

# 26. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 1: THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PRAYER

## بابُ صِفَةِ الصَّلَاةِ

### Chapter: The Description of the Prayer

يُسَنُّ الْقِيَامُ عِنْدَ "قَدْ" مِنْ إِقَامَتِهَا وَتَسْوِيَةِ الصَّفِّ، وَيَقُولُ "اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ" رَافِعًا يَدَيْهِ مَضْمُومَتَيِ الْأَصَابِعِ مَمْدُودَةً حَذْوَ مَنْكِبَيْهِ كَالسُّجُودِ، وَيُسَمِّعُ الْإِمَامُ مَنْ خَلْفَهُ كَقِرَائَتِهِ فِي أَوَّلَتِي غَيْرِ الظُّهْرَيْنِ، وَغَيْرِهِ نَفْسَهُ، ثُمَّ يَقْبِضُ كُوعَ يُسْرَاهُ تَحْتَ سُرَّتِهِ وَيَنْظُرُ مَسْجِدَهُ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: "سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ" ثُمَّ يَسْتَعِيدُ ثُمَّ يُسَمِّلُ سِرًّا وَلَيْسَتْ مِنَ الْفَاتِحَةِ، ثُمَّ يَقْرَأُ الْفَاتِحَةَ، فَإِنْ قَطَعَهَا بِذِكْرِ أَوْ سُكُوتٍ غَيْرِ مَشْرُوعَيْنِ وَطَالَ أَوْ تَرَكَ مِنْهَا تَشْدِيدَةً أَوْ حَرْفًا أَوْ تَرْتِيبًا لَزِمَ غَيْرَ مَأْمُومٍ إِعَادَتُهَا، وَيَجْهَرُ الْكُلُّ بِأَمِينٍ فِي الْجَهْرِيَّةِ ثُمَّ يَقْرَأُ بَعْدَهَا سُورَةً تَكُونُ فِي الصُّبْحِ مِنْ طَوَالِ الْمُفْصَلِ وَفِي الْمَغْرِبِ مِنْ قِصَارِهِ وَفِي الْبَاقِي مِنْ أَوْسَاطِهِ، وَلَا تَصِحُّ الصَّلَاةُ بِقِرَاءَةٍ خَارِجَةٍ عَنْ مُصْحَفِ عُثْمَانَ، ثُمَّ يَرْكَعُ مُكَبِّرًا رَافِعًا يَدَيْهِ وَيَضَعُهُمَا عَلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ مُفَرَّجَتَيِ الْأَصَابِعِ مُسْتَوِيَا ظَهْرُهُ وَيَقُولُ: "سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ" ثُمَّ يَرْفَعُ رَأْسَهُ وَيَدِيهِ قَائِلًا إِمَامًا وَمُنْفَرِدًا: (سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ) وَبَعْدَ قِيَامِهِمَا "رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ، مِلْءَ السَّمَاءِ وَمِلْءَ الْأَرْضِ، وَمِلْءَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ" وَمَأْمُومٌ فِي رَفْعِهِ "رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ" فَقَطْ، ثُمَّ يَخْرُجُ مُكَبِّرًا سَاجِدًا عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَعْضَاءٍ؛ رِجْلَيْهِ ثُمَّ رُكْبَتَيْهِ ثُمَّ يَدَيْهِ ثُمَّ جَبْهَتِهِ مَعَ أَنْفِهِ وَلَوْ مَعَ حَائِلٍ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَعْضَاءِ سُجُودِهِ، وَيُجَافِي عِضْدِيهِ عَنْ جَنْبَيْهِ وَبَطْنَهُ عَنْ فَخْذَيْهِ، وَيُفَرِّقُ رُكْبَتَيْهِ وَيَقُولُ: "سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى" ثُمَّ يَرْفَعُ رَأْسَهُ مُكَبِّرًا وَيَجْلِسُ مُفْتَرِشًا يُسْرَاهُ نَاصِبًا يُمَنَّاهُ وَيَقُولُ: "رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي".

The beginning part of the translation is:

It is *sunnah* to stand when "qad" is said from the *iqāmah*, and it is also *sunnah* to straighten the prayer line. He then says, "Allāhu akbar," raising his hands to the height of his shoulders with his fingers together but outstretched, just like in prostration.

The first is to get the fingers together and the second is to straighten—just like when in prostration, meaning that they will be at your shoulders just like they should be when you are in prostration. You will see many people they prostrate like this [hands

close together when they come up for the *rafʿ al-yadayn*]. You would never give *takbīr* like that. So, it just gives you an idea that these are the same position.

That is our opening piece of text.

Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn, in his commentary to this text, which as we know is called *al-Sharḥ al-Mumtīʿ*, he starts off by explaining what the concept of *ṣifah* means. He says at the top of page 5:

صفةُ الصَّلَاةِ: أي: الكيفية التي تكون عليها

The word *ṣifah* means a sign or a description of something. When we say *ṣifatʿl-ṣalāh*, we are basically talking about the description, how we actually describe the manner of doing something. He said that the *fuqahāʾ*, they spoke about the description of the prayer—that’s their job. The scholars of *fiqh*, the jurists, it’s their job to describe the manner of how to pray and how to perform *Hajj*, and how to do x, and how to do y. Why is that? Because it is a condition of worship, to know how to do it.

