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THE FOUNDATION OF MUSLIM PRAYER

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ABSTRACT

The Qur'ān stresses the importance of prayer, but in no instance explains exactly how worship is to be performed. Even when it does refer to certain specific parts of the prayer such as "rukū'" and "sujūd," its diction suggests that these postures are already known to the believers. The *ḥadīth* literature presents conflicting reports on the performance of prayer. While some narrations suggest that Muḥammad taught the Muslims all the rituals of prayer, others show that some of these Muslims had performed this form of 'ibāda before Islam. Traditions regarding the actual legislation for the number of times of daily worship provide an image of Moses as Muḥammad's advisor, and speak of prayer as a concept common to them both. This study concludes, after analysis of the Qur'ānic verses, Torah, and the *ḥadīth*, that Muslim prayer, as outlined in the Qur'ān, is essentially the same as a Judaic form at the time of Muḥammad.

The urge to show that Islam is nothing but an offshoot of Judaism or Christianity did not start with Western scholarship, even though one may argue that Geiger, Bell and Torrey took that hypothesis to its furthest. For even the Arabs to whom Muḥammad directed his message said, "Tales of the ancients which he has caused to be written down and they are dictated to him morning and evening" (Q 25:4-5). The Qur'ānic answer explained that document's Judeo-Christian material in straightforward terms: Muḥammad came not to found a new religion, but rather to reestablish the message of pristine Abrahamic monotheism, confirming that which had been revealed in the scriptures before him (Q 5:48), and which had unfortunately been corrupted throughout the ages.

The Qur'ān also defined the relationship between God and human in simple, unequivocal language: "And I did not create the jinn and humankind except to serve me" (Q 51:6). This, when considered in terms of the social setting to which Muḥammad delivered his message, can be seen as confirmation of the Pentateuchal verse connecting Divine promise and reward with worship: And it (i.e. the promise of the holy

land) shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 11:13 KJV)

In both Judaism and Islam, the highest act of such service to God was manifested in formal prayer. The Rabbis explained "to serve" in Deut. 11:13 as referring to prayer (Taanit 2a), and the Qur'ān on ninety-nine occasions indicates that prayer for both the people of the book and the Muslims is the desired form of service. As Goitein has observed, there is hardly a page in the Qur'ān which does not contain a reference to prayer, that aspect of *'ibāda* being indeed the quintessence of Islam.[1] Prayer, according to the Qur'ān, is that which distinguishes a Muslim from a polytheist (30:31). The inhabitants of the hell fire, according to Sūrat al-Muddathir, when asked about their sins, will confess among other things, that they did not observe prayer (Q 74:43,44).

In this paper, I intend to show that the Islamic prayer (الصلاة: *al-Ṣalāt*), in its primary ritual from, was structured on a *Judaic pattern at the time of Muḥammad*. I have used the italics to draw attention to two points. The first is to focus on the time frame that I have specified. There is general agreement among scholars that the form of Jewish prayer has evolved tremendously since the sixth century, and that during the symbiotic cycle which characterized some aspects of the relationship between the two religions, Islamic concepts, structured on primary Jewish ideas, were later reimported into Judaism without being fully divested of their Islamic guise.[2]

The second is to draw attention to the use of the word *Judaic*. For despite the claim of some researchers that the Islamic ritual prayer has a Christian origin or that there is not enough evidence to attribute a specific Judaic or Christian origin to the Islamic prayer, I find that the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* do not allow any room for doubt on the issue.[3] The Qur'ān speaks of the institution of prayer as a part of *ibāda* in the covenant of the *Banū Isrā'īl*, Children of Israel (2:83). The term *Children of Israel*, used forty-one times in the Qur'ān, always indicates the tribes claiming lineage from Jacob, and who were later given the Mosaic law, i.e. the Jews. This is quite distinctive from "*Ahl al-Kitab*" or "*al-Yahūd*

[1] S. Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 73.
[2] Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Some Religious Aspects of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 74.
[3] Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1926), 91.

wa al-Naṣārā," which are used when referring to the Jews and Christians collectively.

Christianity too had not identified itself as a religion specific to a particular nation, and had found a footing among the Arabs; the Lakhmids and Ghassanids among some of the Arab tribes professing that religion, and had attained positions of authority in the Church. Al-Ḥārith (Greek: Arethas) ibn Jabalah, the Ghassanid (529-569 C.E.) had been given the elevated title of *patricius* by the Byzantines in the sixth century.[1] Clearly then, by the standards of the strict Arab genealogical and tribal consciousness, the Christians could not be considered as *Children of Israel*, added to which fact that the Christians were associated with Byzantium rather than Jerusalem, as evidenced by the first verse of *Sura Rūm* (Q 30).

