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The Epistemological Divergence between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī Madhhabs: The Ḥadīth Evaluation and Legal Reasoning on the Discourse of Gendered Fiqh

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Abstract

Prayer (ṣalāh) is governed by provisions outlined in the Qur'an and directly exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and therefore must be followed by all Muslims, both men and women. However, there are procedural (kaifiyyah) differences between genders in prayer. This study aims to examine several kaifiyyah differences in prayer between men and women based on the perspectives of the Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī madhhabs of thought. Utilizing normative or library research through a comparative approach, the analysis focuses on the arguments and methods of legal derivation (istinbāt) employed by both madhhabs. The findings indicate that the gender-based differences identified include the positioning of the hands during takbīrat al-ihrām, the placement of the hands while standing, the posture in rukū' (bowing) and sujūd (prostration), the rules governing vocal recitation, and the manner of alerting the imām when an error occurs. Regarding the positioning of the hands during takbīrat al-ihrām, while standing, and in vocal recitation, the Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī madhhabs offer differing views. However, they concur on the procedures of rukū', sujūd, and the method of notifying the imām for both men and women. Both madhhabs base the procedural distinctions on preserving a woman's 'awrah (parts of the body that must be covered). The epistemological divergence between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī madhhabs is deeply rooted in their respective methodologies of ḥadīth evaluation and legal reasoning. Academically, this study contributes to the discourse of gendered fiqh by demonstrating how jurisprudential reasoning addresses ritual distinctions between men and women and highlighting the interpretive dynamism within Islamic law.

Keywords: Prayer; Fiqh; Gender; Ḥanafī Madhhab; Shāfi‘ī Madhhab.

Abstrak

Salat diatur oleh ketentuan yang tercantum dalam al-Qur'an dan dicontohkan secara langsung oleh Nabi Muhammad saw., sehingga wajib diikuti oleh seluruh umat Islam, baik laki-laki maupun perempuan. Namun, terdapat perbedaan prosedural (kaifiyyah) dalam pelaksanaan salat antara laki-laki dan perempuan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji beberapa perbedaan kaifiyyah salat antara laki-laki dan perempuan berdasarkan pandangan mazhab Ḥanafī dan Syafi'i. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan penelitian normatif atau kepustakaan melalui metode komparatif, analisis difokuskan pada argumen serta metode penetapan hukum (istinbāt) yang digunakan oleh kedua mazhab. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan perbedaan antara laki-laki dan perempuan ditemukan dalam beberapa aspek, seperti posisi tangan saat takbīrat al-ihrām, posisi tangan saat berdiri, gerakan rukuk dan sujud, ketentuan mengenai bacaan salat secara keras atau lirih, serta cara mengingatkan imam saat terjadi kekeliruan. Dalam hal posisi tangan saat takbīrat al-ihrām, saat berdiri, dan dalam bacaan salat secara vokal, mazhab Ḥanafī dan Syafi'i memiliki perbedaan pandangan. Namun, keduanya sepakat dalam hal gerakan rukuk, sujud, dan cara mengingatkan imam bagi laki-laki dan perempuan. Kedua mazhab juga sepakat bahwa perbedaan tata cara pelaksanaan salat antara laki-laki dan perempuan didasarkan pada pertimbangan untuk menjaga aurat perempuan. Perbedaan epistemologis antara mazhab Ḥanafī dan Syafi'i sangat mendalam dan berakar pada metodologi masing-masing dalam mengevaluasi hadis dan penalaran hukum. Secara akademik, studi ini berkontribusi terhadap wacana fikih gender dengan menunjukkan bagaimana nalar hukum Islam merespons perbedaan-perbedaan ritual berdasarkan gender, sekaligus menyoroti dinamika interpretasi dalam hukum Islam.

Kata kunci: Salat; Fikih; Gender; Mazhab Ḥanafī; Mazhab Syafi'i.

Introduction

As the central pillar of worship, prayer (*ṣalāh*) has well-established provisions and rules set forth in the Qur'an and ḥadīth (Sudarto, 2018). The procedural aspects (kaifiyyah) of prayer were directly exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as stated in the ḥadīth urging Muslims to pray as he did. Scholars agree that the Prophet's teachings on prayer must be followed without alteration or innovation (Kahraman, 2022). The legal rulings for prayer apply equally to men and women because the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions address all believers without distinction. Nonetheless, some procedural differences exist—for instance, women are advised to cover their bodies more fully during bowing and prostration to maintain modesty (*ʿawrah*) (Muhammad & Sumardi, 2019). These distinctions, however, do not negate gender equality in Islam; rather, they affirm complementary roles, as emphasized by (Mitamimah, 2021), who asserts that both men and women possess equal status and freedom of religious expression.

