

The Meaning of Prayer in Fiqh of Worship

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Abstract: Prayer is a primary act of worship in Islam that holds a central position in the life of a Muslim. In the study of Fiqh of Devotion, prayer is not only understood as a mere ritual obligation but also as a form of complete submission to Allah SWT, encompassing both outward and inward dimensions. This study aims to examine the meaning of prayer from the perspective of Fiqh of Devotion, covering aspects of law, conditions, pillars, as well as its spiritual and social dimensions. The method used is library research, analyzing various classical and contemporary literature in the field of Fiqh. The study results indicate that prayer is a manifestation of human obedience and submission to God, as well as a medium for purifying the soul, shaping moral character, and social control. Prayer also has an educational dimension that teaches Muslims to be disciplined, sincere, and to maintain vertical relationships with God and horizontal relationships with fellow humans. By understanding the meaning of prayer deeply in the jurisprudence of worship, it is hoped that Muslims can improve the quality of their worship and make prayer a foundation in daily life.

Keywords: Fiqh of Devotion, Spiritual Meaning, Worship

A. Introduction

Prayer is a fundamental act of worship in Islam and constitutes the second pillar of Islam after the declaration of faith. It not only serves as a formal ritual obligation but also as the main means of establishing a relationship between the servant and the Creator (Iskandar, 2022). In the Qur'an and Hadith, prayer is repeatedly mentioned as the pillar of religion, a sign of faith, and a means of purifying the soul (Ariyandi, 2024). The obligation to perform the five daily prayers shows how important this worship is in shaping the personality and spiritual life of a Muslim.

In the study of Fiqh Ubudiyah, prayer is not only understood in terms of practice or the procedures of its implementation, but is also interpreted more deeply as a form of total devotion and surrender to Allah SWT (Umi Kalsum, 2023). Ubudiyah itself carries the meaning of complete servitude, encompassing the physical, heart, and mind in every movement and recitation in prayer (Salam, 2024). Therefore, understanding prayer from the perspective of devotional jurisprudence is very important to prevent Muslims from engaging in rituals that are merely formal and devoid of spiritual and moral values.

Prayer also plays a significant role in shaping the character of a devout, honest, patient, and disciplined Muslim individual. Every movement and recitation in prayer carries deep symbolic and educational meaning (Putri Syahri, 2024). In a social context, congregational prayer becomes a medium for the unity of the community, strengthening Islamic brotherhood and forming a harmonious collective culture (Rizki Inayah Putri, 2023). Thus, prayer is not only a vertical act of worship, but also has an important horizontal dimension in social life.

Research on prayer as the main form of worship in Islam has been widely conducted by researchers, from theological, sociological, and psychological perspectives (Topan Iskandar, 2023). Previous research generally focused on the legal aspects and procedures of performing prayers according to certain fiqh schools, such as the study by (Masduki, 2021) A comparison between the pillars and conditions for the validity of prayer in the Shafi'i and Hanafi schools. In addition, there are studies that explore the spiritual dimensions of prayer, such as the impact of prayer on inner peace and self-control. Some modern studies also examine the benefits of prayer from health and neuropsychological perspectives, for instance regarding the correlation between prayer movements and muscle relaxation and mental balance.

However, most of these studies are still partial and few have integrated the meaning of prayer as a whole within the framework of Fiqh of Worship, namely as a combination of legal, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions (Sya' diah, 2021). Fiqh of Worship not only discusses the formal rules of performing acts of worship, but also encompasses the deeper meaning of worship as a form of total submission to Allah SWT in all aspects of life. Therefore, this study attempts to present a new approach by exploring the essential meaning of prayer comprehensively, by combining the normative fiqh dimension, the spiritual values in the recitations and movements of prayer, as well as its implications for character development and the social order of the Muslim community.