The verses on prayer are almost all Medinan, revealed in a city which was Jewish: "Medinat al-Kohanim" with predominantly Jewish customs.[2] In the *ḥādīth* that will be discussed in the paper, it will also be seen that the polemic is always against Jewish practice in prayer, mentioning the Christians very rarely.

My approach however does not follow the methodology of Geiger, Bell and Torrey mentioned earlier, for they tried to explain the Qur'ān in light of the Bible. I intend rather to use the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, working from within the Islamic tradition to prove my point, and referring to external sources as elucidation rather than foundation for my conclusions. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Qur'ān and *ḥādīth* that follow are mine. The paper will be structured according to the following sub-headings: Al-Ṣalāt: The Word, Its Derivation, Definition and Form; Al-Ṣalāt in the Qur'ān; Al-Ṣalāt in the *ḥādīth*; and Conclusion.

Al-Ṣalāt: The word, Its Derivation, Definition and Form

The writings of Muslim scholars show the various struggles to identify a definite source for the word in order to form a link between the formal practice and the linguistic root. Al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) for example, states that scholars differ regarding the origin of the term, and points out that the majority are of the opinion that it comes from the

[1] See Irfan Kawar, "On the Patriarchate of Imru-al-Qays," *The World of Islam*, ed. J. Kritzek and R. Winder (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1959), 74-82; and Bell, *The Origin of Islam*, 22.

[2] Erwin Rosenthal, *Judaism and Islam* (London and New York: World Jewish Congress and Thomas Yoseloff, 1961), 6.

word meaning to supplicate.[6] There is also the view that it may be derived from "al-Ṣalwān," that being either two veins in the lower back or two bones which bend at certain parts of the ritual prayer.[7] After also mentioning that it may also be derived from a word meaning mercy, or from reaching out to something, al-Nawawī concludes "other things have been said and God knows best."[8] Like al-Nawawī, al-Shawkānī (d. 1255/1839) mentions some meanings, one of them being that the term comes from *al-Muṣalli* in horseracing—the name given to the runner-up because he follows immediately behind the winner, the same way that the *ṣalāt* in Islam follows immediately behind the first pillar, the *shahāda*.[9]

The inability to point out anything concrete is the strongest evidence that the word was in existence before Muḥammad and had come from a source which was obscure to the later Arabs. Goitein posits that the nomenclature is actually of Aramaic origin, and Monnot feels that Arthur Jeffrey is more than likely correct in viewing the term as more specifically derived from the Syriac word for prayer, *selota*.[10] Regardless of which view is correct, the term was nonetheless used in the general meaning of institutional prayer in both the church and synagogue long before its use by the Arabs.[11] The definition of *al-Ṣalāt* is given in Muslim sources as a set of specific words and actions, beginning with a *takbīr*, and ending with a *taslīm*.[12] For the purposes of my research, I shall be concerned mainly with three postures that are adopted at various stages of the process between the *takbīr* and the *taslīm*. These are: (1) the standing position (*qiyām*); (2) genuflection (*rukūᶜ*); and finally (3) prostration (*sujūd*).[13] These forms are known to the earlier communities and mentioned in the Tanakh in the following verses: 1 Sam. 1:26, 1 Kings 8:22, Dan. 6:11, Ezek. 9:5, Joshua 7:6, Gen. 24:26, Neh. 8:6, and 2 Sam. 7:18.

[6] Yaḥyā b. Sharif al-Nawawī. *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, n.d.), 1:317.
[7] al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1:317.
[8] al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1:317.
[9] Muḥammad Alī al-Shawkānī, *Fatḥ al-Qadīr: al-Jāmiᶜ baina Fannai al-Riwāyah wa al-Dirāyah min Ilm al-Tafsīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), 1:57.
[10] See Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History*, 74; Monnot, *EI²*, 8:92; and Arthur Jeffrey, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurᵓān* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938), 198.
[11] Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History*, 74; and Rosenthal, *Judaism in Islam*, 22.
[12] Abd al-Raḥmān al- Āṣimī. *Hāshiyat al-Raᶜd al-Murbi: Sharḥ Zād al-Mustaqni* (Beirut: Biṣāṭ, 1982), 1:410-11.
[13] Muhammed Ali, *The Religion of Islam* (Columbus: The Aḥmadiyya Anjuman Ishaᶜat Islām [Lahore] USA, 1990), 305-6.