وذلك لأنَّ شرطَ العبادة أمران:

1 – الإخلاصُ لله تعالى.

2 – المتابعةُ للرَّسولِ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّم.

There are two conditions for worship:

1. To make that action for the sake of Allāh ﷻ alone.
2. To follow the Messenger ﷺ.

These are the two things you have to remember with any action that you do. If you want that action to be accepted by Allāh as an act of worship, it has to be for His sake and it has to be done properly. So, you have follow the Messenger ﷺ. He says: As for the first condition, sincerity for the sake of Allāh ﷻ:

الإخلاصُ لله تعالى

That is the job of the scholars of *tawḥīd* and *al-ʿaqāʾid*—it is for the theologians. That is for the scholars of creed, for *ʿaqīdah*. That is their job to deal with, to make sure that we get it right, make sure that we are not praying to the wrong person, make sure that we

are not making *riyā'*, making sure that our hearts are clean, making sure that we understand. That is their job. It's their job to get our *'aqīdah* right, our creed right, our theology right, to make sure we are doing it for the right reason, to the right deserving one, Allāh ﷻ, to not make mistakes in that, to gee us up when we are feeling down, to motivate us—that is their job. As for the *fuqahā'*, their job is *al-mutāba'ah* of the Prophet ﷺ. It is their job to tell us exactly how it is done according to the way of the Messenger ﷺ. That is the job of the *fuqahā'*. *Ahl'l-tawḥīd wa'l-'aqā'id* they deal with *ikhlāṣ* (first condition) and the rest of the scholars the *fuqahā'*, the jurists, they deal with the second condition.

What is the opposite of *ikhlāṣ*?

Student: *Shirk*.

Ustādh: *Ishrāk*, good. It is to do it other than for the sake of Allāh.

What is the opposite of *al-mutāba'ah* (following the Messenger ﷺ)?

Student: *Bid'ah*.

Ustādh: *Bid'ah*, excellent.

*Bid'ah* [is] innovating in the religion, doing your own thing. Thinking that it is right. You know many people will say that, right? *Bid'ah* is one of these confusing things because it just doesn't make any sense why it would be a problem to do it. If I make my family pray definitely, 100 % twenty extra *rak'āt* every single day, without fail after *'Aṣr ṣalāh* because how on earth can praying extra be a bad thing? The *ikhlāṣ* is there, doing it for the sake of Allāh, no one else is seeing it, hard work, getting it done at home, and taking a lot of time and could be doing lots of other things. But it didn't follow the Messenger ﷺ. It is the exact opposite of following the Prophet ﷺ so it's *bid'ah*. *Bid'ah* has to be within the religious sphere. Something can't be *bid'ah* if you are not expecting reward for it. That is very important to understand. If you are not expecting reward for an action then by definition that action is not in the religious sphere, it is in the secular sphere. It is my decision, for example, to buy x type of car and I want it to be yellow, or I want it to be blue, or I want it to be x or y. These are decisions that I make that might not be following the Prophet ﷺ but I never wanted to follow the Prophet ﷺ, it wasn't around at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, I don't expect it as an act of worship, etc. That basic principle is what carries you forward. Obviously, the studies in *bid'ah* can be quite detailed and I am giving a very general kind of overview. But I want you to know that.

The Shaykh then says:

فَمَنْ تَابَعَ الرَّسُولَ بِدُونِ إِخْلَاصٍ لَمْ تَصَحَّ عِبَادَتُهُ؛ لِقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى فِي الْحَدِيثِ الْقُدْسِيِّ: «أَنَا أَغْنِي  
الشُّرَكَاءَ عَنِ الشُّرْكِ، مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا أَشْرَكَ فِيهِ مَعِيَ غَيْرِي تَرَكْتُهُ وَشِرْكُهُ»

Whoever follows the Messenger without any *ikhhlās*, then his *‘ibādah* is invalid. That is because of what Allāh says in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* in the *ḥadīth qudsi*. What is a *ḥadīth qudsi*?

Student: When the Prophet ﷺ narrates a *ḥadīth* and says, “Allāh says...”. So, it’s the wording of the Prophet ﷺ but Allāh’s statement.

Ustādh: Good. Allāh’s statement but the wording of the Prophet ﷺ.

What is the Qur’ān?

Student: The wording of Allāh.

Ustādh: Allāh’s statement in His word... that’s not enough.

Student: His speech.

Ustādh: His speech, yes. Spoken word, yes. Carry on. Are you just happy with that? Let me repeat, *ḥadīth qudsi*.

Student: In the Prophet’s ﷺ words from Allāh ﷻ and the Qur’ān is from Allāh ﷻ revealed to Jibrīl عليه السلام then to...

Ustādh: Okay, so the Qur’ān is Allāh’s statement, revealed to Jibrīl عليه السلام spoken by him, spoken word therefore, preserved in spoken word—not much difference between the two. What is the big thing that you are missing?

Student: Not created?

Ustādh: Not created is okay.

Student: It’s a miracle.

Ustādh: No, that’s not the real difference between the two.

Student: Is it to do with the authenticity?

Ustādh: Authenticity, come on folks. Wake up! The Qur’ān itself is absolutely 100 % nailed on *mutawātir*, it is not possible for it to be wrong in any single way. It has been checked by the Prophet ﷺ, Jibrīl عليه السلام checked the Prophet ﷺ, Allāh I guaranteed every single letter. Did He give that guarantee to the *ḥadīth*, every single one? No, that is a

human enterprise where although the authentic *ḥadīth* have been guaranteed by Allāh, the inauthentic *ḥadīth* have been allowed to flourish.