Despite general uniformity in obligation and purpose, there are subtle differences in the way men and women perform prayer (Ansari, 2014). These distinctions can be viewed through the lens of egalitarianism in Islamic worship not as signs of inequality but as expressions of justice that account for differing roles and physical conditions. As discussed by (Marwing & Yunus, 2021), explain that gender equality in Islamic law is grounded in fairness rather than identity, balancing *fiṭrah* (human nature) and responsibilities. Therefore, differences in procedural aspects of prayer between genders

should not be perceived as discriminatory but as part of a juristic effort to preserve propriety, comfort, and decorum during worship. Such interpretations underline the adaptability of Islamic law in accommodating the needs of diverse believers while maintaining its spiritual and ethical essence.

The obligation of prayer is firmly established by the Qur'an, Sunnah, and *ijmā'*, binding upon every mature Muslim without dispute (Al Hafid, 2004). The procedures (*kaifiyyah*) of prayer are subject to interpretive variations among jurists, reflecting different methodologies of legal reasoning (*istinbāt*). These differences are natural and expected in Islamic scholarship, which values diversity of thought within the bounds of revelation. However, in contemporary Muslim societies, differences in prayer practices sometimes lead to contention and mutual blame (Bakar et al., 2021). Instead of fostering mutual respect, such disputes often stem from limited textual understanding and excessive sectarian zeal. Variations in interpreting texts are part of the intellectual richness of Islam and should be embraced as a sign of scholarly vitality rather than division (Ilahi et al., 2023).

Previous studies have highlighted gender-related discussions in Islamic ritual jurisprudence. hadiths concerning women's rows (*shaf*) in congregational prayer, promoting an egalitarian understanding of women's participation in worship (Junaid & Lutfiah, 2024). traditional fiqh paradigms by emphasizing the need for gender justice in ritual interpretation (Fithriani & Faridah, 2024), while Sukron et al. reconstructed women's obligation for Friday prayers through *fiqh al-ḥadīth* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approaches (Sukron et al., 2025). Other works, such as (Nst et al., 2024)) and (Tataharja, 2019), have examined broader aspects of prayer in classical and contemporary contexts. However, few studies have focused specifically on the gender-based differences in prayer procedures as viewed through the comparative perspectives of the Ḥanafī and Shāfiʿī madhhab, which is the precise focus of this research.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the *kaifiyyah* differences in prayer between men and women from the viewpoints of the Ḥanafī and Shāfiʿī madhhab. It seeks to identify specific procedural divergences—such as hand placement, bowing and prostration posture, vocal recitation, and the method of alerting the imām—while exploring the legal reasoning (*istinbāt*) underlying these distinctions. The Ḥanafī madhhab, associated with *Ahl al-Ra'y* (rationalist reasoning), and the Shāfiʿī madhhab, which synthesizes textual and rational approaches (*Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and *Ahl al-Ra'y*), represent two foundational schools in Islamic jurisprudence (Haris et al., 2023). By focusing on these two traditions, this study not only contributes to comparative fiqh scholarship but also explores the philosophical question of how women are positioned in Islamic ritual space.

Ultimately, this research aspires to enrich contemporary fiqh discourse by integrating normative rigor with gender-sensitive reflection and contextual adaptability.

Methods

The type of research employed in this study is normative or library research, using a comparative study approach, specifically, the madhhabs of thought comparison method. This method of Islamic legal research focuses on comparing the arguments and opinions of various madhhabs of thought regarding a specific legal issue (Arfa & Marpaung, 2016). Accordingly, the research is centered on a comparative analysis of the differences and similarities in the views of the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhabs regarding procedural differences in prayer between men and women.