Al-Ṣalāt in the Qur'ān

Ṣalāt and its derivative forms occur ninety-nine times in Islam's main document. On every single occasion where it is used as a noun indicating a form of worship, it occurs as or is accompanied by one of the Arabic qualifiers that take the place of the definite article. This usage (*al-maʿrifa*) in the definite form is clear indication that the reference is always to cultic prayer (i.e., something already known) rather than any impromptu form of worship.

If there were no maintained usage of this definite grammar form, it could have been said that *ṣalāt* was just another form of worship, and that the later "Islamic" construct was different to this early way of adoring the Creator. But even when the Qur'ān refers to the prayer of the people before the time of Muḥammad, it still maintains the definite form; Muslims are reminded "and they (i.e., the Jews and Christians and the polytheists from earlier times) were not ordered but to worship God sincerely and to observe the prayer . . ." (Q 98:5). Moses and Aaron are ordered by God thus: "We inspired Moses and his brother with this message: Provide dwellings for your People in Egypt, make your dwellings into places of worship, and establish al-ṣalāt and give good tidings to those who believe" (Q 10:87).

In Q 20:14 (Ṭāha), Moses is ordered by God thus: "Verily I am your Lord; there is no god but me; so serve me only and establish al-ṣalāt in order to remember me." Later on, the Muslims are reminded of this covenant between God and the Jews as can be seen in verse eighty-three of Sūrat al-Baqara: "And we took the covenant from the children of Israel thus: Do not worship any except God: and be kind to your parents, kin, orphans and the poor. Speak good words to people and observe al-ṣalāt and give the charity. Then you turned back except for a small number among you and you (now) turn away from it (too)." On several occasions too, the word appears in conjunction with another term, from which the word "qiyām" is derived, one such example being "*Qum ilā' al-ṣalāt*" (قم إلى الصلاة: Q 5:6). That these two word roots occur in combined forms on more than forty occasions in the Qur'ān is of great significance because as Jeffery points out, *Iqām al-Ṣalāt* was a well known term and *Qiyām* in terminological context in clearly derived from this source.[14]

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[14] Jeffrey, *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*, 198.

The *rukūʿ* and *sujūd* posture mentioned above are never clearly defined in the Qurʾānic usage: rather the document seems to presuppose a cognizance on the part of the listener. The *sujūd* is portrayed as a universal form of submission to God: "And to God prostrate those (yasjud) who are in the heavens and the earth" (Q 16:49). "Do you not observe that those of the heavens and the earth do prostrate before God?" (Q 22:18).

The Qurʾān attributes those actions to the prophets of the Tanakh and to Mary, mother of Jesus: "O Mary! Stand devoutly before thine Lord, and make sujūd and rukūʿ along with those who are making the rukūʿ" (Q 3:43); "And we took a covenant from Abraham and Ishmael to make mine house pure for those who wish to go around it, or use it as a retreat, and those who make (al-)rukūʿ and (al-)sujūd" (Q 2:125). And in Surat al-Baqara, verse forty-three, the children of Israel are exhorted to "Observe al-Salat and give charity, and be among those who make rukūʿ."

In the polemic directed against Jewish and Christian views, the aspect of any difference in the form of prayer is never once mentioned. Instead the Qurʾān points to Muḥammad now being given a new Qibla, and notes that the Jews will say, "What has turned him from the Qibla that he used to face?" (Q 2:142-5). Given that Muḥammad claimed to be a preserver of that revealed in the Torah and the Evangel, were he to be performing the most stressed institution of his religion in a way that was seen as different, his detractors would surely have taken him to task for it, and he would have certainly furnished a reply available to us via the Qurʾān. That no such discourse is noted in a document which records even the play on words that were used in greeting by Muḥammad's opponents (see Q 2:103) indicates that Muḥammad's prayer was seen by his contemporaries—Jewish and Muslim—as something common to both religions in terms of its physical observance.

