

رسالة في سجود السهو

الأخيلة الشيخ العلامة

محمد بن صالح العثيمين

عالم فاضل في فقهنا

أبي عبد الله محمد بن سعيد رسلان

AN EXPLANATION OF SHAYKH MUHAMMAD BIN ṢĀLIḤ
AL-UTHAYMĪN'S TREATISE ON

THE PROSTRATIONS OF FORGETFULNESS

BY

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD RASLĀN

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عُفِّ عليها وخطبها وخرج آثارها

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Transliteration Table

Consonants

ء	ا	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	‘	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

Vowels

Short	اَ	a	اِ	i	اُ	u
Long	آ	ā	يِ	ī	وُ	ū
Diphthongs	اَيِ	ay/ai	اَوْ	aw		

Glyphs

ﷺ *Sallāllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* (May Allāh’s praise & salutations be upon him)

ﷺ *Radīyallāhu ‘anhu* (May Allāh be pleased with him)

ﷺ *Radīyallāhu ‘anhum* (May Allāh be pleased with them)

ﷺ *Radīyallāhu ‘anbā* (May Allāh be pleased with her)

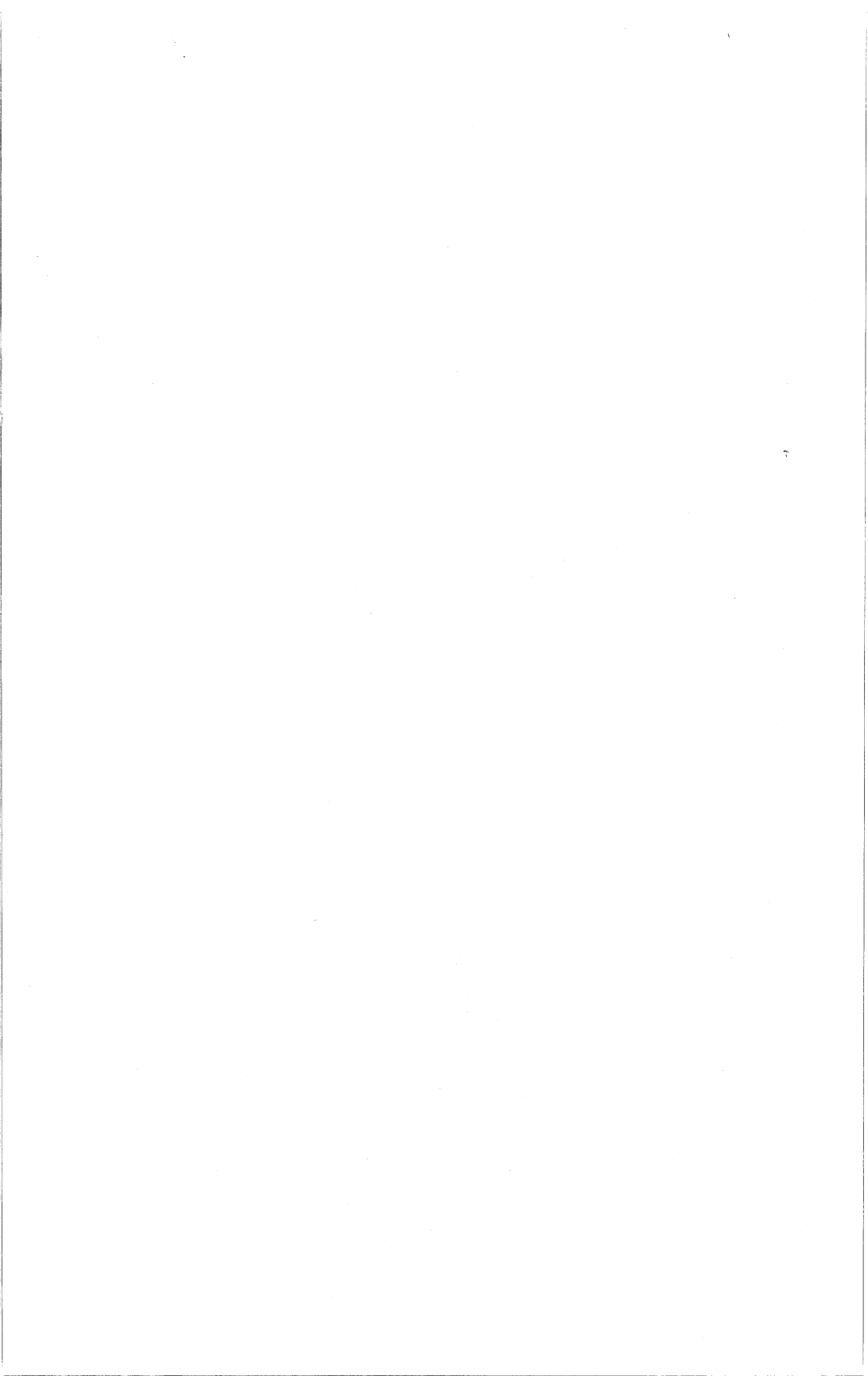
ﷻ *Rahīmabullāh* (May Allāh have mercy on him)

ﷻ *‘Azza wa-Jall* (The Mighty and Majestic)

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Commentator's Introduction



Indeed, all praise is for Allāh. We praise Him, we seek His aid, and we seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evils of our souls and from the (evil) consequences of our bad actions. Whomever Allāh guides, there is none to misguide him, and whomever He misguides, there is none to guide him. I testify that none has the right to be worshiped except Allāh alone, Who has no partner, and I testify that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger ﷺ.

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

O you who believe! Fear Allāh as He should be feared. [Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always], and die not except in a state of Islām (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allāh.

[Sūrah Āli 'Imrān 3:102]

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴾

O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Ādam), and from him (Ādam) He created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allāh through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allāh is Ever an All-Watcher over you.

[Sūrah an-Nisā' 4:1]

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾
يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾ ﴾

O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allāh and fear Him, and speak (always) the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ, he has indeed achieved a great achievement (i.e., he will be saved from the Hellfire and made to enter Paradise).

[Sūrah al-Aḥzāb 33:70-71]

To proceed:

Indeed, the truest speech is the Book of Allāh, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ. The worst of affairs (in religion) are the novelties, for every novelty is an innovation, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Hellfire.

This is a concise treatise regarding the rulings of prostrations for forgetfulness in prayer. Despite its brevity, it is comprehensive of the rulings and situations, and it includes examples in order to clarify the intent.

The author, al-'Allāmah Shaykh Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ bin 'Uthaymīn, has traversed within it upon the path of conciseness, yet he has struck examples so that it will be more easily comprehensible, clearer, and

more comprehensive. This is due to the enormity of the need for the Muslims having cognizance of its rulings. The Shaykh رحمته said: “Especially for the *imāms* whom the people take as an example and follow—they have a responsibility to follow the legislation in their prayer in which they are leading the people.”

