Fashions in Prayer Exhibit the Mysterious Love of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Allah

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a structural view of the mysterious love of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Allah through the combination of different body fashions in prayer (ṣala). Prayer is the most obligatory activity for all Muslims. Several postures or body fashions are comprised in a one-unit prayer (one rak’a sala). In this study, different fashions in prayer were analyzed from the structural viewpoint of human body. It was found that the structures of left-side view of four body fashions in a one-unit prayer: (1) stand upright facing the direction of al-Ka’ba, (2) bow down (ruku), (3) stand up and (4) prostration (sujjūd), are representative to the structures of four Arabic letters: (1) Alif (ا), (2) Lam (ل), (3) Lam (ل) and (4) Ha (ه). Successive arrangement of these four letters providing the structure of Arabic word Allah (الله) which means the performing of one rak’ah salah, eliciting the internal written of the name of Allah (الله). Thus, the Muslims become close to Allah by performing prayer. Again, the recent development in medical science has shown that the skeleton structure of human body represents the structure of the Arabic word Muhammad (محمد) (American J. Medical Sci. and Medicine, Vol. 6, No. 1, page 1-4, 2018). Therefore, as a whole, the fashions in a one unit prayer represent the internal written of the name of Allah (الله) through the name of prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the structure of human body. Thus, the body fashions in prayer, practiced by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), exhibited the greatest love of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Allah.

Keywords
Combine Fashions in Prayer,
Structure of Arabic words Allah and Muhammad (PBUH),
Structure of human skeleton

INTRODUCTION

Islam is the religion of peace. It stands on five: īmān (faith), ṣala (prayer), sawm (fasting), hajj (pilgrimage) and zaka (poor-due). Prayer is the second and most important pillar of Islam and is the most regular compulsory duty for all Muslim’s life whether male or female, rich or poor, strong or weak, black or white except those who are prepubescent, are menstruating, or are experiencing bleeding in the 40 days after childbirth. We fast one month a year; we must perform poor-due once a year; pilgrimage is only once a lifetime. However, prayer is the one act that must be fulfilled at least five times a day, regardless of the circumstance. Allah ordered to perform prayer and expressed its benefits more than 82 times in the Holy Qur’an. Some of these verses are as follows:

إِنَّا نُعْبُدُ لِلَّهِ إِنَّا فَاعْبُدُونَ َوَقَدْ أَصَلَّئْنَا لِذَّكْرِيَ - ٢٠:١٤
“Verily, I am Allah, there is no deity except Me, so worship Me, and perform prayer for My remembrance.” (Q.20:14) (Hilali & Muhsin, 1997).

قَالَ اِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنَأَيْنَ عَنِ الْفَخْشَاةِ وَالْمُنَكَرِ وَيَسْتَبْلِي الْأَذْكَرَ اللَّهَ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَغْلِبُ الْمُلْكَ وَخُذْنَى - 50:40

وَلَوْ بِمَا نَقُولُونَا غَايَةً - 50:39

وَانْخَرُوْفَّا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ خَالِفًا - 59:19

لَيَعْلَمُونَا شَيْئًا إِلَّا مَن تَابَ وَاَمَنَ وَعَمِّ فَخَصَّنَا فَأُولَئِكَ يُدْخِلُونَ الجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُضَلُّونَ شَيْئًا - 19:60

In the holy Qur’an, Allah ordered people to perform prayer with the verses above and similar other verses and mentioned the adverse results of not performing prayers. By reading the Holy Qur’an, one can be familiar with the importance of prayer and how strongly has Allah emphasized on it and explained its importance to the people in the Qur’an.

Again, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “The first matter that the slave will be brought to account for on the Day of Judgment is prayer. If it is sound, then the rest of his deeds will be sound. Moreover, if it is bad, then the rest of his deeds will be bad” (Albani, 2008).

A Muslim must realize that prayer is an obligation, and every Muslim has to fulfill his/her obligation. Muslims are enjoined to pray to their Lord for all their spiritual and worldly needs. Prayer consists of the repetition of a unit called a rak’a consisting of prescribed actions and words. In this ritual (prayer), the worshipper starts standing, bows, stands, prostrates themselves, and concludes while sitting on the ground. During each posture, certain verses, phrases, and duas are read. Typically, prayer is a spiritual practice performed by Muslim believers in any language convenient to the believer. There is much discussion on the spiritual and physical significance of prayer. The structural significance, however, is often overlooked. This article looks into the structural viewpoint of human body fashions in performing the way of Muslim prayer. The knowledge acquired through this article would help the believers to explore the significance of the prayer positions and may facilitate them to connect to the divine creator, Allah.