Even the Qurʾānic discourse on the issue of the number of prayers supports this conclusion. As Fazlur Rahman notes, prayer in the Qurʾān was fundamentally three as is evidenced by the fact that Muḥammad is reported to have combined five prayers into three without there being any reason.[15] The basic timings then, at dawn, afternoon and evening directly correspond to the times of the Jewish *shaḥarit*, *minḥāh* and *arvit* prayers respectively. And contrary to what Goitein and Torrey surmised about Muḥammad legislating five prayers in order to strike a middle

[15] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 36.

path between Judaism and Christianity, between the three of Judaism and the seven of the Syrian Church, Louis Ginzberg, the celebrated Talmudic scholar, has shown that the Arabian Jews prayed five times daily, but that the number was reduced to three, by combining two prayers in the morning and two in the afternoon.[16]

Al-Ṣalāt in the Ḥadīth

The *ḥadīth* supports the Qur'ānic view of the importance of the prayer, and there is a narration from Anas which states that: "The first thing for which the servant will be taken to account on the day of Judgment will be the prayer. If that is acceptable then all his deeds will be acceptable. And if it is not acceptable, then all his deeds will be seen as nought."[17] Despite the agreement on the aspect of importance however, there is a fundamental difference in perception between the *ḥadīth* and the Qur'ān regarding the development and practice of the Muslim prayer. For the Qur'ān shows a gradualism, utilizing terms other than *ṣālāt* for the beginnings of formalised worship. Calls to seeking forgiveness or serving and thanking God, well-known Judeo-Christian connotations of prayer, are in the earlier verses of the Qur'ān (e.g. 11:3,52; 29:16; 39:66; 71:9). The later Medinan verses refer to a specific form of *ibāda*, the *ṣalāt*.

The *aḥādith* regarding the night journey (see Q 17:1) take it for granted that the five prayers were introduced as is, without any gradualism. This, as noted by Monnot, is at variance with the Qur'ān which never mentions this number.[18] Uri Rubin too has shown that there was a gradual development in *ṣalāt*, and that initially, there were only two prayers, one in the afternoon and another in the evening.[19] His translation of the narration recorded by al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) on the authority of al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823) states that, "the Prophet used to go out to the Ka'aba at the beginning of the day and perform the Ḍuḥā prayer. It was a prayer with which the Quraysh did not find any fault. When he afterwards prayed during the rest of the day, 'Ali and

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[16] See Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History*, 84; and Abraham Katsch, *Judaism in Islam* (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1954), xx, xxi.

[17] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, "Al-Jāmi 'al-Ṣaghīr," in *Al-Muḥaddith* Computer Program (Washington: Dār al-Ḥadīth, n.d.), entry 28180.

[18] See Monnot, *EI*², 8:925ff.

[19] Uri Rubin, "Morning and Evening Prayers in Early Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 10 (1987), 40-64.

Zayd used to sit and keep guard on him. When it was the time of the ʿAṣr, the Prophet and his companions would scatter in the ravines, one by one and in pairs; they used to pray (the prayers of) Ḍuḥā and ʿAṣr. Afterwards the five prayers were enjoined on them. Before the Hijra, each prayer consisted of two rakas . . ."[20]

In the narration recorded by al-Bukhārī, on the authority of Abū Dharr, Muḥammad supposedly met a host of prophets in the heavens, including Abraham, Jesus and Moses. After having been ordered by God to make fifty prayers per day, Muḥammad again meets Moses on his return journey who counsels him and has him go back and forth to God until the total gets reduced to five.[21] And in *aḥādith* reported by Muslims, Muḥammad not only sees Moses praying in his grave, but he (Muḥammad) leads the prophets in prayer.[22] The image that we adduce then, is that of all the prophets, Moses plays the role of advisor, from whence we see the clear Judaic imagery coming forth.

Muḥammad, if he could lead the prophets in prayer, with no mention of any difference of posture, must have been doing something—according to the *ḥadīth* imagery—with which they were all familiar. In another *ḥadīth*, David was the one who was initially commanded the Ẓuhr prayer, Solomon, the ʿAṣr, Jacob, the Maghrib, Jonah the ʿIshā, and the Ṣubḥ was given to Adam.[23]

There seems to be great difference of opinion among the *ḥadīth* collections on the nature of the prayer before and after the night journey. While there are some that specify that Gabriel taught Muḥammad how to pray, there are others which has one of Muḥammad's most eminent companions saying that: "I used to observe the prayers three years before I met the prophet."[24] This again shows that there was a specific form of prayer—especially since in the narration, Abū Dharr is not questioned as to how he prayed, but to whom he directed his prayer.