Therefore, it is important for you to remember that when we talk about *ḥadīth qudsi* it has the possibility of being weak. In fact, you will find when you study *ḥadīth* that the vast majority of the *ḥadīth qudsiyyah* are weak. Don't take that as a massive rule of thumb. I am just saying that when you come to study proper, you come to realise that actually huge numbers of *ḥadīth qudsi* are weak. When we are talking weak, etc. obviously weak has a lot of levels. You've got weak, which isn't a major issue. Then you've got *da'īf jiddan*, which is obviously serious, then you've got fabricated and *munkar*, which is rejected, and made up, *mawḍū'* narrations, which is very, very serious.

(00:13:00)

If you look historically, just common sense, to why people would make fake statements, it's not all the time just to spite and just to create hype for your own guy or to create political *ḥadīth* for whatever reason. The vast majority of fabricated *ḥadīth* are well intentioned people who just want to do *da'wah*. They just lose the plot and they want to try and scare people or they want to instill extreme love into the people and so they want to really get a connection. So that's why storytellers are so common to be coming out with weak narrations. Number one, it's in their interest because they are always exciting, always interesting [and there's] always a hype around these kinds of narrations. Likewise, they are the people who are least likely to be scholarly and least likely to want to care about the sources. And if you see the mentality of a person who's trying to impress the other person or make it as exaggerated and as emotional as possible, it doesn't get any bigger than saying "Allah ﷻ said...". So *ḥadīth qudsi* is a prime candidate for weak *ḥadīth*. So, when you see *ḥadīth qudsi*, alarm bells should go off.

Now using the same principles [of] what I just said [and] using the same kind of social story that I've created, what are then the other signs that you would expect to pick up on? Clues to a normal person that would indicate, '*Hold on, I just have to be careful there.*'

Student: Skip some of the *riwāyāt*?

Ustādh: No, I'm just saying these kinds of things. Like I said to you, you will never forget it for the rest of your life—I can guarantee it—because of what you just heard, and these things stick. Next time you come across a *ḥadīth qudsi*, the first thing you'll think is, '*Is it authentic?*' because of what I just said, which is good. And you'll check and that's fine. And I gave a reason for it and maybe you understood it maybe you didn't. If you understood it, what could be other things that you'll see that will betray the reality of a *ḥadīth*?

Student: Shock factor?

Student: Big numbers?

Ustādh: Big numbers is the big one—huge numbers. [For example]: ‘If you say *astaghfir Allāhu’l-‘Azīm wa atūbu ilayh 99 million times...*’ These are the ones that you get in the email and text messages, etc. And also shock factor—big, horrible, cracking this and a mega focus on a mega punishment etc. Crass language, which is not the way of the Prophet ﷺ usually. Shock factor is good because it covers a lot. It covers the positives and negatives. But big numbers is a big one. You know special places and a big emphasis on that. That's not to say that we don't have big numbers in the *Sunnah* and that's not to say that we don't have exaggeration and shock etc., but like I said these are indicators, that's all. It's just a little thing that says, ‘Let me make sure I'm good here.’ You go back, do your double check and you're fine. You're on your way.

This is a *ḥadīth qudsi*. [We think,] ‘We're not too sure about that.’ But we have a look and it's in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. This *ḥadīth* is from the most authentic of *ḥadīth*. Al-Nabi ﷺ said that Allāh ﷻ said:

أَنَا أَغْنَى الشُّرَكَاءِ عَنِ الشِّرْكِ؛ مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا أَشْرَكَ مَعِيَ غَيْرِي، تَرَكْتُهُ وَشِرْكُهُ.

*Ana aghna*: I am completely not in need whatsoever to need to share in anything. I don't need to share my powers, I don't need to delegate my reality, etc. I don't need to share, I'm free from that. “*Ana aghna*” i.e. I have no need to have to be able to do that.

So, whoever does an action where they associate it with Me, where they don't give Me My entire complete due right, and rather give it to someone else, even if it's a small part of it, whoever shares My *ḥaqq* with someone else, then I leave him and their *shirk*. I leave that person and I drop them like a stone and what they are doing.

Clearly anyone who does *shirk* then their action of *‘ibādah* is invalid.

Secondly:

وَمَنْ أَخْلَصَ لِلَّهِ وَلَمْ يَتَّبِعْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَإِنْ عِبَادَتُهُ مَرْدُودَةٌ

And whoever is doing something purely for the sake of Allāh but doesn't follow the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, then his act of worship is rejected. Because of the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

“Whoever does an action from our actions that is not upon our way then it is rejected.”

So, we have these two principles, we have their opposites [and] we know that it's very important to make sure that these two conditions continue otherwise the action is rejected.

Having said that, when it comes to describing acts of worship, not every act of worship is described. Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn makes a point, he says we never saw *ṣifāt'l-zakāh* or *ṣifāt'l-ṣiyām*. Even though the scholars wrote the Chapter of the Description of the Prayer and they described many acts of worship like that, but they never described *zakāh* and they never described *ṣiyām*. Rather what they would do, in *ṣiyām* for example, is that they would make clear what things break the fast and that they would then make a conclusion. They would say that *ṣiyām* is refraining from the invalidators with the intention of the worship of Allah ﷻ, from dawn until sunset. That is the only description that they would give. The rest of it would just be the do's [and] don'ts, but no other actual description.