In the study of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), data is generally classified into two types: primary data, which refers to the main sources that accommodate the views of a particular madhhab of thought in the form of written works, and secondary data, which includes relevant literature used as supplementary references to the primary sources (Bisri, 2003). This research's primary data consists of the authoritative texts of the two madhhabs of thought. For the Ḥanafī madhhab, the researcher refers to *Ḥāshiyat Ibn 'Ābidīn*, *Badā'i' al-Ṣanā'i'*, and several other related works. For the Shāfi'ī Madhhab, references include *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn*, *al-Majmū'*, *al-Fiqh al-Manhajī*, among others. Meanwhile, the secondary data is drawn from comparative *fiqh* literature, such as *al-Fiqh 'alā al-Madhāhib al-Arba'ah*, *Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*, and other scholarly texts that support the complexity of the data and the depth of this research.

Data collection in this study was carried out using the documentation method or document study. This document study is also usually called a literature review (Darmalaksana, 2022). The researcher collected data through several studies discussing the differences in the *kaifiyyah* of prayer between men and women, sourced from both primary and secondary materials. Once the data has been gathered, the next step is to process the data. The data processing method in this study is centered on data analysis, which involves organizing the data in a structured and systematic manner to assist the researcher in drawing conclusions (Bachtiar, 2019). The steps include data reduction, data presentation, and the formulation of conclusions and verification.

In selecting and validating the opinions of the two madhhabs of thought, this study relies on positions considered *mu'tabar* (authoritative) within each madhhab. These views are widely accepted by most scholars and supported by the madhhab's primary references. When internal differences are found within a madhhab, the researcher prioritizes the stronger opinion (*rājiḥ*) based on the strength of its evidence and the reliability of its transmission. The comparative analysis aligns equivalent issues across the

two madhhab and examines the legal arguments, textual evidence, and methodological reasoning (*istinbāt*) behind each view.

Result and Discussion

Gendered Ritual Differences in Prayer: A Comparative Overview of Six Ritual Practices

In examining the ritual dimensions of prayer, particularly about gender-based distinctions, six key components emerge as points of divergence between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab of thought. These include: the position of the hands during *takbīrat al-iḥrām*, the manner of placing the hands while standing, the posture during *rukū'* (bowing), the arrangement of limbs during *sujūd* (prostration), the rules governing vocal recitation, and the appropriate way of signaling the *imām* when an error or disruption occurs during prayer. While these components may appear technical, they are embedded within broader jurisprudential reasoning. These points will be examined comparatively to reveal the legal diversity within Islamic tradition and the epistemological logic underpinning ritual gender differentiation.

First, hand position during *takbīrat al-iḥrām*. When someone begins prayer, it is sunnah for them to raise both hands to the level of their earlobes or their shoulders, with the approximate fingertips of the hand reaching that position. The sunnah of raising the hands begins when the *takbīrat al-iḥrām* begins, and ends when the *takbīrat al-iḥrām* is finished. There is no difference of opinion regarding the ruling on the sunnah of raising the hands at the beginning of the prayer (Zaidan, 1993). However, there are differences of opinion regarding the hand position for women during the *takbīrat al-iḥrām*, whether it is the same as for men or not.

Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab have different opinions regarding the position of the hands for men during the *takbīrat al-iḥrām*. The Ḥanafī madhhab states that the position of the hands for men when *takbīrat al-iḥrām* is parallel to the ears, because raising the hands when *takbīrat al-iḥrām* aims at notification in the imamate (leadership of prayer). In contrast, the Shāfi'ī Madhhab holds that the hands should be raised to the level of the shoulders (Al-Kasani, n.d.). Regarding the position of the hands during the *takbīrat al-iḥrām* in prayer for women, both the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab, in their valid (*ṣaḥīḥ*) opinions, state that the hands should be raised to shoulder level (al-Asqalani, n.d.; al Marghinani, n.d.).

Second, the position of placing the right hand over the left. The Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab agree that it is sunnah to place the right hand on the left hand after the *takbīrat al-iḥrām* for those performing the prayer (Zuhaili, 1999). Regarding the differences in *kaifiyyah* between men and women, the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab hold differing views. In the Ḥanafī madhhab, there is a distinction in the method of placing the hands between

men and women. For men, it is sunnah to place the hands below the navel (M. A. bin Ali, 1966). The method involves wrapping the little finger and thumb of the right hand around the left wrist, while the remaining three fingers are left open (Abidin, 1966). While for women and *khunthā*, it is sunnah to place the right palm over the back of the left palm, without wrapping, and to position the hands below the chest—some say on the chest. This ruling is based on the reasoning that it better preserves the 'awrah of women (Abidin, 1966).