Origin of Prayer

All prophets, from Adam (a), and their followers performed prayer in different ways (without bowing and prostrating), not like the prayer performed by the followers of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). However, the present form of prayer was originally enjoined by Prophet Muhammad (blessings...
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and peace of Allah be upon him) in Makkah at the beginning of Islam; because there are Makkah verses in holy Qur’an:

فَذَٰلِكَ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ – أَلْدِينِ هُمْ فِي صَلَاةِ خَاصِعٍ 2:1-2

“Certainly, will the believers have succeeded: They who are during their prayer humbly submissive” (Q. 23:1-2) (Yousuf, 1987).

That was revealed at the beginning of the Prophet’s mission that encourages praying. As for the five daily prayers in the well-known form, they were made obligatory on the night of the Isra’ and Mi’rāj (Prophet’s Night Journey).

Ibn Kathir (2009) said: On the night of the Isra, one and a half years before the Hijrah, Allah enjoined upon His Messenger (PBUH) the five daily prayers, and explained that there were conditions and essential parts and other matters having to do with them, bit by bit.

Al-Bukhari (349) (Khan, 2009) and Muslim (162) (Al-Khattab, 2007) narrated from Anas ibn Mālik, the famous hadith of the Isra’ and Mi’rāj in which it is reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: “Then Allah revealed what He revealed to me, and enjoined fifty prayers on me every day and night. I came back down to Musa (a), and he said: What did your Lord enjoin upon your ummah? I said: Fifty prayers. He said: Go back to your Lord and ask Him to reduce it…. I kept going back and forth between my Lord, may He be blessed and exalted, and Musa (a), until He said: ‘O Muhammad, they are five prayers each day and night, for every prayer, there will be a tenfold (reward), and that is fifty prayers.” The scholars are unanimously agreed that the five daily prayers were not made obligatory until this night.

After the night of the Isra, due to the obligation of prayer for Muslims, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught his followers to perform prayer differently than the average reading of any verse of the Holy Qur’an, either sitting or standing. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) performed a unit (rak’a) prayer through the combination of standing, bow down, standing, and prostration along with reciting or reading certain verses, phrases, and duas at each posture. It was based on the following verses in the Holy Qur’an, where Allah differentiated prayer from regular reading and mentioned to perform bow down and prostration; whatever it did not clearly describe how to perform the prayer, ruku and sujūd in the holy Qur’an.

وَإِذَا فَضَّلُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَادْخِلُوا الْحَيَاةَ وَقُوُودًا وَعَلَى تَجْمَٰلٍ مُّلْحَمٍ، 4:103

“And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allah standing, sitting, or (laying) on your sides …” (Q. 4:103) (Yousuf, 1987).

أَتْلُ ما أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَاقْصِمُ الصَّلَاةَ 29:45

“Recite, (O Muhammad), what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer…” (Q. 29:45) (Yousuf, 1987).

وُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفُسُكُمْ وَرَكَّةٌ وَأَرْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ 4:43

“And establish prayer and give zakah (poor-due) and bow with those who bow (in worship and obedience)” (Q. 2:43) (Yousuf, 1987).

وَعَهَدَنَا إِلَى إِبْراهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أنْ طَهَّرُوا بَيْنَهُمَا نَّفْسَاهُمَا إِلَى الْمَطْعُومِينَ وَالْمَكْعُومِينَ وَالْرَّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ 2:125

“.... And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, (saying), “Purify My House for those who perform Tawaf and those who are staying (there) for worship and those who bow and prostrate (in prayer)” (Q. 2:125) (Haque, 1997).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَافْعَلُوا رَكَبَةً وَفَاعْلُوا المُنْطُوصَاتُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ 22:77

“O you who have believed, bow down and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good - that you may succeed” (Q. 22:77) (Hilali & Muhsin, 1997).
Health Benefits of Posture in Prayer

Prayer postures, prayer movements outside of worship, have many physical and physiological advantages. The body goes through a unique exercise routine during the prayer. It involves continuous gentle muscle contraction and relaxation with perfect harmony and balance. It also involves different types of stretching and isometric contraction exercises. These gentle and straightforward exercises are suitable for all ages and conditions. Therefore, these postures help to maintain fitness in healthy individuals, leading to improved flexibility, muscle strength (the ability of a muscle to exert force), and muscle endurance (refers to the ability to perform many repetitions).