I also wanted—in directing and guiding towards the good—to take part in acquainting (others) with it and clarify it by way of commentary upon it, arranging it, and citing the *ḥadīth* sources in it and mentioning their grading. This is so this may be from taking the means of spreading correct knowledge within the *ummah*, which is predicated upon the Book and the Sunnah with the understanding of our pious predecessors.

I ask Allāh the Exalted to have tremendous mercy upon the Shaykh, and to bring about benefit by way of what He has blessed him with of beneficial knowledge and excellent effects (upon the *ummah*); indeed, He is capable of all things.

May Allāh send abundant prayers and peace upon our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his fathers—Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘īl, and the rest of the prophets and messengers. Our final supplication is that we say: All praise is for Allāh, the Lord of all that exists.

Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Sa‘īd Raslān, 1429 AH

Biography of Shaykh ‘Uthaymīn



HIS NAME AND LINEAGE

He is the virtuous *shaykh*, the scholar, the verifier, the jurist, the scholar of *tafsīr*, Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ bin Muḥammad bin Sulaymān bin ‘Abdir-Raḥmān bin ‘Uthmān from the Wahbah branch of Banū Tamīm.

HIS BIRTH

He was born on the 27th night of the blessed month of Ramaḍān in the year 1347 AH in the city of ‘Unayzah, one of the cities of Qaṣīm in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

HIS EDUCATIONAL UPBRINGING

He memorized the Noble Qur’ān as well as small books of *aḥādīth* and *fiqh* at an early age.

Then, he joined the circles of al-‘Allāmah ‘Abdur-Raḥmān bin Nāṣir as-Sādī. He was his first *shaykh* from whom he took knowledge. He was affected by his methodology and foundations, as well as his following of the evidence. From him, he studied *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *tawḥīd*, *fiqh* and its principles, the laws of inheritance, and grammar.

With Shaykh ‘Abdur-Razzāq ‘Afīfī رحمته الله, he studied grammar and

al-balāghah (eloquence) while he was in ‘Unayzah.

He enrolled in the Educational Institute in Riyadh in the year 1372 AH and had organized studies for two years in which he benefitted from the scholars who were teaching in the institute at that time. From them:

- The *‘allāmah*, the scholar of *tafsīr*, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn ash-Shinqīṭī
- The *shaykh*, the jurist, Shaykh ‘Abdul-‘Azīz bin Nāṣir bin Rashīd
- The *shaykh* and *muḥaddith*, Shaykh ‘Abdur-Raḥmān al-Ifrīqī

He connected with the eminent Shaykh al-‘Allāmah ‘Abdul-‘Azīz bin Bāz رحمته الله. With him, he studied *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in the *masjid* as well as some of the treatises of Shaykhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah. He was greatly affected by him. In fact, Ibn Bāz is considered to be his second *shaykh*.

He graduated from the Educational Institute and continued his university studies until he acquired a degree from the Imām Muḥammad bin Sa‘ūd Islamic University.

HIS OCCUPATIONS & KNOWLEDGE-BASED ACTIVITIES

He began teaching in the year 1370 AH in the main congregational mosque of ‘Unayzah. In the year 1374 AH, he was appointed as a teacher in the Educational Institute of ‘Unayzah and he continued teaching until 1398 AH.

Toward the end of this period, he participated in formulating the educational curriculum for Imām Muḥammad bin Sa‘ūd University. Thereafter, he continued to be a professor at Imām Muḥammad bin Sa‘ūd University’s Qaṣīm branch, in the Faculty of *Sharī‘ah*, from 1398 AH until his death.

He was a member of the Educational Board in Imām Muḥammad

bin Sa'ūd Islamic University for the years 1399-1400 AH. He was also a member of the board for the Faculty of *Shari'ah* and Religious Fundamentals in the University's Qaṣīm branch, as well as the head of the *'aqidah* division.

He was a member of the Committee of Senior Scholars in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the year 1407 AH until his death. He attained the King Fayṣal World Award for the Service of Islām in the year 1414 AH.

HIS WRITINGS

His writings have reached more than 90 books and treatises.

HIS DEATH رحمته

The Islamic *ummah* suffered a loss, right before Maghrib on Wednesday the 15th of Shawwāl, 1421 AH, with the announcement of the death of Shaykh Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn in the city of Jeddah.

Thousands prayed over the Shaykh in Masjid al-Ḥarām after the 'Aṣr prayer on Thursday the 16th of Shawwāl, 1421 AH, and he was taken to the graveyard with a large procession that cannot be described. He was buried in Makkah al-Mukarramah, may Allāh bestow abundant mercy upon him.

Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh bin Muḥammad Sa'īd Raslān

Introduction to the Treatise



ORIGINAL TEXT

All praise is for Allāh, Lord of all that exists. May prayers and peace be upon our Prophet Muḥammad, who has conveyed the message in a clear way; likewise, upon his family, Companions, and those who follow him in excellence until the Day of Recompense.

To proceed:

Indeed, many people are greatly ignorant of the rulings of the prostrations for forgetfulness in the prayer. From them, there is he who abandons the prostration of forgetfulness when it is obligatory. From them, there is he who prostrates when he should not. From them, there is he who makes the prostration of forgetfulness before the *salām* when he was supposed to prostrate after it. From them, there is he who prostrates after the *salām* when he was supposed to prostrate before it.

Due to this, cognizance of its rulings is very important, especially for the *imāms* whom the people take as an example and follow—they have a responsibility to follow the legislation in their prayer in which they are leading the people. Therefore, I would like to present to my brothers some of the rulings on this issue, hoping that Allāh benefits His believing slaves by way of it.

Therefore, I say, seeking the help of Allāh the Exalted, desiring from Him *tawfiq* in that which is correct...

COMMENTARY

From the favors and blessings of Allāh the Exalted upon this *ummah* is that the Prophet ﷺ would forget in the prayer so that the *ummah* may follow his example in the legislation. This can be seen in that which al-Bukhārī and Muslim have reported from him, wherein he said:

إنما أنا بشر مثلكم، أنسى كما تنسون. فإذا نسيت فذكروني.

Indeed, I am only a human, just as you are. I forget just as you forget. Therefore, if I forget, remind me.

The Prostration of Forgetfulness



ORIGINAL TEXT

This (the prostration of forgetfulness) is a term used to describe the two prostrations the worshiper makes to remove an error that has occurred in his prayer due to forgetfulness. Its reasons are three:

- 1) Addition
- 2) Omission
- 3) Doubt

COMMENTARY

It is obligatory, due to the command of the Prophet ﷺ with it. And this is the statement of the majority of the scholars, as is mentioned in the religious verdicts. Ash-Shawkānī said in *As-Sayl al-Jarrār* that the prostration for abandoning a Sunnah act is not obligatory, so as not to add a subsidiary action to the foundation. Thus, the most that can be said is that it is a Sunnah just as that which has been abandoned is, and there has not come anything regarding the abandonment of a Sunnah act which would indicate that the prostration of forgetfulness is obligatory. Rather, it being obligatory is specific to that for which it has been commanded.

