

Tranquility in Prayer

By Shaykh ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Badr

Abandoning tranquillity in the prayer is from amongst the grave errors that some worshippers find themselves falling into. Indeed the Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] regarded the action of such a person as being from the worst kind of thief amongst the people.

It is narrated by Abū Qatādah [raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhu] that the Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] said:

“The worst kind of thief is the one who steals from his prayer.”

The Companions said:

‘Oh Messenger of Allāh, how can someone steal from his prayer?’

He [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] said:

“He does not complete its rukū‘ or its sujūd”

Or he [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] said:

“He does not straighten his back firmly in the rukū‘ or the sujūd.” [1]

So the Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] regarded the stealing of the prayer as being much worse and severe than stealing from wealth.

The tranquillity in the prayer is a pillar from the pillars of the prayer. The prayer is not correct without it. The Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] said to the one who prayed badly:

“If you stand up for prayer say ‘Allāhū Akbar’ then read that which is easy for you from the Qur’ān. Then bow (make rukū‘) until you are at ease and tranquil in your rukū‘. Then stand up fully until you are standing up straight. Then prostrate until you are at ease and tranquil in your sujūd. Then sit until you are tranquil in you sitting - and do this in your entire prayer.” [2]

The people of knowledge have extracted from this ḥadīth that whoever does not properly straighten his back in the rukū‘ and the sujūd then his prayer is not accepted and will need to repeat it again just like the Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] said to the one who prayed badly:

“Go back and pray for you have not prayed.” [3]

Numerous aḥādīth are mentioned in the Sunnah commanding the establishment of the ṣalāh and its perfection. They also warn against abandoning the tranquillity in the ṣalāh or leaving out its pillars and obligations and other than that of what has been mentioned.

What is narrated on the authority of Anas bin Mālik [raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhu] is that the Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] said:

“Perfect the rukū‘ and the sujūd.” [4]

And the perfection lies only with the tranquillity.

Also from amongst the evidences is that which has come on the authority of ‘Alī b. Shaibān [raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhu] . He was part of a delegation. He said: “We went out until we reached the Messenger of Allāh [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam]. We pledged our allegiance to him and prayed behind him. He [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] noticed a man from the corner of his eye not establishing the ṣalāh properly i.e. not straightening his back firmly in the rukū‘ and sujūd. So when the Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] completed the prayer he said:

“O assembly of Muslims! There is no ṣalāh for the one who does not straighten his back in the rukū‘ and the sujūd.” [5]

Meaning: that the back does not straighten fully upright following the rukū‘ and sujūd. So the ḥadīth is proof that the standing and sitting and having tranquillity in both of the action is from the pillars of the prayer.

On the authority of Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Ash‘arī that Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ash‘arī narrated to him: The Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] glanced at a man praying without properly completing his rukū‘ and sujūd. So He [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] said:

“If he died upon the state he is then he would surely die upon something other than the way of Muḥammad [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam], so complete your rukū‘ and your sujūd for indeed the example of the one who neither completes his rukū or his sujūd is like the example of a hungry person who does not eat except only a date or two that does not suffice him in anyway whatsoever.”

Abū Ṣāliḥ said,

“So I met Abū ‘Abd Allāh and said:

“Who narrated to you this ḥadīth that he heard it from the Messenger of Allah [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam]?”

He said:

“It was narrated to me by the leader (Prince) of the armies Khālid b. Walīd, and Sharjīl b. Ḥasnah, and ‘Amr b. Al-‘Ā , who all heard it from the Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam].” [6]

This is a severe threat, fearing for the for the one falling upon such an action an evil end – to die in a state other than the way of Muḥammad [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] and we seek refuge in Allāh from that.

Abū Hurayrah [raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhu] narrated:

“The Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] commanded me to do three and forbade me from doing three... and he forbade me from pecking like the pecking of the rooster, squatting like the squatting of the dog and looking around like the looking around of the fox.”[7]

On the authority of Ḥudhaifah [raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhu], he saw a man who was not performing his rukū‘ and the sujūd perfectly. When the man finished his prayer Ḥudhaifah [raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhu] said to him, “You have not prayed” and I think he added (said to the man) “If you had died, you would have died upon other than the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam].”[8]

In another narration:

“If you had died then you would have died other than the natural state (disposition) that Allāh created Muḥammad [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] upon. [9]

On the authority of Ṭalq b. ‘Alī al-Ḥanafī [raḍiyAllāhu ‘anhu] who said said that the Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] said:

“Allāh does not look at the prayer of the slave who does not straighten his back in between his rukū‘ and his sujūd”[10] (standing upright fully after the rukū‘ and sitting with ones back fully straight after the first sujūd before the second one).

