

Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, compiled by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2026

Derived largely from the writings of Maulana Muhammad Ali

*Produced by:*

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# **Study 12: Prayer — The language of prayer**

- The Quran says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَأْنِكُمْ<sup>ط</sup>

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالِمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

“And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth  
and the diversity of **your tongues** and colours.

Surely there are signs in this for the learned.” — 30:22

فَأَنَّمَا يُسْرِنُ بِلسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

“So We have made it (i.e., the Quran) easy in your tongue  
that they may be mindful.” — 44:58

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَّاكِرٍ ﴿١٧﴾

“And certainly We have made the Quran **easy to remember**,  
but is there anyone who will be mindful?” — 54:17

- Naturally a person would like to unfold their heart before their Maker by praying in the language in which they can most readily express their feelings, and this is fully recognized in Islam.
- This may be done not only in the individual, private prayers, but even during congregational, public prayers.

- Subject to following the Imam and saying the necessary prescribed words, the worshipper is free at any opportunity, in any posture, to add their own prayers in their own tongue.
- In the public services such prayers would undoubtedly be limited since the worshipper must follow the Imam, but in the private portion they may be of any length.
- But the public service needs to be conducted in a language which is common to all Muslims, otherwise prayer would fail in achieving one of the great ends for which it is instituted, that is the unification of Muslims through prayer.

- Muslims of a locality gather for daily prayers, then there is the more extensive gathering for the Friday prayers, and then again the still larger assemblies at *Eid* prayers, culminating in that mighty assemblage at Makkah of all nations and all races on the most perfect status of equality.
- Without using a common language for those words which are uttered out loud during these devotions, the object of uniting humanity through prayer would fail altogether.

- This language, it is evident, could be none other than Arabic, the language of the Quran. The Quran itself says to the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ :

وَإِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٤﴾  
عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٩٥﴾

“And surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.  
The Faithful Spirit has brought it, on your heart that you may be a warner,  
in plain Arabic language.”

— 26:192–195

- *Question: Is prayer no use at all, and without any value, if it is in a language that you don't understand?*
- *Answer:* The Islamic prayer does not consist of words only. There is also the attitude of mind and the inner feeling itself. This is produced by the atmosphere around the worshipper and by the bodily postures of reverence which the worshipper adopts.
- **The mood**, more than words, generates a true spirit of humility.
- It would be **wrong** to say that prayer **has no benefit at all** for the person who says it without understanding a word of Arabic.

- The movements of the body, the raising of the hands to the ears, the standing up with folded hands, the bowing down, the placing of the forehead on the ground, the sitting down in a particular attitude of reverence, all go a long way towards producing in the worshipper humility and consciousness of the presence of God.
- In fact, the whole self of the worshipper is expressing what the words convey. It will indeed be highly more beneficial if he understands the spoken language as well, but it is wrong to say that the **language of movements** has no meaning for them.

- The most often repeated expressions and the seven short sentences of the opening chapter of the Quran, called *al-Fātiḥah*, can be learnt, along with their meanings, in a short time and with very little effort.
- Even if the prayer service were held in one's own language, still people would have to spend some time in learning it, and the learning of the significance of the Arabic words would only require a little additional time.
- The Quran also says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ<sup>ط</sup>

“And We sent no messenger but with the language of his people,  
so that he might explain to them clearly.” — 14:4

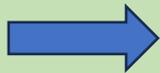
- This verse tells us that every messenger explained his teachings to his people in their own language. This is why the Quran was revealed in Arabic, the language of the Holy Prophet Muhammad

ﷺ

- Although we say certain essential parts of our regular prayers in Arabic for the reasons mentioned above, the meanings of those parts should be explained to us in our own language by our teachers of religion.

- Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad said:

“All languages were created by God. You must make supplications (*dua*) in your language which you understand well, within the prescribed prayer (*namaz*). This has an effect on the heart, creating feelings of humility and devotion. You must recite the Word of God in Arabic and bear its meaning in mind, but certainly make your petitions to God in your own language.



➔ Those people who say the prescribed prayer speedily and then after it they make lengthy supplications are unaware of the true nature of prayer. The time to plead before God and make *dua* is during the *namaz*. Make much supplications during it.”  
(*Malfuzat*, vol. 2, p. 298)

***END OF STUDY 12***