

Prophet Muhammad's Manner of Performing Prayers

(May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

By Shaikh Abdul-Aziz Bin Abdullah Bin Baz

(May Allah's Mercy Be Upon him)

All praise be to Allah alone, and may His peace and blessings be upon His messenger and servant, our Prophet Muhammad, his family and his companions.

The objective of this concise pamphlet is to explain how Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to perform his prayers. I would like to present this explanation to every male and female Muslim so that they may strive to take up the Prophet's manner in performing their prayers as a model for them. It was narrated by Al-Bukhari that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said:

"Perform your prayers in the same manner as you have seen me doing."
Therefore, here is the explanation for the Prophet's manner of prayer:

1. To perform completely the ablution, adopting the method commanded by Allah in the Qur'an:

"O you who believe, when you prepare for prayer, wash your faces and your hands (and arms) to elbows, rub your heads (with water) and (wash) your feet to the ankles."(5:6)

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) said:

"Prayer without purification is not accepted."

2. To turn one's face and whole body towards the *Qiblah*, which is the *Ka'bah* (at Makkah), intending by heart to perform the prayer which he wants to fulfill, whether it is an obligatory prayer or a supererogatory prayer. The worshipper should not pronounce his intention openly, because neither the Prophet nor his companions used to utter the intention for prayer. Thus, pronouncing the intention for prayer in an audible voice is a heresy and an unlawful action. Whether the individual be an Imam or one performing his prayer in individually, he should make a *Sutra* [i.e. a barrier between him and anyone who might pass in front of him] for his prayer. Directing the face towards the *Qiblah* (the *Ka'bah* at Makkah) is an imperative condition for every prayer. However, there are well known exceptions to this rule explained in authoritative books (for whoever wishes to refer to them).

3. To pronounce "*Takbeeratul-Ihraam*" that is to say, "*Allahu Akbar*" celebrating by that the greatness of Allah and looking meanwhile, downwards to the place where he will prostrate.

4. To raise one's hands up to the level of the shoulders or near to the lobes of his ears, while pronouncing "*Takbeeratul- Ihraam*".

5. To put one's right hand over his left hand, wrist and forearm and put them both over his chest, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to do.

6, It is advisable that the worshipper recite this opening supplication saying:

"Allahumma baa'id baynee wa bayna khataayaaya kama baa'adta baynal-mashriqi wal maghribi, Allahumma naqqinee min khataayaaya kama yonaqqath- thawbal-abyado min ad-danas., Allahumma -ghsilnee min khataayaaya bil-maa'i wath-thalji wal-barad.

This supplication means:

"O Allah, separate me from my sins as You have separated the east and west. O Allah, cleanse me of my sins as the white robe is cleansed from dirt. O Allah, wash off my sins with water, snow and hail"

Or, he may say instead:

"Sobhaanaka Allahumma wa bi-hamdika watabaaraka -smoka wa ta'aala jaddoka wa laa ilaaha ghayroka"

This supplication means:

"Praise and glory be to You O Allah! Blessed be Your Name, exalted be Your Majesty and Glory. There is nothing which deserves to be worshipped except You."

Or he may say any other supplications which the Prophet, (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) used to say in his prayers. It is better to recite these supplications alternately, the first one in the dawn prayer "*Fajr*", the second in the noon prayer "*Zuhr*", each one by turn, in conformity with what the Prophet used to do.

After reciting the opening supplication, the worshipper says:

"A'ootho bi-llahi min al-shaytaanir-rajeem"

Which means:

"I seek protection of Allah against the accursed Satan."

Then he says:

" Bismi-llahir-Rahmaanir- Raheem"

Which means:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful".

and recites the *Faatihah* (The opening Soorah of the Glorious Qur'an).

Al-Hamdu li-llahi Rabbil-'aalameen.

Ar-Rahmaanir-Raheem.

Maaliki yawmid-Deen.

Iyyaaka na'budu wa iyyaaka nasta'een.

Ihdinaas-Siraatal-Mustaqeem.