Menahem Kister quotes *aḥadīth* from al-Ṭahāwī who stated that Muḥammad used to follow the practices and rituals of the people of the book until ordered by God to act differently.[25] Whether the *ḥadīth*

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[20] Rubin, *Morning and Evening Prayers*, 41.

[21] Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, tran. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1976), 1:211ff.

[22] Muslim b. Ḥajjāj, "Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim," *Mim* Computer Program (Silver Spring: ISL Software Corporation, 1986), 4:5858.

[23] Al-ʿĀṣimī, *Hāshiya*, 1:409.

[24] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 4:6046.

[25] Menahem Kister, "Do not Assimilate Yourselves . . .," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 12 (1989), 321-71.

is authentic or not is besides the point, for it shows the consciousness of the Muslims the earlier times. Clearly they did not perceive a problem with observing the same prayer as the people around them, the people to whom had been given the order even earlier than the Muslims.

The numerous *ḥadīth* counselling against praying like the Jews also indicate that the early Muslims saw no difference between the basic outward forms of prayer of the Jews and their own observance. After polemic and inter-religious strife reached a level of some intellectuality as opposed to the meeting of swords, the Muslims, it would appear, became desirous of ridding themselves of the Jewish influences and we see therefore a plethora of *ḥadīth* exhorting against imitating the Jews.

I shall examine some *aḥādith* regarding the forms of the prayer to show the clear lines of Judaic architecture in the institution. In the case of the Qiyām, there is the following narration, "If one of you goes to observe the prayer, he should not sway or move to the left and right as does the Jew, for the stillness of the side-to-side is the perfection of *al-ṣalāt.*"[26] There is also the *ḥadīth* that the prophet hated that anyone should put his hand on his waist "since this is the action of the Jews."[27]

If we compare those two *ḥadīth* with the report from the Babylonian Talmud, we can understand the reference clearly for that document mentions that Rabbi Akiba moved about while praying, so that when he did so alone, he could start in one corner and be found in another because of his bowing and prostrations (Berakhot 21a). Another rabbi however is mentioned as praying like a servant before his master, indicating that he stood still (Shabbat 10a). These *ḥadīth* seem to be a late post-Muḥammadan creation for there is the report that ʿAlī, the fourth caliph, would pray in his place at night, swaying and holding his beard.[28] One would assume that the prophet's son-in-law would at least know what was hated or forbidden in prayer. The evidence suggests then that the prohibition against the swaying of the Jews came after ʿAlī's prayer, which would place the date then at after 661 C.E., the year of his assassination.

As late as the time of Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1062 C.E.), we find reports about Judaic precedents for specific aspects of the Islamic prayer. Ibn Ḥazm, in his usual acerbic style, takes to task those who argue that in

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[26] Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Jāmi al-Ṣaghīr*, no. 7830.

[27] Aḥmad b. Taimīya, *Iqliḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm: Mukhālifat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1996), 76.

[28] Ṭāha al-ʿAlwānī, *Ādāb al-Ikhtilāf fi al-Islām* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992), 69.

the communal prayer, the imam should not pronounce the "Āmīn." This is because they claim that when Moses prayed together with Aaron, the former did not pronounce the Āmīn, but the latter did. Ibn Ḥazm stated to the scholar propounding this view: "The strangest thing in the world is that you should take the action of Moses and Aaron—an action that has never ever been verified—as abrogating the authentic word of Muḥammad on the matter of the Āmīn."[29]

Al-Munāwī (d. 1336 C.E.) reports that the prophet forbade a man in the prayer to lean on his left hand for that was the position of the Jews.[30] Note that in a technical part of the prayer, the worshipper is being told not to worship like the Jews, from which we can adduce that, even if the ḥadīth is assumed to be late, it was being told at a time when people observed that there were great similarities between the two religions.

On the matter of recitation in the Ẓuhr and ʿAṣr prayers, which are termed *Sirrī* prayers because the worshipper recites inaudibly, there is a ḥadīth in al-Bukhārī which explains that even though the prophet did not make any sound, the people knew by observing the movement of his beard that he was reciting Qurʾān i.e., that he was mouthing the words without issuing any sound.[31] The Talmudic reports about prayer without sound are interesting for they describe exactly the same thing:

> Hamnuna said: How many important laws can be learnt from these verses relation to Hannah (1 Sam 1:10). *Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart* from this we learn that one who prays must direct his heart. *Only her lips moved* from this we learn that he who prays must frame the words distinctly with his lips. *But her voice could not be heard* from trhis, it is forbidden to raise one's voice in the tefillah, therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. From this that a drunken person is forbidden to say the tefillah, And Eli said unto her: How long will thou be drunken (Berakhot 31a).