According to the Shāfi'ī madhhab, the sunnah of placing the hands is done by placing the right palm on the back of the left hand while holding the wrist and part of the lower arm of the left hand (Al-Bujairami, 1995). There is also an opinion that allows the *muṣallī* to choose between stretching the fingers of the right hand along the left wrist or placing them along the lower arm. (Al-Anshori, n.d.). Regarding the differences between men and women, the Shāfi'ī madhhab does not differentiate between them. Therefore, the provisions for placing the hands below the chest and above the navel apply equally to both men and women (Al-Jaziri, 2003).

Third, the position of body parts during *rukū'*. The Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab agree that it is sunnah for a person performing prayer (*mushalli*) to straighten their neck in line with their back while in the bowing (*rukū'*) position. This is based on the practice of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who would level his back during *rukū'* to such an extent that if water were poured on it, it would not spill (Al-Jaziri, 2003). It is also sunnah that the head be aligned with the lower part of the body (the buttocks), neither raised nor lowered (Zaidan, 1993). Even in the Shāfi'ī madhhab, it is also stated that what is included in the sunnah of bowing is straightening the legs (Al Husaini, 1994).

The Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab also agree on the existence of differences between men and women when bowing. Both argue that this difference is based on the existence of women's 'awrah, which must be covered during *rukū'*. However, there is a difference between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab regarding which parts must be distinguished between men and women when *rukū'*.

The Ḥanafī madhhab holds the view, as cited in *Al-Mujtaba* and *Al-Mi'raj*, that for women, it is sunnah to bow slightly during *rukū'*, to keep their fingers together and place them on their knees. Moreover, it is not recommended that women keep their arms away from their bodies; instead, they should keep their hands close to their sides, as this helps to cover their 'awrah better (Abidin, 1966). Meanwhile, the Shāfi'ī madhhab holds that the only difference between men and women in the *rukū'* position lies in the placement of the arms concerning the sides of the body. For women—even if they are still children or have reached the age of discernment (*tamyīz*)—as well as for intersex individuals (*khunthā*), it is recommended to keep their bodies close together by pressing their elbows against their

sides. This differs from how men pray, as it aims to ensure that a woman's 'awrah remains more fully covered (Al-Bujairami, 1995).

Fourth, the position of body parts during *sujūd*. Prostration (*sujūd*) is one of the pillars of prayer that all scholars of the Islamic madhhab of thought agree upon. When *sujūd*, the knee is recommended as the first part to touch the ground, followed by the hand, the forehead, and the nose. In addition, tasbih is recommended while prostrating (Zaidan, 1993). Because prostration is an agreed-upon pillar, everyone who performs prayer is required to prostrate twice in each *rak'ah* (Al-Jaziri, 2003). There is a hadith that explains the procedure for prostrating:

Hadith Translation:

Narrated by Qutaibah bin Sa'id: Bakr bin Mudhar narrated to us, from Ja'far bin Rabi'ah, from al-A'raj, from 'Abdullah bin Malik bin Buhainah al-Asadi, who said: "When the Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrated, he spread his arms apart to the extent that we could see his armpits." Ibn Bukair added: "Bakr narrated to us: His armpits were white." (HR. Bukhari 3564).

The word *farraja baina yadaihi* means "opening (separating) between his two hands and his two sides". The wisdom is that this position is more like humility and ensures that the forehead touches the ground and distances oneself from the posture of a lazy person. The word *baina yadaih*, in its true meaning, means "in front of him", which means wanting to distance (push) in front of him from the ground until the whiteness of his armpits appears (B. A. M. M. bin A. Al-Aini, n.d.).

This rule of keeping the stomach away from the thighs and the arms away from the armpits during prostration applies if one is in a quiet place, but if one is in a crowded place, it is *sunnah* to keep one's arms together to avoid disturbing other people (Al-Thahthawi, 1997). However, according to the Ḥanafī madhhab, this guideline applies specifically to men. As for women, it is not recommended for them to expose their arms during prostration (M. A. bin Ali, 1966). This difference in the manner of performing *sujūd* for women is based on the consideration that such a posture better conceals the 'awrah (M. B. Al-Aini, 2000). Therefore, it is recommended (*sunnah*) for women to keep their bodies close together by pressing their abdomen against their thighs and their arms against the sides of their body during *sujūd*.