As for *zakāh*, what they would do is explain to you what the types of wealth are, *amwāl'l-zakawīyyah*, what we would call in English ‘*zakātable*’. It's an awesome word. The best word ever! And they will explain the different types of thresholds, the *niṣāb*, about what level it is. And they will also define who are the people who have to define the *zakāh*. So that's basically the only descriptions that they would do.

As for *ṣalāh*, Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says that we know that it is the single greatest pillar of Islam after saying:

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله

It is the one pillar (and now we're going into hard core Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn, Ḥanbali mode now) that whoever leaves out of laziness and not taking it seriously then he is *kāfir*. The one who does not take it seriously and leaves it not making an effort, *kāna kāfiran*. We covered that actually at the beginning of Chapter Two. And whoever denies its obligation, even if he prays, he is a *kāfir*. So, for example, if someone says that, ‘*I am praying these five prayers but they are all just nafl. I'm praying these five obligatory prayers but only because I'm being told to. I don't think they are obligatory*’—he is a *kāfir* even if he prays those prayers. The only exception is someone who is new to Islam. Then of course this person needs to be told that and understood it and if they deny after they've understood the rulings, then the ruling is to be applied.

Shaykh is now going into a reminder about the prayer, he says: As for the prayer then it's either performed in a *jamā'ah* or by oneself. And if it is in *jamā'ah* then that of course

is better for it. And the best way to actually perform the prayer is for a person to make *wuḍū'* at home, and he perfects that *wuḍū'*.

أن يتوضأ الإنسان في بيته، ويُسبغ الوضوء

We've already spoken about that in the last three years. When it comes to *wuḍū'*, we're talking about: taking one's time, using minimum water, thinking about every single moment, making sure that everything is done in the correct way. But also, the fact that the Prophet ﷺ said that the people's sins are falling off during the time that they are making it, that the people who will do it properly and higher and more will be the ones that will be noticed by that in *Jannah* etc. This is called *isbāgh'l-wuḍū'*—doing it proper and nice. Also, some of the scholars mention that using cold water and finding it a bit more difficult to do but enjoying the process because you're feeling it more, that's also the kind of thing that also adds to the perfection. That's not a condition, by the way.

He then leaves his home with the intention for the prayer in *jamā'ah*, and if he does all of that (what we just said—makes the perfection in *wuḍū'*, leaves the home with the intention of *jamā'ah* and sets off), then every single footstep for that person, he will not take except that Allah ﷻ will raise him one level in status and a sin will be taken away from him whether his house is close or far. And Shaykh says that:

قُرْبَ بَيْتِهِ أَوْ بَعْدَ

“Whether he lives close or far.” That does not mean that it is an objective to live further from the *masjid*. People are asked that question: I've got a choice to be here or a choice to be there, do I have to take the further one so that I can get the reward?

Shaykh says that does not mean that a person actually intentionally distances himself from the *masjid*, going further so he increases the reward. Rather, it means that if your house is far from the *masjid*, don't make yourself far from the *masjid*. *Wallāhi* it's a very nice statement he makes there. *Subhān Allāh*.

بل يعني ذلك أنه إذا بُعدَ منزلُك من المسجد فلا تستبعد المسجد، وتقل: إن في ذلك تعباً عليّ، بل اسعَ إليه، ولك في كلِّ خطوة إذا خرجت مُسبِغاً للوضوء قاصداً المسجد أن يرفعَ الله لك بها درجة؛ ويحطَّ عنك بها خطيئة.



(00:24:00)

Which is excellent. The meaning is that don't then say that this is a mission, and it's difficult, I can't bother waking up early, etc. That's what it means—the understanding of the *ajr* is that if you are further away, you have got to have that motivation to keep on doing. And as long as you have that motivation, and you come out with that intention, you will be raised a status with Allāh, you will have your sins removed with every single step.

Student: Is there any specific reward in (inaudible)?

Ustādh: So, this is something that the scholars discussed, because obviously at that time, the majority of the people walked. But, at that time also, there were rides. It was easier to come. The scholars never, at that time, said that a person who comes on the camel etc. is not getting reward. How on a camel (and *vis a vis* today in a car) are the footsteps calculated? That is unknown. That is down to Allāh's knowledge. Is it that we will be getting the individual or not? What there is no doubt about, is that anyone who goes through greater difficulty in getting to the *masjid*, will be rewarded handsomely. That is something that we can say.

Can we say: You should not drive in a car, you should walk? I do not think it is right to say that. What we can say, is that a person who decides to walk, to take on that greater effort, to please Allāh ﷻ more, there is no doubt that that person, through that extra effort, is getting it.

Now let's throw a curve ball in there. Let's say that this guy is on the same salary and the same living expenses as the other guy who has the car. They both set off from their house which is one kilometre away. This guy would rather save the time and leave later, and therefore take the car, but he is willing to spend that extra £25 a week, which the other guy would not, but he is willing to put the time in. That is the danger of trying to say that one is better than the other. This guy might leave later, and you might be thinking that his is a lazier approach, but if he is on the same level (I'm not talking richer), and he is paying £25, that is costing him real time. It is a material 'loss', and who is to argue that the extra three miles of walking is not equal to £25 *ṣadaqah*?