Siraatallatheena an'amta 'alayhim, Ghairil-maghdoobi 'alayhim wa lad-Daaalleen.

Which means:

"All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds,

The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful,

The Only Owner (and the only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection),

You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything),

Guide us to the Straight Way,

The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians).

Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings be upon him, said:

"The prayer of one who does not recite al-Faatihah is invalid".

The worshipper should say "Aameen" - after reciting the *Faatihah* - loudly if the prayer is said loudly, and whisper it in inaudible prayers. To be in conformity with the traditions of the Prophet, the worshipper is advised to recite verses from medium size *Soorahs* (chapters) of the Qur'an in the *Zuhr* (noon), *Asr* (late afternoon), and *Isha* (night) prayers. As for the *Fajr* (dawn) prayer, the worshipper is advised to recite a passage from the long *Soorahs* (chapters) of the Qur'an. He has the choice in *Maghrib* (sunset) prayer either to recite passages from the long *Soorahs* (chapters) or from the short *Soorahs* [chapters] of the Qur'an.

Bismi-llahir- Rahmanir- Raheem

(1) *Qul: Huwa-llahu Ahad*

(2) *Allahus-Samad*

(3) *Lam yalid wa lam yoolad*

(4) *Wa lam yakul lahu kufuwan Ahad*

Which means:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

(1) *Say (O Muhammad): 'He is Allah, (the) One.*

(2) *Allah is the Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need)*

(3) *He begets not, nor was He begotten*

(4) *And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.*

7. Then the worshipper bows in "Rukoo" raising his hands up to the level of his shoulders or ears while saying "Allahu Akbar" "Allah is Great" then bends down, making his head and back on one level and putting his hands with the fingers spread on his knees. The worshipper should feel serenity and tranquility while bowing, he should say at least three times:

"Subhaana Rabbiyal-'Azeem"

Which means:

"Glorified [and free of imperfections] is my Lord, the Supreme"

It is advisable to say while bowing in addition to that:

"Subhaanak-Allahumma Rabbanaa wa bi-hamdika, Allahumma-ghfir lee"

Which means:

"Glory be to Thee, O Allah, Our Lord and I praise Thee. Forgive me my sins."

8. To raise one's head up from bowing, raising one's hands to the level of his shoulders or ears, saying, in case of being Imam or praying alone:

"Sami'a Allahu liman hamidah"

which means:

"Allah listens to him who praises Him"

While resuming the standing position, he should say:

"Rabbanaa wa lakal- hamd, hamdan katheeran tayyiban mubaarakan fee-hi, mil'as-samaawaati wa mil'al-ardhi wa mil'a ma baynahumaa wa mil'a ma shi'ta min shay'in ba'd"

This supplication means:

"Our Lord, praise be for Thee only, praises plentiful, beautiful and blessed as to fill the heavens, the earth, what in between, and fill that which will please Thee besides them."

But if the worshipper is a follower, and led in his prayer by the Imam he should say when rising up *"Rabbanaa wa lakal-hamd... etc.*

It is advisable for the Imam, the follower, or one who prays alone to add also:

Ahluth-Thanaa'i wal-Majd, Ahaqqu maa qaala-l-'Abdu, wa kullu-naa laka 'Abdun, Allahumma laa maani'a limaa A'taita wa laa mu'tiya limaa mana'ta, wa laa yanfa'u Thal-Jaddi minka-l-Jaddu.

Which means:

"You are Allah who deserves all praise and all glory, Your praising is the best and most true of whatever Your servant can say, we all are Your servants. O Allah, no one can ever deprive what You have bestowed and no one can ever give what You have deprived, and the wealth or majesty cannot benefit the one who possesses them with You. "

The worshipper is advised to put his hands on his chest, as he had done before he bowed. Both Waa'il Ibn Hujr and Sahl Ibn Sa'd reported that this was the manner of the Prophet when he used to raise his head up after bowing.