So, if one abandons an obligatory act in a supererogatory prayer, is

the prostration of forgetfulness obligatory? The answer: Yes, we hold it to be obligatory.

If one were to say: How do you hold something to be obligatory within a supererogatory prayer when the basis of the supererogatory prayer is that it is not obligatory? The answer: Once he enters the prayer, it is obligatory upon him to perform it in accordance with the legislation; otherwise, he is making a mockery of it. Before [entering] the prayer, he has a choice (i.e., whether or not to pray). Thus, once he enters it, it is obligatory upon him to perform it in the correct manner.

‘Uthmān bin Qā’id said in his footnotes to *Al-Muntahā* (1/215): “Know that *as-sahw* (السهو), *an-nisyān* (النسيان), and *al-ghaflah* (الغفلة) are all synonymous terms. They mean: The heart becoming absent-minded regarding something which is known.”

Al-Āmidī said: “These words mean nearly the same thing.”

In (the book) *Al-Mawāqif wa Sharḥihā*, it says: “*As-sahw* is when the correct manner (of a thing) may cease in one’s mind while the thing itself remains present. *An-nisyān* (forgetfulness) is when both the correct manner and the thing itself both cease; thus, they are both in need of being attained anew.”

The 1st Reason: Addition



ORIGINAL TEXT

If the worshiper adds a standing, sitting, bowing, or prostration to his prayer intentionally, then his prayer is rendered invalid. If he does so forgetfully and he doesn't recall the addition until after he completes it (i.e., after he completes that additional act), then there is nothing upon him except the prostration of forgetfulness, and his prayer is sound. If he becomes aware of the addition while performing it, it is obligatory upon him to leave it and to perform the prostrations for forgetfulness, and his prayer is sound.

Example:

A person prays *Zuhr*, for example, as five units. He isn't aware of the addition until he is in the *tashahhud*. He is to complete the *tashahhud*, (exit the prayer with) the *taslīm*, prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm* (again).

If he does not recall the addition until after the *salām*, he is to prostrate for forgetfulness and make *taslīm*. If he becomes aware of the addition while in the fifth unit, he is to sit as he does when saying the *tashahhud*, make *taslīm*, then prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm* (again).

The evidence:

The *ḥadīth* of Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه...

COMMENTARY

‘Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd bin Ghāfil bin Ḥabīb al-Hudhalī, Abū ‘Abdir-Raḥmān, from the scholars of the Companions and from the first and foremost. He made the two migrations, witnessed the Battle of Badr and the battles thereafter, and clung to the Prophet ﷺ. He was the holder of the Prophet’s two sandals. He narrated an abundance of *ahādīth* from the Prophet ﷺ. He had many virtues. He died in the year 32 AH. Refer to his biography in *Al-Iṣābah* (4/233) and *Tahdhīb at-Tahdhīb* (6/27-28).

ORIGINAL TEXT

...wherein the Prophet ﷺ prayed Zūhr as five units, so it was said to him, “Has the prayer been increased?” He said, “What do you mean?” They said, “You prayed five units.” So he prostrated twice after having made the *taslīm*.¹

In another narration: “So he turned around, faced the *qiblah*, prostrated twice, then made the *taslīm*.”²

MAKING SALĀM BEFORE THE COMPLETION OF THE PRAYER

The *salām* before the completion of the prayer is from [the category of] addition to the prayer. Therefore, if the worshiper makes *taslīm* before the completion of the prayer intentionally, his prayer is rendered invalid. If he does so forgetfully and he does not become aware until after a long time, he must repeat the prayer anew. If he becomes aware shortly thereafter—such as two or three minutes later—he must complete his prayer, make *taslīm*, prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm* (again).

¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī in “The Book of Jumu‘ah, Chapter: If one prays five units” (1226), and by Muslim in “The Book of Mosques and Places of Prayer, Chapter: Forgetfulness in the prayer and the prostration for it” (572).

² Reported by al-Bukhārī in “The Book of Prayer, Chapter: Facing the direction of the *qiblah* wherever one may be” (401), and by Muslim in “The Book of Mosques and Places of Prayer, Chapter: Forgetfulness in the prayer and the prostration for it” (572).

COMMENTARY

No specific demarcation has come for this timeframe. Hence, the affair is contingent upon custom.

ORIGINAL TEXT

The evidence:

The *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه...

COMMENTARY

‘Abdur-Raḥmān bin Ṣakhr ad-Dawsī. The scholars have differed greatly regarding his name and the name of his father. He embraced Islām seven years after the Hijrah and he memorized more narrations than those who narrated during his era. The people of *ḥadīth* are in agreement that he is the Companion who has narrated the most *aḥādīth*. He came to Madīnah as an immigrant and resided in aṣ-Ṣuḥfah. He was beloved by the people. Ibn Taymiyyah said concerning him: “(He was) a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ for less than four years, so all of his narrations are from the latter era. He died in Madīnah in 59 AH.”

Refer to his biography in *Al-Istī‘āb* (4/1768) and *Al-Iṣābah* (7/425).

ORIGINAL TEXT

...in which he said: The Prophet ﷺ prayed Zuhr or ‘Aṣr with them and made *taslīm* after two units, and people began to rush³ out of the doors of the *masjid*, saying, “The prayer has been reduced.” The Prophet ﷺ stood by a piece of wood in the *masjid*⁴ and leaned against it as if he was upset. A man⁵ stood and said, “O Messenger of Allāh, did you forget, or has the prayer been shortened?” The Prophet ﷺ

³ السرعان —This refers to those who rush to exit (after the prayer).

⁴ A tree trunk in the direction of the *qiblah* in the *masjid*.

⁵ He was Dhul-Yadayn. He was nicknamed as such due to the (long) length of his hands.

said:

لم أنس ولم تقصر.

I have neither forgotten nor has it been shortened.

The man said, “Rather, you have forgotten.” So the Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions:

أحق ما يقول؟

Is what he is saying correct?

They said, “Yes.” So the Prophet ﷺ went forward and prayed that which remained of his prayer, then he made *taslīm*, then he prostrated twice, then he made *taslīm* again.⁶

If the *imām* makes *taslīm* before the completion of the prayer, and there is someone amongst the followers who has missed some of the prayer, so he stands to complete what he has missed, then the *imām* recalls that he has shortened the prayer so he stands to complete it, then the follower who stood to complete what he missed may choose between continuing to make up what he has missed then prostrating for forgetfulness, or returning to (prayer) with the *imām* and following him, such that when he makes *taslīm*, the follower (stands to) make up what he has missed, then prostrates for forgetfulness after the *taslīm*; and this (the latter) is more befitting and safer.