Student: It's similar to when you say that some of the scholars said it is better to use cold water. Some of the scholars said this. I don't think there is any *ḥadīth* about it.

Ustādh: There is *ḥadīth* about cold water, but the real discussion about the cold water [is] just like the issue of the house. Do you intend to find cold water, or if there is cold water there, do you just go for it and take it? In my opinion it is the second one. It is not like the person has hot water and I am going freeze myself off. But there is also cold water, and then there is cold water. You do not go out to get cold water but when you are faced with cold water, you take it like a champ and that is it. I think that's the thing—you do not let it put you off, and here is a *ḥadīth* to encourage you. That is the essence of the *ḥadīth*, and that is the essence of living far from the *masjid*. That is the essence of not having a ride, etc.

The Shaykh says:

وينبغي أن يأتي إليها بسكينةٍ ووقارٍ، سكينة في الألفاظ والحركة، ووقار في الهيئة، فلا يأتي إليها وهو منزعجٌ، أو يمشي مشية الإنسان الذي ليس بمنتظم، بل يكون وقوراً؛ لأنه مُقبلٌ على مكانٍ يقفُ فيه بين يدي الله عزّ وجل .

It is a must that you come to the *masjid* calm and with gravitas. *Waqār* is a difficult word to translate—I call it gravitas. We all know what *sakīnah* is, people call it tranquillity. *Sakīnah* is just relaxed. Your *maskan* is your abode, your home—not the house, not the *bait*. The *sakan* is your home. So, you are relaxed, and that is the concept.

Shaykh says: not speaking, not chatting, gossiping, not being angry. He has got to be relaxed in that.

سكينة في الألفاظ والحركة

Not jittery, not rushing.

ووقار في الهيئة

*Hay'ah* is the way that you are presenting yourself.

فلا يأتي إليها وهو منزعجٌ

You know, he does not look like a guy who has come to stand in front of Allāh. Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says he must be:

وقوراً؛ لأنه مُقبلٌ على مكانٍ يقفُ فيه بين يدي الله عزّ وجل

You have to look at this person and see that he is about to enter into a place where he is about to stand in front of Allāh ﷻ. He says: *Wallāhi*, if you were to enter upon a

king—and we have all heard this, but this cliché or rhetoric will never ever grow old, because it is absolutely correct. If you were ever to go in [to meet] a king or a boss, you would be checking your tie, you would be looking at this, that. You would be smelling, you would be doing all kinds of things to make sure that you are spot on. You would turn your phone off. There are so many things that you would do, because you know that this is your big moment.

Shaykh says you do that, and you come to the *masjid*, a person bowls in, throwing your [shoes] here and there, he bangs the door open, he stands like he is a privileged guy. That is another thing that blows my mind, the person who comes to the prayer and lifts his hands immediately. Where are the couple of seconds to gather your thoughts, to gather yourself, to calm down and take a breath and say, 'Right, okay, let's do this. *Allāhu akbar*.' That is *waqār*. And gravitas, if you know the meaning of the word, I think is the thing that I think fits the bill. Is there an alternative? Does anyone want to offer an alternative?

Student: Presence?

Ustādh: The problem with where you are going, and also in fairness, the problem with the word gravitas, is that it seems more about you. And it is not about you, it is about Allāh being respected.

(00:36:00)

Student: Dignified?

Ustādh: Dignified yes. Dignified is gravitas. A person who has gravitas you know he is a serious person. And that is also good—serious because this is not the time for jokes. This is the one moment when it is not time for jokes.

He then says that you must not rush even if he fears that he going to miss the prayer.

لأن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال:  
«إذا سمعتم الإقامة فامشوا إلى الصلاة؛ وعليكم السكينة والوقار؛ ولا تسرعوا»

When you hear the *iqāmah* then move to the prayer or walk to the prayer and be calm and show gravitas.

وعليكم السكينة والوقار

It is a command—just clam down or be still or be tranquil or chill out and show some seriousness and do not rush. That is what happens you see, people [do this]. You have got to understand this. This is very important. For me, I have told you that when it comes to sign of a practising Muslim, people just think that person who prays is a practising Muslim. That is a million miles off. Amongst the practising Muslims or students of knowledge we should all have certain key indicators that mark off who a practising person is. Likewise, people who do not display these characteristics, it is difficult to say they are practising Muslims. This is very harsh by the way because you may think, *'How can you say that someone is not a practising because of this?'* But it is an indicator. If you see someone running for the prayer, that person is off my list within a second. I never saw anyone run for the prayer except someone who is *jāhil* because anyone who has half a brain knows that whatever you miss from the prayer, you make up and whatever you catch from the prayer you do. And that you by running and rushing to try and jump in is not showing respect to the prayer. It is actually showing a disrespect because not only are you going against the *ḥadīth* which is saying, chill and be easy, and be serious—and no person who is running has gravitas. But it is also as if, *'Oh my God, I cannot be doing another rak'ah by myself.'* It is a diss to the prayer as well.

Student: That is harsh.

Ustādh: It is harsh.

Student: What about speeding?