9. To prostrate saying "*Allahu Akbar* " "Allah is Great". He should touch the ground with his knees before touching it with his hands, if that is easy for him. If not, he is permitted to touch the ground by his hands before his knees. His fingers and toes should be directed towards the *Qiblah* (Makkah), and his hands should be stretched, and the fingers close together and not separated. In prostration, the worshipper should use these seven organs:

'The forehead with the nose, both hands, both knees and the internal parts of the toes.

These seven organs should touch the ground. Then the worshipper should say three times or more:

"Subhaana Rabbiyal-A'laa"

which means:

"Glorified [and free of imperfections] is my Lord, the Most High."

It is advisable to say:

*"Subhaanaka Allahumma Rabbanaa wa bi-hamdika,
Allahumma-ghfir-lee.*

This means:

"Glory be to Thee, O Allah Our Lord, and I praise Thee. O Allah, forgive me my sins."

The worshipper should exceed more and more in supplications, because the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:

Which means:

"As for bowing (Rukoo) you should glorify your Lord while performing it. As for prostration, you should do your best to supplicate and ask for more from Him, because your supplications during prostration are more worthy to be accepted."

The worshipper should ask his Lord for prosperity both in this worldly life and in the hereafter, whether it is an obligatory prayer or an optional prayer. The worshipper, while prostrating, should neither bring his

hands close to his sides, nor (stick) his abdomen to his thighs, or his thighs to his legs. The worshipper's forearms should be raised up from the ground due to the Prophet's, may peace and blessings of Allah be on him, saying: *"Be moderate in prostration (i.e. keep straight in it), and stretch not your forearms on the ground (during prostrations) as dogs do."* [Reported by al-Bukhari]

10. He should raise his head from prostration saying:

"Allahu Akbar" and lay his left foot flat on the ground and sit upon it, keeping his right foot erected, his hands on his thighs and knees, and say:

Rabbi-ghfirlee, war-hamnee, wah-dinee, war-zuqnee, wa 'aafinee, waj-burnee.

Which means:

"O my Lord, forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, provide me with Your blessings, grant me well-being and console me. "

The worshipper should feel tranquillity during this sitting.

11. To prostrate again saying *"Allahu Akbar"* and repeating during his prostration what he did and said in the first prostration.

12. Then the worshipper raises his head saying *"Allahu Akbar"* sitting briefly similar to the sitting between the two prostrations; this is called *"the sitting for rest."* It is recommended for the worshipper to observe this sitting, but there is no harm if he leaves it off. This position does not contain any words of remembrance (*thikr*) or supplication (*du'a*). Then the worshipper rises up and stands supporting himself on his knees, or on the ground if he cannot support himself on the knees easily. He reads the Faatihah (the opening Soorah of the Glorious Qur'an) and some other verses of the Qur'an and does just as he did in the first Rak'ah (unit of prayer). Those who pray behind the Imam should not compete with him (i.e. precede him) in the prayer actions as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

The Imam is to be followed. Therefore, do not differ from him in what he does. If he says: *"Allahu Akbar"* which means "Allah is Great" then say the same after him. If he bows in *"Rukoo"*, bow after him. If he says: *"Samia-llahu liman hamidah"* which means "Allah hears him who praises Him", then say: *"Rabbanaa wa lakal-hamd"* which means "Our Lord! All praises are for Thee"; and if he prostrates, then prostrate after him".(al-Bukhari)

13. If the prayer consists of two Rak'ah (two units of prayer) as the dawn prayer (*Fajr*), Feast prayer (*Eid*), or the Friday prayer (*Jumu'ah*), the worshipper sits after the second prostration, with his right foot erect, sitting on his left foot laid down. He puts his right hand on his right

thigh, all his fingers close-fisted except the index finger which he uses to point out as a sign for his monotheistic belief [*Tawheed*], and his left hand is put on his left thigh and knee. It is also acceptable, if the worshipper keeps both the little and ring fingers closed, while rounding his thumb and his middle finger in a ring-shape, and uses his index finger to point out as a sign for his monotheistic belief. It has been related that the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be on him, had practiced both of these ways. Thus, it is advisable for the worshipper to perform the *first way* once and the next time the *second way*.