⁶ Reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in “The Book of the *Adhān*, Chapter: If the *imām* doubts the statement of the people” (714), and by Muslim in “The Book of Mosques, Chapter: Forgetfulness in the prayer” (573) on the authority of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه.

The 2nd Reason: Omission



ORIGINAL TEXT

OMISSION OF THE PILLARS

If the worshiper omits the opening *takbīr*, then he has no prayer, whether he has omitted it intentionally or forgetfully. This is because his prayer never commenced.

If it is other than the opening *takbīr*, then if he abandoned it intentionally, his prayer is invalid. If he abandoned it forgetfully and he reaches its place in the next *rak'ah*, then he cancels the previous *rak'ah* in which he abandoned it and the current one he is in takes its place. If he has not reached its place in the next *rak'ah*, then it is binding upon him to return to the pillar which has been left and perform it along with that which is after it. In each case, he must prostrate for forgetfulness after the *taslim*.

COMMENTARY

This is the correct statement, because that which is after the abandoned pillar has occurred in an improper place due to the correct sequence of the pillars being left off. Thus, since they have occurred in an improper place, it is not permissible to continue in them. Rather, one must return to the pillar that he omitted.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Example:

A person forgets the second prostration in the first *rak'ah* and he remembers this while sitting between the two prostrations in the following *rak'ah*; the first *rak'ah* is canceled and the second *rak'ah* takes its place so that it is now considered to be the first *rak'ah*. He completes his prayer upon this basis and makes *taslim*, then he prostrates for forgetfulness and makes *taslim* (again).

Another example:

A person forgets the second prostration and the sitting before it in the first *rak'ah*, and he remembers this after having stood from the bowing in the second *rak'ah*. He must return (to that which he left), sit and prostrate, then complete his prayer, make *taslim*, then prostrate for forgetfulness and make *taslim* (again).

COMMENTARY

If he is aware of the abandoned pillar after having made *taslim*, it would be as if he has left an entire *rak'ah*. This is one statement (from the statements of the scholars).

That which is correct is that it is not binding upon him to perform an entire *rak'ah*. Rather, he must perform that which comes after what was abandoned, due to sequence being an obligation. And that which occurs before the abandoned action has occurred in its proper place.

Example:

A man prays, and when he completes his prayer, he recalls that in the last *rak'ah* he only prostrated once. Therefore, it is upon him to return to the prayer, sit (i.e., between the prostrations), and perform the second prostration, then recite the *tashahhud*, make *taslim*, prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslim* (again). This is what is correct; the pillars [of the prayer] are such that forgetfulness does not remove the obligation to perform them.

OMISSION OF THE OBLIGATIONS (AL-WĀJIBĀT)

If the worshiper omits an obligation from the obligations of the prayer intentionally, his prayer is rendered invalid. If he does so forgetfully before moving on from its place in the prayer, then he must perform it, and there is nothing due upon him.

COMMENTARY

The obligation (*al-wājib*) is that which is binding to perform. The obligation, according to the Ḥanābilah, is that which nullifies the prayer if it is left intentionally, but it is not nullified if it is left out of ignorance or forgetfulness; one must prostrate if it was left due to forgetfulness. The obligations, according to them, are eight in number; from them are the first *tashahhud* and sitting for it.

ORIGINAL TEXT

If he remembers after having moved on from its place and before reaching the pillar that comes after it, he is to return and perform it, then complete his prayer, make *taslīm*, then prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm* (again).

If he remembers it after reaching the pillar that comes after it, it is left off and he is not to return to it. Thus, he continues his prayer and prostrates for forgetfulness before the *taslīm*.

Example:

A person rises from the second prostration in the second *rak'ah*, and he stands for the third, forgetting the first *tashahhud*; and he remembers before getting up. Thus, he is to remain sitting, recite the *tashahhud*, then complete his prayer, and there is nothing due upon him.

If he remembers after completely standing, then he leaves off the first *tashahhud* and does not return to it. Thus, he completes his prayer and prostrates for forgetfulness before the *taslīm*.

COMMENTARY

Aḥmad, ad-Dāraquṭnī, Abū Dāwūd, and others reported on the authority of al-Mughīrah رضي الله عنه that he said that the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

إذا قام الإمام في الركعتين فإن ذكر قبل أن يستوي قائماً فليجلس، فإن استوى قائماً فلا يجلس ويسجد سجدي السهو.

If the *imām* stands after two *raka'āt*, then remembers before standing fully upright, let him sit. If he stands fully upright, he is not to sit, and he must make two prostrations for forgetfulness.

This indicates that what prevents the one who is standing from returning to (say) the *tashahhud* is the fact that he is standing fully upright. If he has not stood fully upright, then it is upon him to sit. In this lies a refutation of the statement of some of the Islamic schools of jurisprudence, that if he is closer to the standing position, he is not to return (to the sitting), and if he is closer to the sitting, then he sits. In addition to there being no basis in the Sunnah for this detail, it is in opposition to the *ḥadīth*. So grab onto it and bite onto it with your molar teeth, and leave the opinions of men.

I say: Shaykh al-Albānī رحمته الله said in *As-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (5/586): “Benefit: His statement: ‘...so once he has stood fully upright, it has passed and he is not to return...’ Within this is a strong indication that him صلى الله عليه وسلم not returning to the *tashahhud*—which is an obligation—was due to him having stood fully upright. The understanding derived from it is that, had he not stood fully upright, he would have returned (to the sitting position). This has been textually mentioned by him in his statement:

إذا قام الإمام في الركعتين فإن ذكر قبل أن يستوي قائماً فليجلس، فإن استوى قائماً فلا يجلس ويسجد سجدي السهو.

“If the *imām* stands after two *raka'āt*, then remembers before standing fully upright, let him sit. If he stands fully upright, he is not to sit, and he must make two prostrations for forgetfulness.’

“It is a *ḥadīth* which is *ṣaḥīḥ* when its various routes of transmission are combined, and *jayyid* (good) when looking at one of them. It is reported in *Al-Irwāʾ* (388) and *Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd* (949).

“So that which has come in some of the books of *fiqh*—that if one is closer to *qiyām* then he is not to return—there is no basis for it whatsoever, in addition to the fact that it contradicts these two narrations. Therefore—O Muslim—be upon clarity in your religion.”

ORIGINAL TEXT

The evidence for this:

The evidence is that which al-Bukhārī and others have reported on the authority of ‘Abdullāh bin Buḥaynah رضي الله عنه: “The Prophet ﷺ prayed Zuhr with them and stood after two *rakaʿāt*, and he did not sit (for the first *tashahhud*), so the people stood along with him until he completed the prayer, and the people awaited his *taslīm*; but he said the *takbīr* while sitting and prostrated twice before saying the *taslīm*, then he made the *taslīm*.”¹

¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, in “The Book of Jumuʿah, Chapter: What has come regarding forgetfulness when one stands after two *rakaʿāt* in an obligatory prayer” (1224).