In agreement with this, the Shāfi'ī madhhab also holds that women—and even intersex individuals (*khunthā*), as a precaution, are recommended to keep parts of their bodies close to one another during *sujūd*, in order to conceal their 'awrah better. It is even mentioned that the recommendation to bring the limbs closer together—such as pressing the elbows against the sides of the body—applies throughout all movements of a woman's prayer (Al-Haitami, 1983).

Fifth, guidelines for recitation aloud during prayer. The Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhabs differ regarding the ruling on reciting aloud or quietly during prayer. According to the Ḥanafī madhhab, observing whether the recitation should be loud or silent is *wājib* (obligatory) for the *imām*, as it was consistently practiced by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Based on this, if an *imām* recites aloud in a prayer where the recitation is supposed to be quiet—or vice versa—he must perform *sujūd al-sahw* (prostration of forgetfulness). However, this ruling applies only to the *imām*, as recitation aloud during prayer is not obligatory for someone praying alone (*munfarid*) (M. B. Al-Aini, 2000). It is also based on the reason that people who pray alone are allowed to choose between the two, so this freedom negates the existence of any shortcomings in it (As-Sarkhasyi, n.d.).

Meanwhile, according to the Shāfi'ī madhhab, the ruling on reciting aloud or silently during prayer falls under *sunnah hay'ah*—a recommended practice related to the manner or form of the prayer. If it is omitted, it does not require compensation through *sujūd al-sahw* (Al-Bugha et al., 1992). Then, to determine whether women can raise their voices in prayer recitation, it is important first to understand whether a woman's voice is considered *'awrah*. Most scholars agree that a woman's voice is not *'awrah*, as the Companions often listened to the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to learn religious rulings. However, listening to a woman's voice that is soft, seductive, or melodious—even if it is *Qur'anic recitation*—is considered *ḥarām* (forbidden), due to the potential risk of temptation (*fitnah*) (Zuhaili, 1999).

Sixth, how to remind the imam when something happens in prayer. The Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhabs agree on the distinction between how men and women should alert the imam when something unexpected happens during prayer. Men are required to say *tasbīḥ* (e.g., *Subḥānallāh*), while women are allowed to clap their hands (An-Nawawi, 2012). As for women, if something disturbs or befalls them during prayer, they are permitted to clap their hands, not recite *tasbīḥ* like men (Al-Thahthawi, 1997). The proper way for women to clap during prayer is by striking the right hand's inner palm against the left hand's outer palm, or vice versa—striking the left hand's inner palm against the right hand's outer palm. This excludes the permissibility of clapping palms to palms (inner to inner) or back to back (outer to outer) (S. M. bin A. Asy-Syarbini, n.d.). Such forms of clapping resemble playful behavior, which may invalidate the prayer (S. A.-K. Asy-Syarbini, 1994).

Table 1: A Comparative Overview of Six Ritual Practices

No.	Aspect	Ḥanafī		Shāfi'ī	
		For Men	For Woman	For Men	For Women
1.	Position of the Hands During	Hands raised to the level of the ears	Hands raised to the level of the shoulders	Hands raised to the level of	Hands raised to the

	<i>Takbīrat al- iḥrām</i>			the shoulders	level of the shoulders
2.	Position of Placing the Right Hand Over the Left Hand	Place the right palm over the left hand, with the thumb and little finger wrapped around the left wrist, and position below the navel	Place the right palm over the left hand without wrapping, and position it above the chest.	Place the right palm over the back of the left hand; Fingers may either extend or wrap around the left wrist and position below the chest and above the navel.	
3.	The Position of Body Parts During Rukūʿ	It is sunnah to straighten the back in line with the hips, keep the upper arms away from the sides of the body, and spread the fingers while placing the hands on the knees.	It is sunnah to bow only slightly, keep the upper arms close to the sides of the body, and keep the fingers together while placing the hands on the knees.	It is sunnah to keep the upper arms away from the sides of the body.	It is sunnah to keep the upper arms close to the sides of the body.
4.	Position of Body Parts During Sujūd	It is sunnah to keep the abdomen away from the thighs and the arms away from the armpits.	It is sunnah to press the abdomen against the thighs and keep the arms close to the armpits.	It is sunnah to keep the abdomen away from the thighs and the arms away from the armpits.	It is sunnah to press the abdomen against the thighs and keep the arms close to the armpits.
5.	Guidelines on Recitation Aloud During Prayer	The minimum limit for silent recitation is that it is audible to oneself or someone nearby. The maximum is pronouncing each letter; The minimum for loud recitation is that it can be heard by someone not close. There is no maximum limit.	No distinction between men and women regarding the volume limits of prayer recitation; A woman's voice must not be melodious, musical, or overly softened, due to the risk of arousing male desire.	Loud recitation should be audible to those behind the reciter; the limit for silent recitation is only when the reciter can hear it.	It is sunnah to recite quietly when non- mahram men are present nearby; Raising the voice is allowed only when no non- mahram men are present, and even then, it must not be as loud as a man's voice.