The worshipper reads the *Tashahhud* while sitting and says:

"At-tahiyaatu li-llahi was-salawaatu wat-tayibaatu As-salaamu 'alayka ayyuhan-nabiyyu wa rahmatu-llahi wa barakaatuhu. As-salaamu 'alaynaa wa 'ala 'ibaadi-llahis-saaliheen. Ashhadu an laa ilaaha illa -llahu wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluhu. Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala Aali Muhammad kama sallayta 'ala Ibraaheem wa 'ala Aali Ibraaheem. Innaka Hameedun Majeed. Allahumma baarik 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala Aali Muhammad kama baarakta 'ala Ibraaheem wa 'ala Aali Ibraaheem. Innaka Hameedun Majeed.

This means:

"Greetings, prayers and the good deeds are for Allah. Peace, mercy and blessing of Allah be on you, O Prophet. May peace be upon us and on the righteous servants of Allah. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and messenger. O Allah, praise and exalt Muhammad and his family as You praised and exalted Ibraaheem and his family. You are the Most-Praised, The Most-Glorious. O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and his family just as You sent blessings upon Ibraaheem and his family. You are the Most-Praised, The Most-Glorious."

After reciting the *Tashahhud*, the worshipper asks Allah's protection from four evils. He should say:

Allahumma innee a'oothu bi-ka min 'athaabi Jahannam, wa min 'athaabi-l-qabr, wa min fitnati-l-mahyaa wa-l-mamaat, wa min fitnati-l-Maseehid-Dajjaal.

This means:

"My Lord, I ask your protection from the torment of Hell, the torment of the grave, the trials in life and after death, and from the imposter Anti-Christ."

The worshipper may ask Allah for prosperity in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, supplicate Allah (to bestow His favors on) his parents and other Muslims. He could do this in both obligatory and optional prayers. It has been reported by Ibn Mas'ood that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, taught him how to recite the *Tashahhud*

and told him that the worshipper should choose the supplication which is most pleasing to him and then supplicate (by it).

It has been related in another narration that the worshipper should ask Allah for whatever he wishes. This will cover everything that is of benefit to the person in this worldly life and the life to come. The worshipper terminates his prayer by turning his face to the right and left saying:

"*As-salaamu alaikum wa rahmatu-llah*" ..."*As-salaamu alaikum wa rahmatu-llah*", which means "Peace and mercy of Allah be on you. "

14. In case of a three Rak'ah prayer (prayer consisting of three units) as that of *Maghrib* (sunset prayer), or a four Raka'ah prayer like that of *Zuhr* (noon prayer), 'Asr (late afternoon prayer) or, 'Isha (night prayer), the worshipper stands up after reciting the *Tashahhud*, including prayers for the Prophet, according to the manner stated before, and raises his hands up to the level of his shoulders saying *Allahu Akbar*. The worshipper puts his hands over his chest as it had been explained before, and recites only the *Faatihah*. There is no objection if he occasionally adds to the *Faatihah* some other verses of the Qur'an while performing the third or fourth Rak'ah (units of prayer) of noon prayer (*Zuhr*), because this was confirmed to be one of the manners adopted by the Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be on him, according to the tradition reported by Abu Sa'eed.

After the third Rak'ah of *Maghrib* (sunset prayer), and the fourth Rak'ah of *Zuhr* (noon prayer), 'Asr (late afternoon [prayer) and 'Isha (night prayer), the worshipper recites the *Tashahhud* and terminates his prayers by saying:

"*Assalaamu alaikum wa rahmatu-llah*"

while turning first to the right, and second to the left as it has been explained before.

It is not an obligatory duty, but it is a commendable prophetic tradition to invoke Allah after terminating the prayer by asking Him forgiveness three times and saying before turning one's face towards his followers if he is the Imam:

Allahumma Anta-s-Salaam, wa min-ka-s-Salaam, tabaarakta Yaa Tha-l-Jalaali wa-l-Ikraam.

Which means:

"O Allah, You are the peace and from You comes peace, You are blessed, O possessor of Majesty and Honor."