The 3rd Reason: Doubt



ORIGINAL TEXT

Doubt is uncertainty as to which of two affairs has occurred. Doubt in worship is not given any consideration in three instances:

1) If it is mere speculation, with no substantial basis for it, such as satanic whispers.

2) If it frequently occurs to a person, such that he does not perform an act of worship except that he falls into doubt regarding it.

3) If it occurs after having completed the act of worship, then one is not to give consideration to it as long as he is not certain regarding the matter. He is to act on the basis of what he is certain about.

Example:

A person prays *Zuhr*, and when he completes his prayer, he doubts whether he has prayed three or four *raka'āt*. He is to give no consideration to this doubt unless he becomes certain that he has not prayed more than three; in this case, he would complete his prayer if a short time has elapsed, then make *taslīm*, then prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm* (again).

If he does not remember until a long period of time has elapsed, he is to repeat his prayer anew.

As for doubt in other than these instances, it is given consideration. And doubt within the prayer will not go outside of two states:

1) The First State: One of the two affairs is preponderant to him, in which case he is to act upon that which is preponderant to him, complete his prayer on that basis, make *taslīm*, prostrate for forgetfulness, and make *taslīm* (again).¹

Example:

A person prays *Zuḥr* and doubts in a *rak'ah* whether he is in the second or third. However, that which is preponderant to him is that it is the third. He is to consider it to be the third and perform that which comes after it (i.e., one *rak'ah*), and make *taslīm*. Then, he is to prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm* (again).

The evidence:

The evidence is that which is affirmed in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* and others from the *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إذا شك أحدكم في صلاته، فليتحزّ الصواب، فليتم عليه ثم ليسلم ثم يسجد سجدتين.

If one of you doubts within his prayer, let him strive to ascertain what is correct then complete his prayer upon that basis, then make *taslīm*, then prostrate twice.²

2) The Second State: Neither of the two affairs is preponderant to him. Thus, he must act upon that which he is certain of, which is the least of the two, and complete his prayer upon this basis and prostrate for forgetfulness before the *taslīm*, then make *taslīm*.

¹ The prostration for forgetfulness in this instance is after the *taslīm*.

² Reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in "The Book of Prayer, Chapter: Facing the direction of the *qiblah* wherever one may be" (401), and by Muslim in "The Book of Mosques and Places of Prayer, Chapter: Forgetfulness in the prayer and the prostration for it" (572).

COMMENTARY

Al-Bayhaqī reported in *As-Sunan* by way of Ja'far: Sa'īd (i.e., Ibn Abī 'Arūbah) reported from Qatādah who narrated on the authority of Anas from the Prophet ﷺ that he said:

إِذَا شَكَّ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِ فَلَمْ يَدْرِ اثْنَتَيْنِ صَلَّى أَوْ ثَلَاثًا فَلْيَلْقِ الشَّكَّ
وَلْيَبْنِ عَلَى الْيَقِينِ.

If one of you doubts within his prayer and does not know if he has prayed two or three (units), let him repel the doubt and act upon certainty.

He said: This “Ja'far” is Ibn 'Awn.

Shaykh al-Albānī رحمه الله said in *As-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (3/342): “He— Ibn 'Awn—is trustworthy, from amongst the men that the two Shaykhs (al-Bukhārī and Muslim) narrate from, as are those above them (i.e., in the chain). Therefore, the chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*.”

ORIGINAL TEXT

Example:

A person prays 'Aṣr and doubts within a *rak'ah* whether he is in the second or third *rak'ah*, and neither it being the second nor the third is preponderant to him. He is to consider it to be the second, make the first *tashahhud*, then perform that which comes after it (i.e., two *raka'āt*), prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm*.

The evidence:

The evidence is that which Muslim reported on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī...

COMMENTARY

Sa'd bin Mālik bin Sinān al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī. He did not witness the Battle of Uḥud due to his young age, yet he witnessed the Battle of the Trench and the battles thereafter. He was

from the eminent Companions and their scholars and virtuous ones. He narrated many *ahādīth* from the Prophet ﷺ. Many of the Tābi‘ūn narrated from him, as did a group from the Companions. He died in the year 73 AH.

ORIGINAL TEXT

...that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إذا شك أحدكم في صلاته فلم يدر كم صلى ثلاثا أم أربعا فليطرح الشك وليبن على ما استيقن ثم يسجد سجدتين قبل أن يسلم فإن كان صلى خمسا شفعن له صلاته، وإن كان صلى إتماما لأربع كانتا ترغيما للشيطان.

If one of you doubts within his prayer and he doesn't know if he has prayed three or four, then let him repel the doubt and proceed upon that which he is certain of, then prostrate twice before the *taslīm*. If he has prayed five, they will make his prayer even, and if he has prayed a complete prayer of four units, then they will be a humiliation for the Shayṭān.³

FROM THE EXAMPLES OF DOUBT

If a person comes while the *imām* is bowing, he must make the opening *takbīr* while standing upright, then bow. At that time, he will be in one of three states:

1) He is certain that he caught the *imām* in his *rukū'* before he rose from it. Therefore, he has caught the *rak'ah*, and the obligation of reciting al-Fātiḥah is removed.

2) He is certain that the *imām* rose from the *rukū'* before he joined him. Therefore, he has missed the *rak'ah*.

3) He is in doubt as to whether he caught the *imām* while in

³ Reported by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in "The Book of Mosques, Chapter: Forgetfulness in the prayer and prostration for it" (571).

rukū', and thus he either caught the *rak'ah* or the *imām* rose from the *rukū'* before he joined him and he missed the *rak'ah*. If one of the two affairs is preponderant to him, then he is to act upon the basis of that which is preponderant to him, complete his prayer upon that basis, and make *taslīm*. Then, he must prostrate for forgetfulness and make *taslīm* (again), unless he has missed nothing from the prayer. If this is the case, there is no prostration due upon him.

If neither of the two is preponderant to him, then he is to act upon the basis of what he is certain of (i.e., consider that he has missed the *rak'ah*) and complete his prayer on that basis, then prostrate for forgetfulness before the *taslīm*, then make *taslīm*.

POINT OF BENEFIT

If one doubts in his prayer, then he is to act upon what he is certain of or upon that which is preponderant to him in accordance with the aforementioned details. Thereafter, if it becomes clear to him that he has acted in accordance with the reality—thus he did not add to his prayer nor did he omit from it—the obligation of prostration for forgetfulness is removed from him based upon what is well-known in the (Ḥanbalī) *madh'hab*, due to the cessation of that which makes the prostration obligatory, which is doubt.

It has been said that it is not removed from him for the purpose of humiliating the Shayṭān, due to the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

وإن كان صلى إتماماً لأربع كانتا ترغيماً للشيطان.

...and if he has prayed a complete prayer of four units, they will be a humiliation for the Shayṭān.⁴

This is also due to the fact that he performed a portion of his prayer in a state of doubt, and this is the stronger view.