On the authority of ‘Ā’ishah [raḍiyAllāhu ‘anha] who said:

“...and he used to - meaning the Messenger of Allah - when he raised his head from rukū‘ he would not go to sujūd until he stood up straight and upright, and when he would raise his head from sujūd he would not make the second prostration until he was sitting up straight.”[11]

The aḥādīth all comprise and are consistent with the command in preserving the establishment of the rukū‘ and the sujūd as well as rising (properly) from them. This indicates that they are from the pillars of the prayer which will not make the ṣalah correct except with its presence. This is preserved through the recordings established in the Sunnah like Bukhārī and Muslim and the four Sunan and other than them as we have preceded with.

It is an obligation upon all Muslims to preserve this in their ṣalāh with full preservation. So he completes his rukūʿ, rises from it, makes his sujūd and rises from it and bringing with that its completion and perfection in all of the ṣalāh in a manner which pleases the Lord Most Blessed and Most High and thus acting according to the guidance of the Messenger of Allāh and holding onto his Sunnah for he [ṣallAllāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam] is the one who said:

“Pray as the way you have seen me pray.”[12]

Oh Allāh, make us from the ones who (properly) establish the prayer.

Based upon the authentic texts of the Messenger of Allah [ṣallAllāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam] that has preceded as well as other than them, the scholars hold the opinion that bringing the bones to a comfortable resting position in the rukūʿ and the sujūd as well as standing up straight in between them and sitting upright between the two prostrations, is obligatory in the ṣalāh. It is a pillar from its pillars. The ṣalāh is nullified by its abandonment and becomes necessary for the one who fell into that to repeat it again.

The statements of the scholars regarding this matter are numerous. It is not possible to mention even a little at this moment but I will suffice with a statement in this regard on the authority of the great Imām - He is the Imām, the Judge, Abū Yūsuf the student of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa. Abū Yūsuf said:

“Bringing the bones to a comfortable resting position – then it is the tranquillity in the rukūʿ and the sujūd and completion of standing upright (straightening the back) between them and the completion of sitting upright between the two prostrations – is obligatory. Abandoning it will invalidate the ṣalāh.’

This statement of his has been transmitted by many of the People of Knowledge.

It is an obligation upon every Muslim to preserve his ṣalāh and establish it with complete preservation with regards to its conditions, its pillars, its obligations and sunans. He performs all of that in the most complete and perfect form for it is the first thing that the slave will be asked about on the day of judgement.

Narrated by Abū Hurayrah:

“I heard the Messenger of Allāh [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam] say:

“Verily the first thing that the slave will be brought to account on the day of judgement from his deeds will be his ṣalāh. If it is correct then he will be successful and victorious and if it is corrupt then he will be disgraced and a loser.”[13]

Allāh, The Exalted, Most High says:

{Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their ṣalāh (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.} (23:1-2)

And He says the Most High :

{Guard strictly the prayers, especially the middle ṣalāh (i.e. the best prayer - ‘Aṣr). And stand before Allāh with obedience.} (2:238)

And He Says, the Most High:

{So woe unto those performers of ṣalāh (prayers) (hypocrites)
Who delay their ṣalāh (prayer) from their stated fixed times}. (107:4 -5)

Concerning the explanation of the ayah {from their stated fixed times} (107:5)
Ibn Kathīr mentions:

“Either they delay performing the ṣalah from the earliest prescribed time. So they mostly if not always pray at the end of its time.

Or that they do not perform the ṣalāh with its pillars and conditions upon the manner they were commanded with.

Or they lack having the feeling of submissiveness in the ṣalāh and do not contemplate over its meaning – hence the wording encompasses all of the above meanings. Any individual that possesses some of these characteristics will fall prey and take a share of that verse. Whoever possesses all of the characteristics then he has taken the full share of the verse and has completed for himself hypocrisy in his actions

May Allāh protect us and you from that. May Allāh give us and you the tawfīq to do the actions in accordance to His Book and upon holding onto the Sunnah of His Prophet [ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam]. May Allāh make us and you from amongst those who establish the ṣalāh and adhering to its pillars and conditions and obligations and that He accepts from us our righteous sayings and truthful actions. May Allāh forgive us our wrong and our shortcomings and deviations. Verily He is the Most Forgiving and the Constant Mercy Giver.

Reference:

<http://al-badr.net/detail/EVhwKvPr0x>

Footnotes:

- [1] Aḥmad (3/310), Ḥākim (1/229). Authenticated by Sh.Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ (986)
- [2] Bukhārī (757), Muslim (397) from Abū Hurayrah
- [3] Bukhārī (757), Muslim (397) from Abū Hurayrah
- [4] Bukhārī (6644), Muslim (425)
- [5] Ibn Mājah (871), Aḥmad (4/23). Also authenticated by Sh. Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb (526)
- [6] Abū Ya‘la (71840), Declared Ḥasan by Sh. Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb (528)
- [7] Aḥmad (2/311), Declared Ḥasan by Sh.Albānī in Ṣifat al-Ṣalāh (131)
- [8] Bukhārī (389)
- [9] Bukhārī (791)
- [10] Aḥmad (4/22) and al-Ṣaḥīḥah ((2536)
- [11] Muslim (498)
- [12] Bukhārī (631)
- [13] Tirmidhī (413). Authenticated by Sh.Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī (337)