Ustādh: Speeding in the car? Let me tell you something about what some of the Companions used to say and do. The idea here is that one does not lose control. I think that speeding is not good. I do not want to say it is *ḥarām*, I do not want to say that it is the pure version of the anti-gravitas, but I do not think it is good. Because you know also speeding, not only is it against the law and dangerous but no one speeds except their adrenaline increases. Their heart beat increases, the *taḥarruk*, and the *ḥarakah* that is not meant to happen like when you are just running it is producing an increased heart beat and fight and flight response and adrenaline is increasing which is what also happens if a person is pushing the boundaries, overtaking, etc. I think people yes, in cars, do need to take it easy as best as possible. I do not want to say that it is *ḥarām*, but it is good [to take it easy].

Student: If you think it is the last *rak'ah* and you might catch it?

Ustādh: So, this also needs to be said, that when we talk about whatever you catch you pray and whatever you miss then you make up—this is the same for missing the *jamā'ah*. Meaning, if you miss the *jamā'ah* you do not lose your mind to get there and your reward is there. And *in shā' Allāh* you get the same amount of reward because the *ḥadīth* indicates that a person has caught the *jamā'ah* even if they have not actually caught the *jamā'ah*—the reward thereof, because it is on the intention. At the same

time, you do get the other extreme which is like, '*I am so on this ḥadīth you just count how long it is taking me to make these footsteps.*'

Student: Twenty miles per hour down the road...

Ustādh: Do not talk about that guy. There are some people that will drive you nuts, they are literally like driving so slowly that, '*I am Mr. Waqār.*' And they walk in, they are in the *tashahhud*, the last one, and they are just [strolling in]. That is the other way, '*I am the super-practising guy.*' Because if the one who runs is the non-practising guy, then the one who is super-practising is the one who is like, '*I am not even bothered, go on give salām then.*' Those are the two extremes that you have to avoid and you have to hit it the middle and that is what 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar used to be described as: If they were late for the prayer, they would quicken their pace—so they would then start to lean forward and walk quicker but never go into an ungainly trot, or a run, or a jog, etc., It's just that you do not disrespect the prayer by just slowing down and chilling.

Student: What were you saying about if somebody misses the prayer...

Ustādh: Someone who misses the prayer because they did not speed, they did not do anything illegal and they did not run. That is what you are saying, yeah? Then the person comes in and the prayer is over?

Student: Say I am praying in the *masjid* and I am going to come say at 8:30. I know I am going to miss it. Is there any benefit in that?

Ustādh: Oh, you mean that you are super late?

Student: I know I am going to miss it.

Ustādh: '*Ishā'*' is at 8:00 and you know that you are going to get there at 8:30 there is no way that you are going to catch the prayer. Then is there some excellence in the *masjid*?

There is no doubt that there is an excellence in praying an obligatory prayer in the *masjid*. There is no doubt about that because the *malā'ikah* love the House of Allāh ﷺ, you have a greater chance of someone coming in and saying, '*Listen I will pray jamā'ah with you,*' etc. But yes, likewise if you have missed the main *jamā'ah*, if a person goes home, there is no issue on that.

Then the Shaykh says that once you have arrived at the *masjid* then pray whatever is easier for you. If the *adhān* has been done, then it is now possible for you to pray the *rātibah*. *Al-Rātibah* (plural *al-rawātib*) this is the name of the *sunnah* prayer that is the most emphasised *sunnah* prayers in Islam and it those prayers which are so associated with the obligatory prayers. We are talking about the two *sunnah* of *Fajr*, the four *sunnah* before *Zuhr*, the two or the four *sunnah* after *Zuhr*, the two *sunnah* after *Maghrib* and the two after '*Ishā'*' and the *witr* according to the majority of scholars. The *sunan*'l-

*mu'akkadah* as we call them, those emphasised *sunan*. These are the formal prayers which are linked to the prayer. Shaykh says that if that *farḍ* prayer doesn't have a *rātib* before it:

إن لم يكن لها راتبة قبلها فسنة ما بين الأذنين

If there is a prayer that does not actually have a *sunnah* before it, like *Maghrib*, then you can pray two *rak'ah* for the two *adhāns*. The 'two *adhāns*' (we have already spoken about that)—that is the *adhān* and the *iqāmah*. There are two *rak'ah* to be prayed, there is always a *du'ā'* there to be prayed as well, that is *sunnah*. Shaykh says that these prayers, the *rātib* or the prayers between the two *adhāns*, they will suffice for you and replace for you the *taḥiyyat'l-masjid* because the Prophet ﷺ said:

إذا دخل أحدكم المسجد فلا يجلس حتى يُصلي ركعتين

"If any of you enters the *masjid*, let not one of you sit down until you have prayed two *rak'ah*."

*Ḥadīth* narrated by Bukhāri and Muslim. So, that is achieved if a person prays a *rātibah* or the prayer of the *adhān* or he makes *wuḍū'* that would be achieved. And as I said it also then not necessary, it is kind of achieved, you can either argue it has been achieved or kind of cancelled out, if you arrive at the obligatory prayer time. If you have arrived at the obligatory prayer time, then you have entered into the prayer and you have lost the opportunity to do a separate *taḥiyyat'l-masjid*. That does now become your pseudo *taḥiyyat'l-masjid* (remember we explained that).

Then a person after he has prayed the two *rak'ah* he sits down with the intention of waiting for the prayer and as long as you do that, then you should know that you will continue to be in the prayer. You have started the prayer already whilst you are waiting for the prayer. That is the excellence of coming early to the *masjid*—as long as you are waiting, as long as your intention is that. If you come to the *masjid*, for example, to meet someone and then that finished early by mistake for example, unexpectedly, then you do not get the reward of the person who is waiting for the prayer. The intention has to be that the person comes for that.