Several studies (Aqlan et al., 2017; Kamran, 2018; Imamoglu and Dilek, 2016; Fatimah et al., 2013) have been reported that the complex physical movements of the ritual (Islamic prayer) can reduce lower back pain if prayer performed regularly and properly. Aqlan et al., (2017) reported the percent reduction of lower back pain for different prayer postures by performing prayer. Eman Al Janahi (2015), a physiotherapist at Al Baraha Hospital in Dubai, said, if the movement from one position to the next in prayer is slowly and smoothly, prayer can prevent joint problems. Peoples can obtain safe and simple stretching exercises from their praying experience (Doufesh et al., 2012). These include flexing the back and leg stretches. She also added, the hip joints remain well intact, if the people praying regularly (Sharifudin et al., 2015). Hameed (2013), a specialist orthopedic surgeon at Abu Dhabi, said, "Prayer is a moderate workout that is not only spiritual but involves a fantastic physical exercise because it involves every part of your body.” It has also been reported (Health Fitness Revolution, 2015; Dogu, 2016; Ghorbani and Moosavi, 2007; Doufesh et al. 2013) that prayer helps regulate your heartbeat, making it stronger and less stressed. Though it is a mental and spiritual activity, prayer has been known to speed up the recovery of the heart following heart attacks and cardiac surgery. However, such health benefits may be the secondary objective of Muslims to perfume prayer. The main goal of all Muslims is to reach the Almighty Allah by performing prayer.

Mental and Spiritual Benefits of Prayer

The importance of prayer is continuously conveyed in the Quran and was also stressed by the Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Everyone commits sins. However, Allah has provided, in prayer, a way to wipe out those sins. Allah says:

“...And establish regular prayers....good remove those that are evil:...” (Q. 11:114) (Yousuf, 1987).

The Messenger (blessings and peace be upon him) gave a beautiful example when he said to his companions: If a person had a river outside his door and he bathed in it five times a day, do you think he would have any filth left on him?” The people said, “No filth would remain on him whatsoever.” The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) then said, “That is like the five daily prayers: Allah wipes away the sins by them” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Humbleness is one of the qualities which Allah has associated with success, which was mentioned in the Holy Quran (Q.23:1-2), described previously. Of course, this can only be achieved when one understands what one is reciting and concentrates with humility. Prayer allows the believer to enrich their spirituality and cultivate the soul’s right to love and worship the Creator, Allah. The Holy Qur’an (Q.20:14) says that one of the purposes of prayers is to remember Allah. Prayer is not for health benefits; prayer is a direct connection between Allah and His slaves. But how can we connect with Allah? In this study, the structural view of human body fashions in performing prayer was investigated to evaluate the significance of prayer postures.

Typically, anyone can read a book or verse of Allah, either sitting or standing or lying. But Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) mentioned particular body fashions (postures) in prayer through the introduction of ruku and sujūd in prayer. These body fashions (postures) are in the sequence of (1) stand upright facing the direction of ka'ba, (2) bow down (ruku), (3) stand up, and (4) prostration (sujūd) as shown in Figure 1. In this figure, the left side views of the structures of human body fashions in one unit (rak'a) of prayer are investigated and simulated with the structures of four Arabic letters: (1) Alif (ا), (2) Lam (ل), (3) Lam (ل), and (4) Ha (ا). These four Arabic letters were sequentially arranged and investigated its structure, simulate with the formation of the Arabic word Allah (الله).
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of prayer is putting ourselves connected to God; to strengthen our relationship with Him; to be grateful for all His blessings, and to remind ourselves of His Greatness. Prayer is the integrated concentration of the physical, vital, mental, and psychic planes into the spiritual consciousness. In this study, the structural analysis of the human body fashions in prayer has shown (Figure 1) that the left side views of four human body fashions in a one unit (rak’a) prayer are similar structures of four Arabic letters: Alif (ا) is for standing, Lam (ل) is for bow down (ruku), Lam (ل) is for stand up and Ha Ha (هما) is for prostration (sujūd). Successive arrangement of these:

Letters provided the structure of the Arabic word Allah (الله), as shown in Figure 2(A). That means the name of Allah is internally written by the structures of different body fashions (postures) to perform a unit (rak’a) prayer.