6.	How to Remind the Imam When Something Happens in Prayer	Saying <i>tasbīḥ</i> “ <i>Subḥānallāh</i> ”	Clapping hands	Saying <i>tasbīḥ</i> “ <i>Subḥānallāh</i> ”	Clapping hands
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Source: Authors analysis

Epistemological Divergence: Tracing the Legal Reasoning in the Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī Madhhabs

The divergence between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī madhhabs regarding the hand position during *takbīrat al-iḥrām* lies in their differing methodologies of *ḥadīth* acceptance and legal reasoning. The Ḥanafī madhhab, known for its rationalist inclinations, often prioritizes the reliability of a *ḥadīth*’s content and its compatibility with overarching legal principles over its chain of transmission. Hence, even when a *ḥadīth* is categorized as *ḍa‘īf* (weak), as long as other reports reinforce it, it may still be utilized. This is evident in their reliance on a narration from Abdullah bin Mas‘ud, which supports raising the hands to the ears (As-Sarkhasyi, n.d.).

In contrast, the Shāfi‘ī madhhab places strict emphasis on the authenticity of *ḥadīths*, often dismissing those with interrupted chains (*munqaṭi‘*) regardless of the legal convenience they might offer. As a result, they favor narrations deemed stronger in *sanad* (chain of narration), such as those prescribing raising the hands to shoulder level (al-Asqalani, n.d.). This emphasis on textual precision leads them to apply the same ruling equally to men and women unless explicit textual evidence warrants differentiation.

Beyond textual analysis, the Ḥanafī position reflects a social-ethical concern: preserving a woman’s modesty and concealment of the ‘*awrah*. Thus, their legal reasoning integrates textual flexibility and sociocultural sensitivity (al Marghinani, n.d.). Meanwhile, the Shāfi‘ī position demonstrates legal formalism anchored in *ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ*, thereby maintaining uniformity across gender unless otherwise indicated. This contrast illustrates how each madhhab’s epistemological stance shapes their use of sources and their attitude towards contextual considerations in ritual practices (al-Asqalani, n.d.).

The methodological divergence between the two madhhabs is further apparent in their interpretations of hand placement and body postures during prayer. For instance, both madhhabs derive the practice of placing the right hand over the left from the same *ḥadīth* narrated by Wail ibn Hujr (HR. Abu Dawud, 726&727). However, their extrapolation differs: the Ḥanafis distinguish between genders, placing a woman’s hands below her chest without wrapping them around the wrist, reflecting a sociocultural consideration for covering the ‘*awrah*. This also aligns with their broader tendency to introduce distinctions in ritual acts for men and women based on societal norms and propriety.

Conversely, the Shāfi'ī madhhab maintains a unified standard for men and women in this posture, upholding the idea that unless a sound ḥadīth prescribes a gender-based distinction, uniformity is preferable. This points to their more text-centric and formalist approach in legal derivation. These nuances in epistemology—the balance between text and context in Ḥanafī jurisprudence, and the prioritization of textual integrity in the Shāfi'ī method—demonstrate a critical distinction in how each madhhab articulates legal rulings that affect ritual embodiment.

The difference of opinion between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab regarding the posture of the body during *rukū'* for women illustrates each madhhab's distinctive method of *istinbāṭ*. The Ḥanafī madhhab, as recorded in works such as *al-Mujtabā* and *al-Mi'rāj*, recommends that women should bow slightly during *rukū'*, keep their fingers together, and place their hands on their knees. They are also advised to keep their arms close to their sides rather than extend them outward. This ruling is grounded in concealing a woman's 'awrah more thoroughly. This approach reflects the Ḥanafī method of legal reasoning, which combines textual sources with *maṣlaḥah* (public interest) and 'urf (local custom) as valid foundations for juristic argument (Abidin, 1966).