The Shaykh also says that do not forget that whilst you are waiting you are also in the company of the *malā'ikah* who are all the time while you are waiting are sending salutations upon you. Their salutations of course, is asking Allāh ﷻ to forgive you and have mercy upon you. They are doing that all the time you are waiting for the prayer in the *masjid*.

يُسَنُّ الْقِيَامُ عِنْدَ "قَدْ" مِنْ إِقَامَتِهَا

It is *sunnah* to stand when “*qad*” is said from the *iqāmah*.

The Shaykh then says it is *sunnah* for the one who is following to stand (according to the author) when the *muqīm*, the one who gives the *iqāmah* says, “*Qad*,” from the statement: *Qad qāmat’l-ṣalāh*. Why? Because:

«قد» تفيد التحقيق

*Qad* indicates that the job has been done—because you do not give the *iqāmah* unless the prayer is going to be established. You do not give it and then say, “Is there anyone here to lead us?” You establish that someone is going to lead the prayer and that the time is in and we are going to pray and then when you say *qad*, *qad* means indeed, definitely. So, when you say *ḥayya ‘alā’l-ṣalāh*, *ḥayya ‘alā’l-ṣalāh*, hey come to the prayer, hey come to the prayer, *ḥayya ‘alā’l-falāḥ*, *ḥayya ‘alā’l-falāḥ*, hey come to success, come to success, *qad qāmat’l-ṣalāh*, listen, definitely the prayer is established—that is what it means. *Qad*, it has 100% been established, we are in. According to the author and a *qawl* in the *madh-hab* of the Ḥanābilah this *qad* means that the prayer has established itself and therefore it is the time for a person to stand up.

Shaykh says: What is interesting is that according to this statement of the author, Imām al-Ḥajjāwī, and this statement in the *madh-hab* this would indicate that it is *sunnah* to stand up at this statement whether you see the imām or not. Whether the imām is there or not or whether you have seen them or not then it is *sunnah*, according to them, to stand at this moment.

(00:48:00)

As for the well-known, *al-mash-hūr min’l-madh-hab*, the well-known position, the established position, and the position of the majority in the Ḥanbali *madh-hab* it is that you do not stand at the *iqāmah*. There is no standing during the *iqāmah* except if you see the imām. So, the condition is the imām, meaning the imām is the key—not the wording itself. If the imām is present, then “*qad*” comes back into play. In the absence of the imām, the “*qad*” has no meaning per se, it is not the starting point. So, if you do not see him, then he waits until he sees the imām because they are following the imām, not any other way. Shaykh says: In this country, in Saudi, it would be very bizarre if any stood up before the imām entered the *masjid*. Then when the people see him then the people will stand up and the *muqīm* will give the *iqāmah*.

Shaykh goes into some opinions. He said that some of the scholars said:

وقيل: يقوم إذا رأى الإمام مطلقاً.

It was said that you stand as soon as you see the imām, regardless of whether you start the *iqāmah* or say the *iqāmah*. As soon as you see the imām you stand.

Another opinion is you stand as soon as you start the *iqāmah*. Another opinion is you stand when he says, “Come to the prayer,” meaning, alright, let’s get up, “*Ḥayya ‘ala’l-ṣalāh*.” That would make sense. Another opinion is you stand just when the imām is about to say, “*Allāhu akbar*,” for *takbīrāt’l-iḥrām*. He’s mentioning a sixth opinion:

وقيل: الأمر في ذلك واسع

It was said that the situation is flexible, meaning any of these that you do is okay. That was another opinion—so, not choosing one specific one.

What does Shaykh say?

والسنة لم تردّ محدّدة لموضع القيام

The *sunnah* has not established for us, accurately and clearly the exact moment of when to stand up in the *iqāmah* because the only thing the Prophet ﷺ said was:

والسنة لم تردّ محدّدة لموضع القيام؛ إلا أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: «إذا أُقيمت الصلاة فلا تقوموا حتى تروني»

“If the prayer is established, don’t stand until you see me,” that’s the only statement which indicates something about the standing. So, what do we know? If the prayer is established, meaning that the time is in, everyone knows that this is when we are meant to pray (now uses clocks), so now we are ready to pray, and everyone is here—don’t stand up until you see. Why? Because he is the imām and that is therefore the ruling. The **class position** is that a person does not stand up until the imām comes. It is not linked to the *iqāmah*. The *iqāmah* will happen either before or as he is asked for it, or it will start as he comes in—this is the *sunnah* and the class position. Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn does make a point after that:



فإذا كانت السُّنة غيرَ محدَّدة للقيام؛ كان القيامُ عند أوَّل الإقامة، أو في أثنائها، أو عند انتهائها، كلُّ ذلك جائز.

If the *sunnah* has not established it, then the *qiyām* can be at the beginning of the *iqāmah* or the middle of the *iqāmah* or at the end of it. All of that is permissible. That's very interesting what Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn said. It is permissible for you to stand up at any moment.

That main thing is though, he says:

المهم: أن تكون متهيئاً للدُّخول في الصلاة قبل تكبيرة الإمام؛ لئلا تفوتك تكبيرة الإحرام.