Example:

A person prays and doubts within a *rak'ah* as to whether it is the

⁴ Its reference has preceded.

The 3rd Reason: Doubt

second or third, and neither of the two affairs is preponderant to him. So he considers it to be the second and completes his prayer upon this basis. Then it becomes clear to him that it was actually the second *rak'ah*; there is no prostration due upon him based upon the well-known viewpoint within the *madh'hab*. And he must prostrate for forgetfulness before the *taslim* based upon the second statement, which we have deemed to be the stronger view.

Prostration of Forgetfulness for the Person Following the *Imām*



ORIGINAL TEXT

If the *imām* forgets, it is obligatory upon those praying behind him to follow him in the prostration of forgetfulness. This is due to the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ الْإِمَامَ لِيُؤْتَمَّ بِهِ، فَلَا تَخْتَلَفُوا عَلَيْهِ...

The *imām* has only been set in order that he may be followed; therefore, do not differ from him...

Up to his statement:

وَإِذَا سَجَدَ فَاسْجُدُوا.

...and if he prostrates, (you) prostrate.¹

This *ḥadīth* is agreed upon (by al-Bukhārī and Muslim) from the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه.

This is the case whether the *imām* prostrates for forgetfulness before or after the *taslīm*; the follower must follow him, unless he is a latecomer (i.e., one who has missed some of the prayer). In this case,

¹ Reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in “The Book of *Adhān*, Chapter: Establishing the rows is from the completion of the prayer” (722), and by Muslim in “The Book of Prayer, Chapter: The follower’s following of the *imām*” (414).

he does not follow him in the prostration after the *taslīm* due to being excused in this situation. Hence, the latecomer is not able to make *taslīm* along with the *imām*. Due to this, he must make up what he has missed, then make *taslīm*, then prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm* (again).

Example:

A man enters the prayer with the *imām* in the last *rak'ah* and the *imām* has to perform the prostration of forgetfulness after the *taslīm*. When the *imām* makes *taslīm*, this latecomer must stand to perform that which he has missed, and he is not to prostrate along with the *imām*. When he finishes performing what he has missed and makes *taslīm*, he must prostrate (for forgetfulness) after the *taslīm*.

If the follower forgets something in the prayer (as opposed to the *imām*), and he has not missed any of the prayer, there is no prostration due upon him. This is because him prostrating would lead to him differing with the *imām* and not following him. Also, this is because the Companions ﷺ had left the first *tashahhud* when the Prophet ﷺ forgot it, so they stood along with him and did not sit for the first *tashahhud*, giving due consideration to following (the *imām*) and not differing with him.

If one has missed any of the prayer and he forgets something while praying along with his *imām* or in that which he makes up after his prayer, the obligation to prostrate for forgetfulness is not removed from him. He must prostrate for forgetfulness when he makes up that which he missed, before the *taslīm* or after it, in accordance with the aforementioned details.

Example:

The follower forgets to say, in *rukū'*:

سبحان ربّي العظيم .

Glorified be my Lord, the Magnificent.

And he has not missed any portion of the prayer; in this case, there is

no prostration due upon him. But if he has missed a *rak'ah* or more, he must make it up, then prostrate for forgetfulness before the *taslīm*.

Another example:

A follower prays *Zuhr* along with his *imām*; when the *imām* stands for the fourth *rak'ah*, the follower sits, thinking that this is the last *rak'ah*. When he comes to know that the *imām* is standing, he stands; if he has not missed any portion of the prayer, there is no prostration due upon him. If he has missed a *rak'ah* or more from the prayer, then he makes it up and makes *taslīm*, then he prostrates for forgetfulness. This prostration is due to the sitting which he had added during the standing of the *imām* for the fourth *rak'ah*.

COMMENTARY

This is so he does not differ with his *imām*.

Summary (and When to Make the Prostrations Before or After the *Taslīm*)



ORIGINAL TEXT

From that which has preceded, it is clear that at times the prostration for forgetfulness is before the *taslīm* and at times it is after it.

It is before the *taslīm* in two instances:

1) If it is due to omission. This is due to the *ḥadīth* of ‘Abdullāh bin Buḥaynah ؓ wherein the Prophet ﷺ prostrated for forgetfulness before the *taslīm* when he left off the first *tashahhud*. Mention of the *ḥadīth* has preceded.

COMMENTARY

It is the *ḥadīth* which al-Bukhārī has reported on the authority of ‘Abdullāh bin Buḥaynah ؓ that: “The Prophet ﷺ prayed Zuhur with them and stood after two *raka‘āt*, and he did not sit (for the first *tashahhud*); so the people stood along with him until he completed the prayer, and the people awaited his *taslīm*, but he said the *takbīr* while sitting and prostrated twice before saying the *taslīm*; then he made the *taslīm*.”

ORIGINAL TEXT

2) If it is due to doubt and neither of the two affairs is preponderant to the person. This is due to the *ḥadīth* of Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه regarding the one who doubts in his prayer and he does not know if he has prayed three or four (units), for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded him to prostrate twice before making *taslīm*. Mention of the *ḥadīth* has preceded.

COMMENTARY

It is the *ḥadīth* which Muslim has reported on the authority of Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

إذا شك أحدكم في صلاته فلم يدر كم صلى ثلاثا أم أربعا فليطرح الشك وليبن على ما استيقن ثم يسجد سجدتين قبل أن يسلم فإن كان صلى خمسا شفعن له صلاته، وإن كان صلى إتماما لأربع كانتا ترغيمًا للشيطان.

If one of you doubts within his prayer and he doesn't know if he has prayed three or four, then let him repel the doubt and proceed upon that which he is certain of, then prostrate twice before the *taslīm*. And if he has prayed five, then they will make his prayer even, and if he has prayed a complete prayer of four units, they will be a humiliation for the Shaytān.

ORIGINAL TEXT

Thus, the prostration for forgetfulness is after the *taslīm* in two instances:

1) If it is due to addition. This is based upon the *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه wherein the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم prayed *Zuhr* as five units. They reminded him after the *taslīm*, and he prostrated twice then made *taslīm*; and he did not clarify that his prostration after the *taslīm* was due to him not knowing of the addition until after the *taslīm*. This indicates generality in the ruling and that the prostration

for addition is to be after the *salām* whether one knows about the addition before the *salām* or after.

From this is that if one forgetfully makes *taslīm* before the completion of his prayer, then he remembers and completes it, he has added a *taslīm* during his prayer, so he must prostrate after the *taslīm*. This is due to the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه wherein the Prophet ﷺ made *taslīm*—in *Zuḥr* or '*Aṣr* prayer—after two *raka'āt*, so they reminded him and he completed his prayer and made *taslīm*, then he prostrated for forgetfulness and made *taslīm* (again). Mention of the *ḥadīth* has preceded.