In defining how the prayer is to be performed, there are several *aḥadīth* reported in all the "authentic" collections that describe the required state of calmness that the believer must strive to achieve. In all of the postures, there is the stress on "Ṭumaʾnīna" which may be functionally translated as "absolute relaxation and calmness in a particular posture."

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[29] Ṭāha al-ʿAlwānī, *Al-Turāth al-Islāmī: Mulāḥaẓat Manhajīat fi al-Nash at wa al-Sairurah* (Washington: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1995), 45.

[30] Al-Munāwī, *Faṛḍ al-Qadīr: Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaghīr* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, 1938), 3:543.

[31] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:744.

This is to be seen as one of the extended aspects of the Hebrew Kavannah, which in Berakhot 10b is explained as one not standing up to say *tefillah* except in a reverent frame of mind. Rabbi Tanhum said that in saying *tefillah*, one should bow down at the appropriate places until all the vertebrae in the spinal column are loosened (Berakhot 28b). This too is a perfect description of "Tuma'nīna."

Conclusion

In all of the foregoing, it seems obvious that the stress in the *ḥadīth* on going against what the Jews did in the observance of the ritual prayer is clear evidence that the goal was to distinguish the Islamic prayer from the Jewish form, and that this distinction could only be achieved by strict adherence to the *ḥadīth* on the subject. The Qur'ān however gives a different picture, and were it not for the *ḥadīth*, one may even surmise that there would be no perceived difference at all between the Judaic and the Islamic forms of prayer.

In another *ḥadīth* "Go against the Jews—pray in your shoes," the wearing of the shoes, rather than any aspect of performance, is seen as the difference.[32] In analyzing the the literature on the subject, one gets the picture that as Islam became more established—and this is after the death of Muḥammad—the desire to deny the Judaic provenance of Islamic practice grew more and more. Ibn Taimīya's *Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm Mukhālifat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm* is manifest evidence of this trait, for the book maintains a constant polemic against Jewish practice and custom. Many of the ḥadīths reported by Ibn Taimīya denote a clear ignorance of Jewish prayer, but it only shows that the later developments in Islam made Jewish worship practice—whether in imagination or reality—the standard against which to measure that most important of all overt acts of worship—*al-ṣalāt.*

This paper has focused on the externalia of the prayer proper, leaving aside the prerequisites, such as the purification (*wuḍū'*), the intention (*nīyyah*), and the rulings pertaining to *al-ṣalāt.* An unbiased reading of the Talmud, however, clearly shows that there is enough material for investigation of the sources of all aspects of prayer in Islam. Purification is a necessary part of Jewish prayer (Berakoth 14a-15b), and even the Qur'ānic allowance for the use of the *tayammum* instead of *wuḍū'* (Q 4:43) has its parallel in the Talmud: "Rabina said to Raba: Sir, pray

[32] Kister, "Do not Assimilate," 321-71.

look at this student who has come from the West (Palestine), and who says: If one has no water for washing his hands, he can rub his hands with earth or with a pebble or with sawdust. He replied: He is quite correct . . ." (Berakoth 14a-15b).

The *nīyrah* too, so indispensable to worship, as noted by Frederick Denny, has its exact analogue in the Jewish *kawannah*.[33] Indeed, it is in dealing with the topic of the *kawannah* that Lazarus-Yafeh made her observation, quoted earlier, about Jewish ideas forming the basis for Islamic practice, and then being reimported into Judaism in their newer Islamic guise.[34]

The prohibition to pass in front of the praying person and the shortening of the prayer also have their parallels in the Talmud. These parallels cannot be dismissed as unrelated similarities, and indeed furnish enough material for further examination of *al-ṣalāt*. The use of Jewish and Christian terminology in the institution of this aspect of *'ibāda* is I think, further evidence that the coming of Islam did not present as radical a break, as is assumed by many historians, between Islam and pre-Islamic Arabia.

[33] Frederick Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1993), 118.

[34] Lazarus-Yafeh, *Some Religious Aspects of Islam*, 2.