The novelty in this research lies in the effort to reinterpret the meaning of prayer within the paradigm of fiqh `ubudiyah holistically, which not only emphasizes adherence to outward aspects but also highlights inner consciousness and the social transformation resulting from the practice of prayer. With this approach, the study contributes to filling the gap in fiqh studies that have long been too focused on legal-formal aspects, as well as enriching the discourse of `ubudiyah with a more integrative and applicable perspective in modern life.

This study is expected to serve as a basis for the development of worship education that is not only oriented towards memorization and routine, but also the formation of meaning and spiritual awareness in every act of worship performed. However, many Muslims perform prayer merely as a routine without understanding the essence and significance of the worship. This is caused by a lack of understanding of the aspects of 'ubudiyah' in fiqh. Therefore, this study is important to be conducted in order to rediscover the essence of prayer as a manifestation of true servitude, not merely a ritual obligation, but as a form of integration between devotion, spiritual awareness,

and social contribution.

B. Methods

This research is a library study that is qualitative and descriptive, aimed at examining and analyzing the meaning of prayer from the perspective of fiqh ubudiyah (Sugiyono, 2018). The library approach was chosen because the research object in this study is more theoretical in nature, based on classical and contemporary religious texts, as well as scientific studies relevant to the theme of prayer as a mahdhah worship. In this study, the primary data sources come from primary literature such as the Qur'an, authentic hadiths, and authoritative fiqh books from various schools of thought, such as *al-Umm* by Imam Shafi'i, *al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudamah, *Bidayatul Mujtahid* by Ibn Rushd, and *al-Majmu'* by Imam Nawawi. In addition, secondary literature was also used, such as contemporary Islamic books, scientific journal articles, undergraduate theses, master's theses, and dissertations that discuss the fiqh and spiritual dimensions of prayer.

The data collection technique was carried out through a search of literature relevant to the focus theme, followed by identification, selection, and classification of data to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of prayer. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical method (Setiawan, 2023). This analysis aims to illustrate the thoughts of scholars regarding the essence of prayer and relate it to the dimensions of devotion and spiritual transformation in human life. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation, comparing opinions from various authoritative sources from both classical and modern eras. Thus, the results of the analysis are expected to provide a comprehensive and integrative understanding of the meaning of prayer in the context of devotional jurisprudence, not only as a form of ritual obligation but also as a means of shaping a Muslim's personality to be obedient, pure, and morally upright.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

Prayer is a mahdhah worship that holds a central position in Islamic teachings. Within the framework of fiqh ubudiyah, prayer is positioned as the most apparent and direct form of servitude to Allah SWT. It not only regulates the vertical relationship between the servant and his Lord (*habl min Allah*), but also contains profound spiritual and social educational dimensions. In fiqh, prayer is systematically discussed through aspects of law, conditions, pillars, Sunnah, and invalidating factors, all of which demonstrate how detailed and sacred this act of worship is (Rahman, 2022).

The meaning of prayer in fiqh of worship is not only found in its form and procedures, but also in its essential purpose, which is to shape a person who is obedient, disciplined, and aware of the Divine presence in every aspect of life. Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Ankabut, verse 45: "Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...". This verse emphasizes that the meaning of prayer goes deeper than

merely a ritual obligation; rather, it serves as an effective means to improve human morals and behavior.

From the fiqh perspective, prayer has a value of ta'abbudi (devotional obedience) that cannot be replaced or reduced by other activities. It is a form of pure obedience that must be performed as prescribed, in terms of time, number of rak'ahs, recitations, and movements. Nevertheless, the substance of fiqh of worship does not stop at formalistic rules, but also encompasses inner aspects such as sincerity, humility, and total surrender to Allah SWT (Badaruddin, 2021).

Prayer also reflects the horizontal dimension in life. Through congregational prayer, Islam teaches equality, togetherness, and unity among the people. Every Muslim stands side by side regardless of social, economic, or ethnic status. This shows that prayer is a worship that unites both individual and collective dimensions in forming a civilized and pious society. From an educational perspective, prayer also contains important pedagogical values, such as punctuality, physical and spiritual purity, obedience to rules, as well as the habituation of patience and perseverance (Sazali, 2021).