This imaginary internal construction of the structure of the name of Allah in prayer through the postures is the expressions of direct remembrance of Allah, which leads to the connection of believers to Allah as the primary goal of prayer of Muslims. The body fashions (postures) in prayer were initiated by Prophet Muhammad (PUBH) as a physical and mental expression of love and remembrance to Allah, which is the unique superiority of Muslim prayer over the prayers of other Prophets and their followers.

Again, the recent development in medical science (Hossain, 2018a) and understanding Islam (Hossain, 2018b) have shown that the structure of the human skeleton is representative of the structure of the Arabic word Muhammad (محمد). Such information also provides the internal written of the name of Allah (الله) by the name of Muhammad (محمد) (PBUH) as the structure of the human skeleton through the sequential fashions of the human body in one unit (rak’a) prayer. This fact is schematically presented in Figure 2(B). This posture was initially done by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to express his greatest and endless love to Allah through prayer and taught to all Muslims to perform prayer in such a way. That means “the postures in prayer is the internal love of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Allah” which is the highest worship of the Muslim to Allah.
Figure 2: Schematic diagram of the motions in prayer: standing presents Alif, bow down presents Ruku, stand up presents Lam, and prostration presents Sujud, which leading to the name of Allah.

Thus, prayer helps in maintaining great spiritual discipline. Its significance cannot be measured with materialistic analysis but with the pure vision of the inner experiment. Prayers are essential potentialities of our inner being. Thus, prayer satisfies our spiritual need to be in contact with our Lord, Allah (SWT). This prayer gives the soul peace and contentment. Allah says in the Holy Qu’ran:


There are several references to the holy Quran and Hadith that prayer is a means of communicating with Allah, which are supported by the above structural evidence for the imagination of love in prayer. These are as follows:

96:19 - كَلَّا لَا تُطَِّعْهُ وااسْجُدْ وااقْتَاِب

“... But prostrate in adoration and bring thyself the closer (to Allah)” (Q. 96:19) (Farid-ul-Haque, 1997).

“The place where a slave is the closest to his Lord is the position of prostration” (Sahih Muslim, Salat 215, Al-Khattab, 2007).

Narrated Abu Hurairah (R), The Prophet (PBUH) said, "If anyone of you stands for salah (the prayers), he should not spit in front of him because, in salah he is speaking in private to Allah and he should not spit on his right as there is an angel, but he can spit either on his left or under his foot and bury it (i.e., the expectoration) (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, 416) (Khan, 2009).

Narrated Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari (R), A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and he said, “O Messenger of Allah, teach me something, but make it concise.” The Prophet said, “When you stand for
your prayer, then pray as if you are saying farewell. Do not say anything for which you must apologize and abandon any desire to acquire what other people have” (Sunan Ibn Majah, 4169).

Al-Kulayni reports with his isnad from Abu Ja’far (A) that in a hadith qudsi God says, “...And verily he seeks nearness to Me through the means of the nawafil, until I love him. And when I love him, I become the hearing with which he hears and the vision with which he beholds, and the tongue with which he speaks, and the hand by which he grasps...” (Usul al-Kafi, H. No. 08).

In the Thawab al-a’mal, al-Shaykh al-Saduq reports with his chain of transmitters from someone who heard Imam al-Sadiq (A) that he used to say: “One who offers two rak’ahs of salat with the knowledge of what he says therein, he does not finish them without Allah forgiving him every sin that there is between him and Allah.” (Mafatih al-Jinan).

The prayer is said to be the “Miraj” of the believers. Miraj refers to the miraculous ascension of the Prophet (PBUH) to the heavens and his direct communion with Allah there, among other things. It can be said that the prayer is the glorification of Allah with all of His names and attributes. And since no one can discover the real significance of the praise of the sacred essence—for that depends upon the knowledge of the essence and its attributes and the reality of the relation between the manifest and the hidden, it is impossible except through the means of revelation and divine inspiration.

