene in our lives daily in a very personal way (Rabbi Abraham J. Heschel). For Jews prayer is collective and is bound up with praising God, benedictions, petitions or supplications and gratitude to what God has done and will continue to do in history. In Jewish tradition prayer is also form of study, when one study the Torah with a partner then it open up an opportunity to hear and listen to God. Prayer is dialogue, an encounter with Self, with Divine and with Others.

In Christian Tradition: Prayer being towards transcendent mysterious Other (John of a mutual conversation between being. Prayer is like stripping plunging to the swimming pool ultimate source to carry you of the pool to the surface. Prayer loosing oneself and discovering God.



is lifting one's being, the Damascus). It is God and human oneself then and allowing the from the bottom is simply floating, oneself with



In Islam tradition: For Muslims prayer is meeting oneself, to know oneself, to know God and to know the other. Prayer is both a conversation and an encounter between God and human being. Prayer is like a bell that rings throughout the day that keeps reminding them of their duty to pray. Muslims believe that it is through prayer that their hearts would attain balance and corrections of their

imperfections (Sheikh Ghassan Manasra).

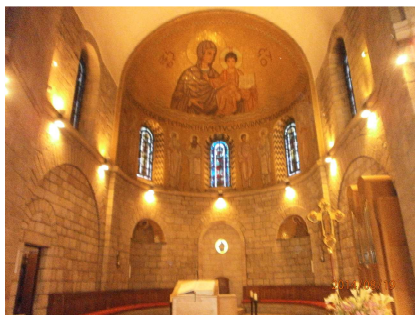
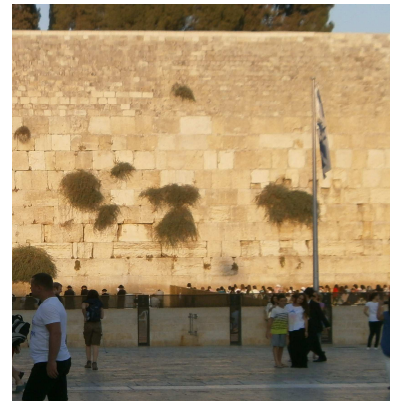


Why we pray and How do we pray?



For Islam: Prayer enables them to get connected with God, Self, Others and with the world. For Muslims prayer prevent them from doing evil and also as a from of cleansing ones mind and heart. Prayer is command and an obligation for Muslims to pray 5x a day. It is the 2nd pillars of Islam and the first duty of every Muslims, therefore they start their day to pray at 4:25am and ends at 9:25pm praying collectively.

For Jewish tradition: Prayer is a Divine commandment institutionalized by the Sages for the community. For Jews prayer enables them to be in God's presence and be constantly transform in God's presence. It is the very fabric of their being which allows them to turn their hearts and mind to God. Judaism have fixed prayers which are recited in the synagogue as a community. The Amidah Prayer is central to Jewish liturgy and prayer. It is standing prayer which consists of 18 blessings. The first three are Praising God, then the following 13th blessings are communal request and the rest are universal prayer considered as the responsibility of every Jews.



For Christian tradition: Prayer is not an obligation for Christians although Scripture tells us particularly Jesus reminding his disciples the significance as well as the value of prayer. For Christians prayer is to get in communion with oneself, with God, with the other and with the world. Prayer helps us to get out from our self-absorption and recognize the other as well as the presence of God. Christians often pray spontaneously although there are official prayers used in the Church especially during Mass.

Jerusalem is an important place for Muslims, Christians and Jews. It is a Holy City which became an object of tensions and possibilities for the three traditions to come together. The seminar on the power of prayer aim that by coming together in Jerusalem in an attitude of prayer and encounter will bridge the gaps that divide Christians, Jews and Muslims. Praying in Jerusalem and for the peace of Jerusalem is a common ground for the three traditions. In the same vein it can be a source of encounter, awareness, mindfulness of the presence of the other religions. Finally it envision hope. Hope that praying together in Jerusalem will create peace and harmony.