2) If it is due to doubt wherein one of the two affairs is preponderant to the person. This is due to the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه wherein the Prophet ﷺ commanded the one who doubts within his prayer to strive in ascertaining that which is correct and complete his prayer upon that basis, then make *taslīm* and prostrate. Mention of the *ḥadīth* has preceded.

If two issues of forgetfulness were to occur to a person—one being that which necessitates prostration before the *taslīm* and the second being that which necessitates prostration after it—the scholars have said that what occurs before the *taslīm* takes precedence, so he is to prostrate before.

Example:

A person prays *Zuḥr* and stands for the third *rak'ah*, not sitting for the first *tashahhud*, and he sits in the third *rak'ah* believing it to be the second. Thereafter, he remembers that it is the third. So, he is to stand and perform one *rak'ah* and prostrate for forgetfulness, then make *taslīm*.

This person has left the first *tashahhud*, the prostration for which would be before the *taslīm*. He also added a sitting within the third *rak'ah* for which he would have to prostrate after the *taslīm*. Therefore, that which is before the *taslīm* is given precedence, and Allāh knows best.

Conclusion



ORIGINAL TEXT

I ask Allāh to grant us and our Muslim brothers *tawfiq* in understanding His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, as well as acting in accordance with them, outwardly and inwardly, in *'aqidah*, worship, and social interactions; and that He grant us all a good ending. Indeed, He is Generous and Kind, and all the praise is for Allāh, Lord of all that exists.

May prayers and peace be upon our prophet Muḥammad, his family, and his Companions altogether.

Appendix 1



The Ruling of the Prayer of the One Who Intentionally Abandons *Sujūd as-Sahw*¹

Questioner: Noble Shaykh, the one who abandons the prostration for forgetfulness due to a *rak'ah* which was left off—what is the ruling?

Shaykh 'Uthaymīn: Meaning, a prayer that he missed?

Questioner: Meaning, a (*rak'ah*) within the prayer.

Shaykh 'Uthaymīn: Some of the scholars say that if one intentionally abandons the prostration for forgetfulness which must be made before the *taslīm*, his prayer is invalid. As for if it (the abandoned prostration for forgetfulness) is after the *taslīm*, then no (i.e., the prayer is still valid). They justify their statement by saying: If the prostration for forgetfulness is within the prayer itself, then it is obligatory within it, and if it is after the *taslīm*, it is obligatory for it (for the prayer).

Some of the scholars say that whether it is before or after the *taslīm*, his prayer is invalid if he intentionally abandons it. This is because he has disobeyed the command of the Prophet ﷺ wherein he said:

¹ *Silsilah Liqā'āt al-Bāb al-Mafrūh* (233)

فليسجد.

...let him prostrate.

I do not think that a Muslim would intentionally abandon the prostration of forgetfulness when it is (only) two prostrations, knowing that the Messenger has commanded with them. (If he does), he must either be ignorant or he forgot.

Appendix 2



What is Said in the Prostration of Forgetfulness?¹

Question: Noble Shaykh, what is said in the prostration of forgetfulness and the prostration for recitation?

Answer: That which is said in the prostration of prayer can be said within them. For example:

سبحان ربي الأعلى.

Glorified be my Lord, the Exalted. (x3)

Or:

سبحانك اللهم ربنا وبحمدك اللهم اغفر لي.

Glorified be You, O my Lord, and the praise is Yours; O Allāh, forgive me.

And in the prostration for recitation:

اللهم لك سجدت وبك آمنت وعليك توكلت، سجد وجهي لله الذي خلقه وصوره وشق سمعه وبصره فتبارك الله أحسن الخالقين.

O Allāh, to You I have prostrated, in You I have believed, and in You I have placed my trust. My face has prostrated to Allāh, who created it

¹ *Silsilah Liqā'āt al-Bāb al-Maftūḥ* (135)

and fashioned it and has portioned its hearing and sight. Blessed be Allāh, the best of creators.

Or:

اللهم اكتب لي بها أجراً وحط عني بها وزراً واجعلها لي عندك ذخراً،
وتقبلها مني كما تقبلتها من عبدك داؤد.

O Allāh, write for me, due to it, the reward, and erase from me, due to it, a sin; and store it with Yourself for me and accept it from me just as you have accepted it from Your slave Dāwūd.

Appendix 3



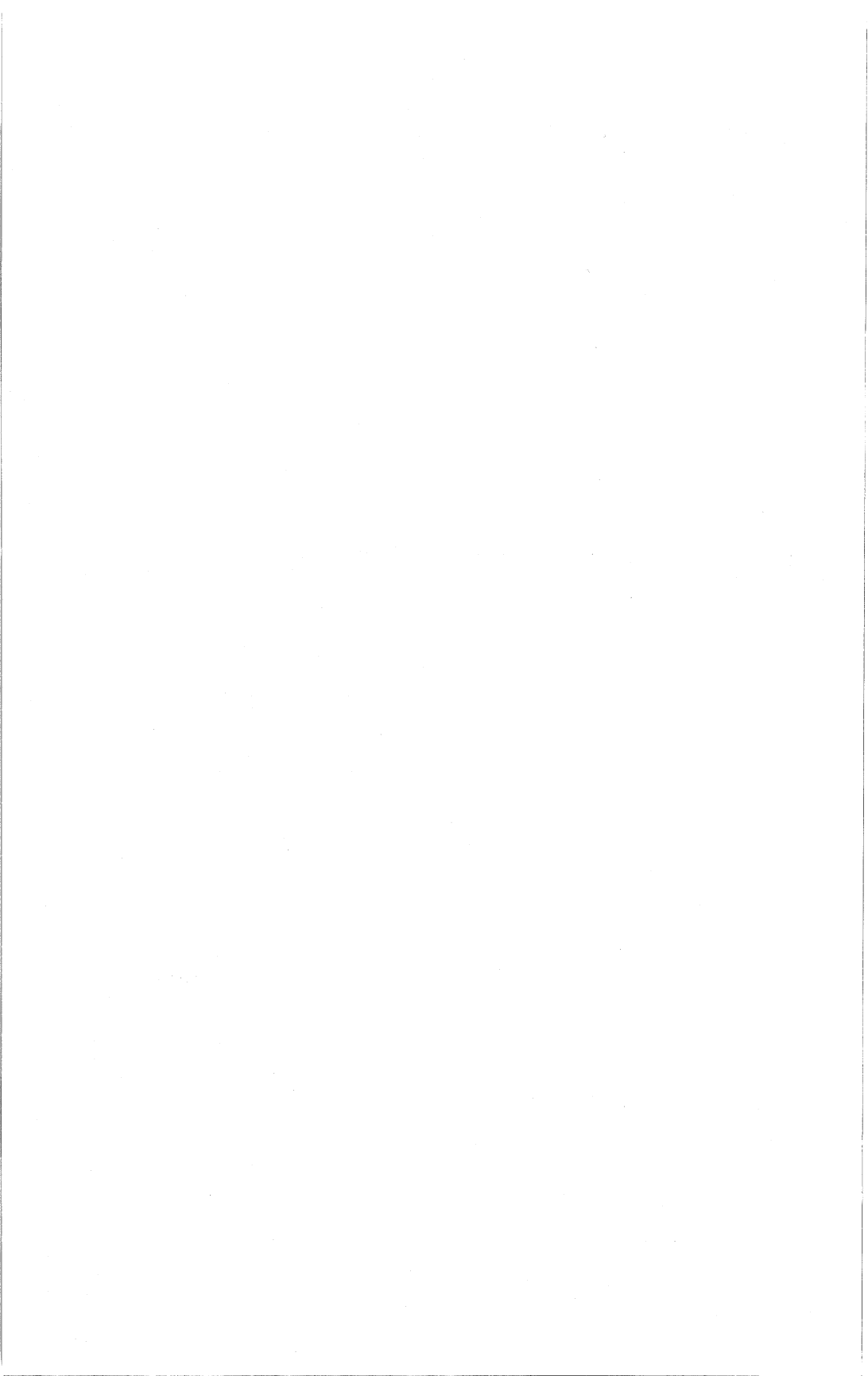
What Should be Done if the *Imām* Makes *Taslīm* After One *Rak'ah* During *Tarāwīḥ* Prayer?¹