We should at least be cognizant of the fact that each of those acts of worship is magnification of the perfect One, of the One Who is worthy of all praise and worship, a form that the sacred essence itself has prescribed for Its glorification and commanded us to magnify it through its means in its holy presence. The essential reality of the Messenger (PBUH) manifests all the aspects of the essence, and this manifestation culminated in guidance, intuiting the total span of reality and bringing prophethood to its culmination by his sacred existence.

However, a servant whose heart is turned towards Allah and is submerged in the Divine light (Allah), all its dispensations assume a godly character of the divine creator. Of foremost importance amongst the prerequisites of worship is the attention of the heart, on which depends the soul and essence of worship and without which it has no value and acceptability near Allah.

In fact, the prayer is performed correctly—with true remembrance of Allah by written His name through the prayer postures as mentioned in the article and turning to Him for forgiveness—it will have a lasting effect on the person. After he finishes the prayer, his heart will be filled with the remembrance of Allah. He will be fearful as well as hopeful of Allah. After that experience, he will not want to move from that lofty position to one wherein he disobeys Allah. Allah has mentioned this aspect of the prayer when He has said,

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ السَّحَاتِ وَالسَّرْطُ وَلِدْنَ أَحَدَرَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَصْنَعُ مِنْهَا مَنْ تَصْنَعُونَ - 29:45

“...... Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing......” (Q. 29:45) (Haque, 1997).

The overall affect that the properly performed prayers should have upon humans is described in other verses in the Quran 70:19-23;

وَجَعَلَ فَوْقَ الأَلْوَانِ - اللَّهُ خَلَقَ هَلْوَاءًا - إِنَّا مُدَّيِّنُونَ - إِذَا مُسَاءَةٌ جَزَّوْا - إِذَا مُسَاءَةٌ أَحِبَّ مَثَّوْا - إِلَّا أَلْحَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ - أَلْحَقُّ إِنَّمَا عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ ذَاتِيَمْوَانَ - 70:19-23

“Truly, man was created impatient, irritable when evil touches him and niggardly when good touches him. Except for those devoted to prayer those who remain constant in their prayers...” (Q.70:19-23) (Yousuf, 1987).
Prayer purifies the heart, and indeed, through prayer, a believer attains spiritual devotion and moral elevation. Prayer not only gives a deep connection with Allah, but in prayer, one establishes patience, humility, and sincerity. Praying five times a day engages the believer in constant remembrance of Allah and keeps him away from any unjust deeds and leads him only to deeds that will earn the pleasure of Allah.

About the spiritual benefits of prayers in Islam, Helmandi (2016) stated, “Prayer provides a constant reminder of the essence of our creation and provides a direct connection to Allah, who linked success and felicity to humility in prayer. It emphasizes the proximity between religion and daily life. Life, from an Islamic standpoint, is to be directed to Allah. Life is an opportunity for worship and the remembrance of Allah. Praying repeatedly throughout the day and interrupting daily activities brings about the realization of this concept. The believer, through prayer, acquires a spiritual awareness that he takes with him throughout all of life’s endeavors.

By realizing Allah’s greatness and dependence on our Lord, man is humbled and rids us from pride and arrogance. In the prayer, the Muslim puts the highest part of his body and source of intellect, his head, on to the ground and says, “How perfect is my Lord, The Highest” with the expression of internal love of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the Almighty Allah. Allah knows everything better than all of the creations.

CONCLUSION

The structural views of different fashions of human body (prayer postures) in a one-unit (rak‘a) prayer represent the structure of four Arabic letters: Alife (ا) for stand up, Lam (ل) for bow down (ruku), Lam (ل) for stand up and Ha (ه) for prostration (Sujood), which successive arrangement provides the structure of Arabic word Allah (الله). This internal construction/written of the name of Allah in prayer is the expressions of direct remembrance and love of Allah, to be closer through prayer. Again, the internal written of the structure of the Arabic word Allah in prayer, through the prayer postures by the structure of the Arabic word Muhammad (محمد) (PBUH), existing in human body (Hossain, 2018a), exhibits the mysterious love of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the Almighty Allah. There is no doubt that the processing of prayer is the most supreme job, because it is the moment of intimate conversation of Muslims with Allah and the mine of pure relationship in which the flashes of Divine Light shine and His secrets are revealed through the endless love of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to Allah.

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