In contrast, the Shāfi'ī madhhab, as explained in *Ḥāshiyat al-Bujayramī*, holds that the only significant difference between men and women in the *rukū'* posture lies in the positioning of the arms relative to the body. Women—even those who are children, have reached the age of discernment (*tamyīz*), or are intersex individuals (*khunthā*)—are advised to keep their bodies close together by pressing their elbows against their sides. However, this leads to a similar physical posture as that in the Ḥanafī madhhab; the Shāfi'ī position relies more heavily on authentic and explicit textual evidence. Legal rulings in the Shāfi'ī framework are generally not derived through juristic preference or public interest unless supported by sound prophetic traditions (Al-Bujairami, 1995).

The divergence between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab regarding women's posture during *sujūd* reflects their differing epistemological approaches in legal reasoning (*istinbāṭ*). In the Ḥanafī madhhab, rulings on women's prostration are derived from a concern for a strong emphasis on safeguarding the 'awrah. This madhhab explicitly states that the general postures prescribed for men are not necessarily applicable to women. As referenced in the works of (M. A. bin Ali, 1966) and (M. B. Al-Aini, 2000), women are recommended to keep their bodies close together during *sujūd*—pressing their abdomen against their thighs and keeping their arms alongside the body—as a precaution to ensure maximum concealment of the 'awrah. This method of legal reasoning shows the Ḥanafī madhhab's inclination to incorporate sociomoral considerations such as *maṣlaḥah* (public benefit) and prevailing customs ('urf) in determining ritual practices.

Meanwhile, the Shāfi'ī madhhab, known for its text-centric methodology, also recommends that women and intersex individuals (*khunthā*) keep their limbs close together during *sujūd* as a precautionary measure to maintain modesty. However, this recommendation is not merely the result of contextual interpretation but rather based on the principle of *iḥtiyāt* (legal precaution), rooted in textual sources and the legal practices of early scholars. (Al-Haitami, 1983) Even notes that the recommendation to draw the limbs close to the body applies not only during *sujūd* but throughout all movements of a woman's prayer.

The differing views between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhabs regarding the permissibility and limits of reciting aloud in prayer reflect fundamentally different approaches to legal reasoning (*istinbāt al-ḥukm*). The Ḥanafī madhhab adopts a more flexible interpretation of texts, taking into account the principle of *maṣlaḥah* (public benefit) and the social impact of legal rulings. According to their view, a woman's voice is not considered part of the *'awrah*, so there is no essential difference between men and women regarding the rules of reciting silently or aloud in prayer. However, this is conditioned by the requirement that a woman's voice not be melodious, musical, or softened in a way that might provoke desire. Based on this principle, women are also prohibited from serving as *mu'adhdhin* (callers to prayer) to avoid attracting inappropriate attention (Al-Jaziri, 2003).

In contrast, the Shāfi'ī madhhab takes a more cautious and normative stance, strictly applying the principle of *sadd al-dharī'ah* (blocking the means to harm). They permit women to recite aloud only when *no ajnabī* (non-*maḥram*) men are present, and even then, the volume of their voice must not match that of men. The concern over potential *fitnah* (temptation) becomes the primary consideration, regardless of whether a woman's voice is technically classified as *'awrah*. This reflects the Shāfi'ī epistemological tendency to tightly control the social effects of worship practices and adhere closely to a precautionary approach even in the absence of explicit prohibitive texts (Al-Jaziri, 2003).

Both madhhabs draw on the same *ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Qatadah, which states that the Prophet (peace be upon him) occasionally raises his voice in verses during prayers, which are usually recited silently. (HR. Bukhari, 762) However, the legal conclusions they reach differ due to their distinct methods of legal reasoning. The Ḥanafī madhhab allows room for interpretive reasoning based on rational and social considerations, while the Shāfi'ī madhhab establishes stricter boundaries grounded in textual preservation and maintaining the sanctity of worship (al-Asqalani, n.d.; An-Nawawi, 2012).

The legal reasoning of both the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhabs in addressing how to remind the *imām* during prayer is rooted in the same prophetic *ḥadīth*: "Whoever experiences something during the prayer (that requires alerting others), let him say *tasbīḥ*,

for through *tasbīḥ* the attention of others will be drawn. As for clapping, it is for women.” (HR. Muslim, 421). While both accept this *ḥadīth* as the foundational source, their interpretive methodologies yield different applications (An-Nawawi, 2012).