It is advisable for the worshipper to say:

Laa ilaaha illa-llah Wahdahu laa shareeka lahu, lahu-l-Mulk wa lahu-l-Hamd wa Huwa 'ala kulli shay'in Qadeer. Allahumma laa maani'a limaa

A'taita wa laa mu'tiya limaa mana'ta, wa laa yanfa'u Thal-Jaddi minka-l-Jaddu. Laa hawla wa laa quuwata illa bi-llahi. Laa ilaaha illa-llah, wa laa na'budu illa iyyaahu, lahu-l-ni'mah wa lahu-l-fadl wa lahuth-thanaa'u-l-hanan

Which means:

"None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, Alone. He has no partner. His is the dominion and for Him alone is the praise. He has power over all things. O Allah, none may withhold what You have given and none may give what You have withheld and the wealth or majesty cannot benefit the one who possesses them against You. There is no might or power except with Allah. None has the right to be worshipped except Allah and we do not worship but Him alone. To Him alone belong all bounties, to Him alone belong all grace, and to Him worthy praise is accorded. None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, to Whom we are sincere in faith and devotion, even though the unbelievers may detest it."

It is also advisable for the worshipper to extol Allah 33 times by saying (*Subhaana-llah*), praise Him by saying (*Al Hamdu li-llah*) 33 times, and by saying: (*Allahu Akbar*) 33 times. The worshipper completes his supplications to be one hundred by saying once:

Laa ilaaha illa-llah Wahdahu laa shareeka lahu, lahu-l-Mulk wa lahu-l-Hamdu, wa Huwa 'alaa kulli shay'in Qadeer.

Which means:

"Nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah, Alone. He has no partner. His is the dominion and to Him alone is the praise. He has power over all things."

The worshipper adds to that the recitation of the verse known as "*Ayatul-Kursee*" (2:255), 'Soorah *Al-Ikhlaas* (112:1-4), Soorah *al-Falaq* (113:1-5), and Soorah *An-Naas* (114:1-6). It is recommendable to recite these Soorahs three times after the *Fajr* (dawn prayer), and the *Maghrib* (sunset prayer) because this was reported in the traditions of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. As it has been stated before, all these after-prayer supplications are optional and not obligatory.

Every Muslim, whether male or female, is recommended to pray 12 Rak'ah (units) of supererogatory prayers every day: four of these Rak'ah (units of prayer) are before *Zuhr* (noon prayer), two after it, two after *Maghrib* (sunset prayer), two after '*Ishaa*' (night prayer) and two before the *Fajr* (dawn prayer). - These supererogatory prayers are called *Rawaatib* [which means: The supererogatory or optional prayers which regularly accompany the daily obligatory prayers]. The Prophet peace and blessings of Allah be on him, preserved the performance of these optional prayers whenever he was resident (in al-Madeenah). During his

travels, he used to perform the two optional Rak'ah before the *Fajr* (dawn prayer) and also the *Witr* (odd number prayer performed between the times of *'Isha* and *Fajr*). There is no objection to perform these optional prayers in the mosque, but it is better to perform them at home, because the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said "The best of the prayers are those which are performed at one's own home, with exception of obligatory prayers [which should be performed in congregation at the mosque]."

Observing these optional prayers is a means for gaining admission to paradise. The Prophet, may peace and blessings of Allah be on him, said:

"Whoever prays optionally twelve Rak'ah every day and night, Allah will build for him a home in paradise." Reported by Muslim in his *Saheeh* (authentic collection).

If he prays four optional Rak'ah before *'Asr* (late afternoon prayer), two before *Maghrib* (sunset prayer), and two before *'Isha* (night prayer), it is good because this was authentically reported from the Prophet. Allah, the Almighty says:

"Indeed you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent model (of behavior)" (33:21).

Also the Prophet (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"Perform your prayer in the same manner as you have seen me doing."

Allah is He Who is Able to render us success, and may Allah give His blessings and peace to our Prophet Muhammad son of Abdullah, his family, his companions and whoever follows his way until the Day of Judgement.

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