Therefore, understanding the meaning of prayer through the approach of fiqh ubudiyah becomes important to restore the awareness of Muslims about the position of prayer as the main foundation in religious life. Thus, fiqh ubudiyah provides a normative and spiritual framework for understanding prayer, not only as an obligation to be carried out, but also as a spiritual need that nurtures the servant's consciousness of their Lord. A comprehensive understanding of this meaning will encourage the formation of a devout Muslim personality, spiritually pure, and of noble character.

Prayer is one of the main pillars of Islamic teachings and holds a very special position among other acts of worship. In the structure of fiqh of worship, prayer is classified as ibadah mahdhah, which is a form of worship solely intended for Allah SWT and cannot be designed or modified by human reasoning (Sodikin, 2021). As a pure act of worship, prayer has established rules as taught by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), including its timing, conditions, pillars, recitations, movements, and procedures of performance.

The meaning of prayer from the perspective of fiqh ubudiyah is not only understood in terms of its legal and formal execution, but also from the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions contained within it. Fiqh ubudiyah, as a branch of Islamic jurisprudence that discusses the procedures for performing ritual acts of worship, functions not only as a normative guide but also as a means to shape Muslims who are obedient both outwardly and inwardly. Therefore, every aspect of prayer carries symbolic and transformative significance.

Theologically, prayer is a form of direct communication between a servant and their God. In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah SWT says: 'I have divided prayer between Me and My servant into two parts...' (HR. Muslim), which indicates that prayer is a space for

spiritual dialogue between humans and the Creator. In prayer, a Muslim expresses submission, offers praise, conveys needs, and seeks forgiveness and guidance. Therefore, prayer becomes a means of cleansing the heart, purifying the soul, and strengthening faith. Prayer also serves as a reminder of Allah's presence in every aspect of life (Saprun, 2021).

The movements and recitations in prayer are not merely symbolic; they are full of meaning. Bowing and prostrating, for example, symbolize humility and total submission to the Divine will. The recitation of Al-Fatihah reflects the essence of Islamic teachings: monotheism, mercy, and a plea to always remain on the straight path. Thus, in the jurisprudence of worship, the meaning of prayer is understood as a means of internalizing the values of monotheism into the soul and behavior of a Muslim.

Besides its theological dimension, prayer also has a very strong social meaning. In congregational prayer, Islam teaches the principles of equality, togetherness, and brotherhood. All worshippers stand in a single row, without distinctions of social, economic, racial, or status differences. Congregational prayer also trains individuals to be obedient to leadership, maintain order, and prioritize solidarity and tolerance. Prayer also has an ethical effect in shaping behavior. In Qur'an Surah Al-'Ankabut, verse 45, it is mentioned: "Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing." This verse shows that performing prayer with full awareness will impact the formation of noble character. Therefore, *fiqh ubudiyah* does not merely discuss the formal rules of worship, but also aims at shaping pious and morally virtuous character.

The meaning of prayer can also be seen from an educational and psychological perspective. In this regard, prayer teaches time discipline, orderly living, physical and spiritual purity, as well as building perseverance and patience. From a young age, a Muslim is taught to perform the five daily prayers, which when done consistently, trains a disciplined and responsible mentality. Additionally, prayer also serves as a therapy for the soul. In moments of stress or sadness, prayer becomes a place to calm oneself and surrender all matters to Allah SWT.

In the jurisprudence of worship (*fiqh ubudiyah*), prayer holds the position of a legal obligation (*fardhu*) that must be carried out by every Muslim who meets the requirements. The provisions regarding the conditions for the validity and pillars of prayer are formulated in detail in *fiqh* books, such as *al-Majmu'* (Shafi'i), *al-Mughni* (Hanbali), and *Bidayatul Mujtahid* (Maliki). This indicates that prayer is not only a spiritual activity but also a legal act that has consequences of being valid or invalid (Rahmad, 2024).