The Ḥanafī madhhab emphasizes the permissibility of men reciting *tasbīḥ* as a form of *dhikr* (remembrance), arguing that the phrase “*Subḥānallāh*” is a Qur’anic expression of glorification, not ordinary speech. Therefore, it does not invalidate the prayer even when used to alert the *imām*. This reflects the Ḥanafī epistemology, which allows for pragmatic application grounded in semantic distinctions and broader legal principles. Moreover, they do not require the utterance of *tasbīḥ* to be accompanied by specific *niyyah* (intention), indicating their leniency in ritual matters where practical necessity is evident. Their perspective also downplays concerns over *fitnah* (temptation) unless there is exaggerated or seductive vocalization, thus allowing for more contextual nuance in practice (Al-Thahthawi, 1997; As-Saghnaqi, 1435).

By contrast, the Shāfi'ī madhhab applies a stricter textualist and formalist approach. According to their reasoning, the prayer is rendered invalid if *tasbīḥ* is uttered solely to communicate a message to the *imām* rather than as an act of *dhikr*. This is because such use closely resembles worldly speech, which is prohibited during prayer. The exception is made for those unaware of this rule, for whom the prayer remains valid. This cautious stance reflects the Shāfi'ī prioritization of maintaining prayer's sanctity and singular purpose, even in moments requiring communication. Their concern lies in preserving the spiritual quality of prayer by avoiding any overlap with mundane expressions (Al-Jamal, n.d.; S. M. bin A. Asy-Syarbini, n.d.).

The epistemological divergence between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab is deeply rooted in their respective methodologies of *ḥadīth* evaluation and legal reasoning. The Ḥanafīs exhibit a more flexible, contextualist approach that integrates rationality, public interest (*maṣlaḥah*) (Tabrani, 2018), and customary practice (*‘urf*) (Nurhalizah & Fageh, 2022) to accommodate social realities, particularly in matters of ritual involving gender distinctions. Conversely, the Shāfi'ī adhere closely to the authenticity of *ḥadīths* and maintain formal consistency, prioritizing textual evidence over contextual adaptation unless explicitly warranted. These differences highlight the richness and diversity of Islamic jurisprudential thought and underscore the dynamic interplay between textual fidelity and contextual sensitivity in shaping religious ritual.

This epistemological divergence also invites reflection through the lens of contemporary gender analysis. Kecia Ali emphasizes that many traditional fiqh rulings, especially those related to ritual practices and bodily comportment, reflect textual interpretations and social assumptions about gender roles and modesty (K. Ali, 2006). Similarly, Asma Barlas critiques the tendency in classical exegesis and jurisprudence to

equate female piety with invisibility and bodily restriction, arguing that such interpretations often stem from patriarchal cultural norms rather than the egalitarian ethos of the Qur'an (Barlas, 2002). Viewed from this perspective, the Ḥanafī madhhab's emphasis on sociocultural considerations and gender differentiation can be seen as reinforcing existing gender hierarchies, while the Shāfi'ī madhhab's textual uniformity—though seemingly neutral—may overlook the embodied realities and sociopolitical constraints that women face in religious spaces. Integrating these contemporary critiques highlights the need for an interpretive framework that considers the authenticity of hadith and jurisprudential coherence and critically assesses the gendered implications of legal rulings in both historical and present contexts.

Conclusion

The procedures (*kaifiyyah*) of prayer can be found in the hadith *fi'li*, including some differences regarding the *kaifiyyah* of prayer between men and women. There are differences between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab of thought in accepting, assessing, and interpreting *ḥadīth*, related to the *kaifiyyah* of prayer. Regarding the position of the hands during *takbīrat al-iḥrām*, while standing, and the rule on vocal recitation, differences exist between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab. However, both madhhab agree on the hand positions during *rukū'* and *sujūd*, and on the methods for alerting the imam in the event of an issue, for both men and women. Although different in the *istinbāṭ* method, both agree that the difference in the *kaifiyyah* of prayer between men and women aims to maintain women's *'awrah* more optimally. The epistemological divergence between the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī madhhab is deeply rooted in their respective methodologies of *ḥadīth* evaluation and legal reasoning. Future research is encouraged to expand the scope by incorporating perspectives from other Islamic madhhab of thought and engaging with contemporary gender studies and critical Islamic thought. Such interdisciplinary exploration will enrich the discourse on ritual practices and offer more inclusive and contextualized interpretations of worship.

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