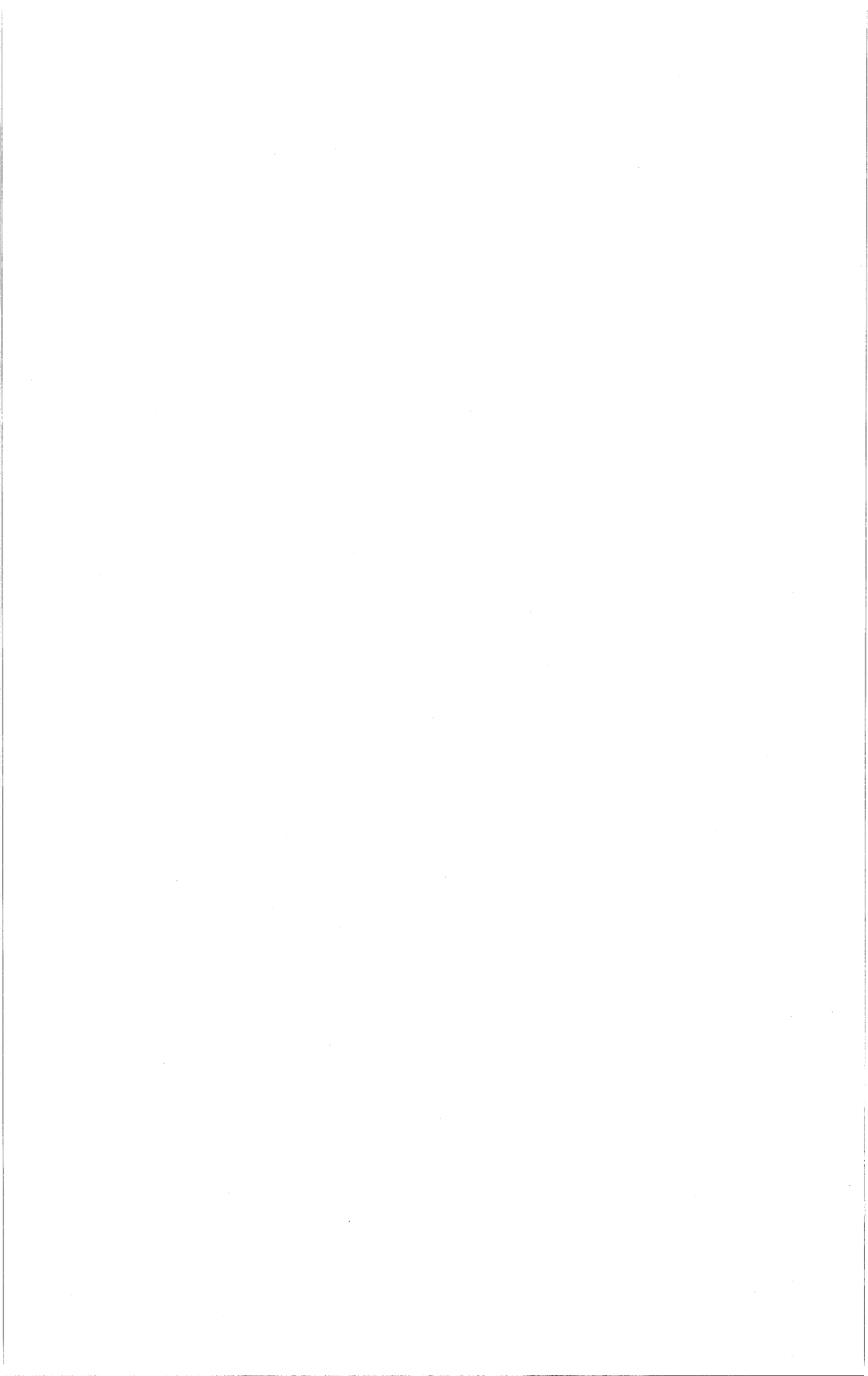
Question: If an *imām* in the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer were to make *taslīm* after one *rak'ah*—forgetfully—what must he do? Does he make it to be the odd unit or what? Bearing in mind that the followers did not make him aware of it until he made *taslīm*.

Answer: If the *imām* makes *taslīm* after the first *rak'ah* (in the set of two), and the followers make him aware, then he must stand and complete it by performing another *rak'ah*, and prostrate for forgetfulness after the *taslīm*; and it is not permissible for him to make it to be the *Witr* (odd *rak'ah*) because he did not intend it to be *Witr* from the beginning.

However, on the opposite end of this: If the *imām* in the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer were to stand for a third *rak'ah* (when his intention was to make a set of two) and the people make him aware, should he continue (in the prayer) or return (i.e., to the sitting position)? It is obligatory upon him to return. This is because, if he were to continue praying, his prayer would be rendered invalid. So he must return to the sitting position, recite the *tashahhud*, make *taslīm*, then prostrate twice for forgetfulness after the *taslīm*, then make *taslīm* (again).

¹ *Silsilah Liqā'āt al-Bāb al-Mafrūḥ* (41)





SHAYKH MUḤAMMAD AL-'UTHAYMĪN ربه الله SAID:

“Indeed, many people are greatly ignorant of the rulings of the prostrations of forgetfulness in the prayer. From them, there is he who abandons the prostration of forgetfulness when it is obligatory. From them, there is he who prostrates when he should not. From them, there is he who makes the prostration of forgetfulness before the salām when he was supposed to prostrate after it. From them, there is he who prostrates after the salām when he was supposed to prostrate before it.”



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