59957 - Where to Place Your Hands in Prayer

the question

What is the ruling on clasping the hands when praying?

Summary of answer

Placing the hands on the chest is what is established in the Sunnah. Hands are placed on the chest in two ways: 1- Placing the right hand on top of the left hand, wrist and forearm. 2- Clasping the right hand over the left.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Ruling on clasping the hands when praying

Clasping the hands when praying means placing the right hand over the left when standing . This is one of the sunnahs of prayer, and is proven from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This is the view of the majority of scholars.

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“As for placing the right hand on the left during prayer, it is one of the sunnahs of prayer according to the majority of scholars. That was narrated from `Ali, Abu Hurayrah, An-Nakha`i, Abu Majlaz, Sa`id ibn Jubayr, Ath-Thawri, Ash-Shafi`i and Ashab Ar-Ra`i. It was also narrated by Ibn Al-Mundhir from Malik.” (Al-Mughni, 1/281)

The scholars of the Standing Committee said:

“Clasping the hands in prayer means placing the right hand over the left hand, and letting the

arms hang means letting them hang down by the sides . It is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) placed his right hand on his left during prayer, when standing to recite Quran, and when standing after rising from bowing. This is according to the report narrated by Ahmad and Muslim from Wa'il ibn Hajar (may Allah be pleased with him), that he saw the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) raising his hands and saying Takbir when he started to pray, then he wrapped his cloak around himself, then he placed his right hand on his left. When he wanted to bow, he brought out his hands, then he raised them and said Takbir , then he bowed. When he said "Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah (Allah hears the one who praises Him)" he raised his hands , and when he prostrated, he prostrated between his hands." According to a report narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawud he said: Then he placed his right hand on his left hand, wrist and forearm. According to a report narrated by Abu Hazim from Sahl ibn Sa`d Al-Sa`idi: The people were commanded to place the right hand on the left forearm when praying. Abu Hazim said: All I know is that he attributed it to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). (Narrated by Ahmad and Al-Bukhari)

There is no Hadith to prove that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) let his arms hang by his sides when standing during prayer." (Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah)

Where to place your hands in prayer

As for where the hands are to be placed, it is on the chest.

Ibn Khuzaymah (479) narrated that Wa'il ibn Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I prayed with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and he placed his right hand over his left hand on his chest. (Classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Tahqiq Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah)

Al-Albani said in Sifat Salat An-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), p. 69:

"Placing them (the hands) on the chest is what is established in the Sunnah, and doing otherwise is either weak (based on weak evidence) or has no basis."

As-Sindi said in Hashiyat Ibn Majah:

“Just as it is Sunnah to clasp the hands and not let them hang by one’s sides, it is proven that they are to be placed in the chest, not elsewhere. As for the Hadith “It is Sunnah to place one hand over the other beneath the navel when praying”, the scholars agree that it is inauthentic.”

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin said:

“This method – i.e., placing the hands beneath the navel – is what is prescribed according to the well known view of the madhhab, and there is a Hadith narrated from `Ali which says “It is Sunnah to place the right hand over the left beneath the navel when praying.” It was narrated by Abu Dawud and classed as inauthentic by An-Nawawi, Ibn Hajar and others.

Some scholars are of the view that the hands may be placed above the navel. This was stated by Imam Ahmad.

Other scholars are of the view that they should be placed on the chest, and this is the most correct view. There is some debate concerning the evidence for that but the apparent meaning of the Hadith of Sahl ibn Sa`d which is in Al-Bukhari supports the idea that the hands should be placed on the chest. The best report concerning this issue, even though there is some debate concerning it, is the Hadith of Wa’il ibn Hujr who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to put (his hands) on his chest.” (Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti`, 3/36, 37)

How are the hands placed on the chest in prayer?

As for the manner in which the hands are placed , there are two ways:

- Placing the right hand on top of the left hand, wrist and forearm
- Clasping the right hand over the left

And Allah knows best.