The perfection of prayer according to *fiqh* is not only seen from the correctness of movements and recitations, but also from intention and devotion. Therefore, *fiqh ubudiyah* not only discusses the outward aspects of worship but also encourages deep inner awareness. A person who fully understands the meaning of prayer will be driven to perform it wholeheartedly, not just as an obligation, but as a spiritual

necessity (Febriana, 2024). From these various dimensions, it can be concluded that the meaning of prayer in the jurisprudence of worship encompasses legal, spiritual, social, educational, and moral aspects. Prayer is not merely a formal ritual, but also a means of education and self-development within the framework of complete servitude to Allah SWT. Therefore, understanding the meaning of prayer through the jurisprudence of worship is very important to revive the awareness of quality worship, as well as to shape Muslims who are obedient, pious, and positively contribute to community life.

Discussion

Discussion of various literature regarding the meaning of prayer in fiqh ubudiyah shows that prayer is not only positioned as a ritual obligation regulated in detail through laws, conditions, and its pillars, but also as a means of spiritual and social development that directly affects the quality of a Muslim's personality (Badaruddin, 2021). These studies emphasize that the ta'abbudi value of prayer requires total obedience to Allah SWT in its practice, yet the essence of this worship goes far beyond formal aspects. Prayer performed with full awareness has a transformational role in developing individual piety, thereby becoming a moral fortress, as explained in QS. Al-'Ankabut verse 45 as a deterrent to immoral and sinful deeds.

(Sodikin, 2021) adding that as a mahdhah worship, the rules for performing prayer cannot be manipulated by humans, but the internalization of prayer values becomes the core of moral education and the formation of a Muslim character balanced between outward and inward obedience. Furthermore, several studies highlight the social function of congregational prayer as a medium for strengthening brotherhood, social equality, and orderly leadership within the community. Prayer even has psychological effects, such as serving as soul therapy, a means of tranquility, and a practice of discipline (Saprun, 2021). Therefore, prayer is seen as a key instrument in creating a religious, harmonious, and virtuous society.

Although various studies have strengthened the understanding of the meaning of prayer from a normative and textual perspective (Setiawan, 2023), Previous research has still been more dominant in focusing on theoretical analysis and has not revealed much about how effective the practice of prayer is in shaping the actual behavior of Muslims in daily life. The gap between the understanding of fiqh ubudiyah and the practical implementation of prayer becomes an important space for future research. Therefore, upcoming research needs to be directed towards more applied and field-based studies, such as measuring the level of khushu' (devoutness), prayer discipline, and its impact on moral character and social ethics, especially in adolescents and students. Educational and habitual prayer-based interventions can also be developed as character-building strategies within the context of family, school, and society.

Thus, the results of this literature review emphasize that strengthening the understanding of the meaning of prayer in fiqh of worship is not only theologically important, but also strategic in promoting the improvement of the quality of worship, which directly impacts the development of better Muslim character in the future.

D. Conclusions

Based on studies on the meaning of prayer in fiqh ubudiyah, it can be concluded that prayer is an act of worship (ibadah mahdhah) that holds a primary position in Islam, not merely as a ritual obligation with fixed legal regulations, but also as a means of spiritual, moral, social, and educational development for every Muslim. Prayer performed with a comprehensive understanding will shape individuals who are obedient, disciplined, morally upright, and capable of contributing positively to community life. These findings imply the importance of strengthening the understanding of the values of prayer in religious learning and guidance practices so that they do not fall into mere ritual formalities. However, this study still has limitations because it is conceptual in nature and has not yet revealed the empirical implementation of prayer values in the lives of the community. Therefore, future research is recommended to examine the quality of prayer practices and their impact on character and social behavior in society through an interdisciplinary and field-based approach to enrich and strengthen the findings of this study.

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