It's not about the standing. It's that you're ready to stand in front of Allāh ﷻ. That's an excellent statement to end that particular point. You are about to stand in front of Allāh ﷻ and therefore you should be ready for the *takbīrāt'l-iḥrām* with the imām. That's the key that you need to be ready and focused on—it is not the exact moment you stand up, but that I am going to stand with the imām and make sure I say *Allāhu akbar* and I do not miss the *takbīrāt'l-iḥrām*. The missing of the *takbīrāt'l-iḥrām* is seen as a major, major fail. I just want you to know that. People who are coming late to the *masjid*, ten or twenty seconds late, it's still a fail. Twenty seconds is as bad as three minutes.

The only thing you have missed out on is if you like the imām's recitation, then you have missed out on some great *qirā'ah*. If you hate the imām's recitation, then you've saved yourself—it's a great result, I caught the *jamā'ah* and I didn't have to listen to him. It depends on you. The truth of the matter is that if you missed that first *takbīrāt'l-iḥrām*, you have come down. That's why when they speak about the *salaf*, they would mention that we saw so and so at the *masjid* and I never saw him miss the *takbīrāt'l-iḥrām* for x amount of years. That's how a person is measured.

## Q & A

Q: Of the positions you gave, would we be able to disregard the one that says stand up as soon as the *takbīrāt'l-iḥrām* is going to be given?

A: Yes, that would definitely that's the weakest.

Q: ...tells everyone to straighten their rows and it's *sunnah* to...

A: Yes, I absolutely agree with you. There is no doubt that the weakest and the weirdest of all these opinions is to stand up when he is about to give the *takbīr*. Really strange because of exactly what the next section is going to be about and what you just said.

Q: If you selected a different time to stand up...

A: If you chose a different time to stand up, such as?

Q: Such as the *shahādah*?

A: The standing up, you can't say it is wrong, like Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn said. A person says he is going to stand up at *ḥayya ʿala'l-ṣalāh*, we can't say it is wrong in terms of the standing. But that is on the proviso that the imām is there. For a person to say, "I am going to stand up at *ḥayya ʿala'l-ṣalāh* every time regardless of whether the imām is there or not," that's a weak position.

Q: So, if I am there and I stand up when the *iqāmah* starts, you don't consider that to be wrong?

A: You are asking the question: "Should I cause a ruckus amongst a bunch of Paks..."

Q: They said that, "This is when we stand up." Is it not wrong to say, "This is when we stand up?"

A: This issue of should I follow the *sunnah* or should I follow [what the group is doing]. The truth is that a person always has to make a judgment call at that place and time. What's it going to look like? Are you looking at bringing people together? Have you burned all your bridges and may as well go nuclear anyways? That's the first consideration. The second consideration is how serious the matter is and if there is a level of permissibility in all? That also helps a person as well. Etc. I have to say that in this particular one I find people quite relaxed. Even the Brillios will not have a major issue with a person standing up, unlike for example, not making *duʿāʾ* at the end. There is no comparison between the two.

Q: Let's say I am right and you're wrong and they said we are going to stand up at: *ash-hadu anna Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*. Is that wrong?

A: They want to stand at the end on the statement of the Prophet ﷺ? That is wrong isn't it because that's like showing some pseudo respect to the Prophet ﷺ?

Student: Exactly that, you are setting a precedent.

Ustādh: I agree there is some dodginess going on there.

Q: How about women in regard to seeing the imām.

A: That shows you the *bid'ah* of having a barrier. It shouldn't be that. All the headache that we have is because of this barrier because the imām should be seen by the women. Obviously if you're in a room or there's a barrier they should go by the sound of people.

Q: First of all, the only situation I can see where there is an *iqāmah* before the imām is there is a group of friends and they haven't decided who is going to be the imām in the first place. And if we do that, someone says *ḥayya 'ala'l-ṣalāh* it's very difficult to not stand up for *ṣalāh* when he says *ḥayya 'ala'l-ṣalāh*.

Ustādh: Because the imām has been chosen, and one of you, you know he is going to step forward...

Student: No, we don't know. It is a group of people and we don't know who is going to be the imām. It is decided that we are going to pray. Someone stands and says the *iqāmah*. Then everyone is like, "Go ahead brother."

Ustādh: That's okay. The reason that's okay, what you're saying, is that we are a group of brothers and we're going to have the whole "*taffaḍal, taffaḍal, taffaḍal...*"—that's cool. We don't want to break a centuries old tradition of the *taffaḍaling*. *Taffaḍaling* is part and parcel of our culture and our *dīn*.

Why is it different? It is because we definitely know the imām is here. We know we are going to pray now, we know one of us is going to lead; we just have to go through the *taffaḍaling* process.

Student: How weird is it for someone to even...

Ustādh: It is weird but not so weird in the Muslim countries where it is a paid imām, a paid *mu'adhdhin*. He's coming from the back door. The microphones are set up. They're not going to delay the prayer by one second. It's not a realistic situation. It happens all the time in the Gulf, it runs like clockwork.

Student: There has been a clock for a long time. But it's when the imām comes in that someone starts for the *iqāmah*.

Ustādh: That's because they are preserving the *sunnah*. But I can tell you there a number of countries, especially Gulf countries. In fairness I don't want to say it is *bid'ah* because the guy who is giving the *iqāmah* has just come out of the same room where he was with the imām—just so you understand. He said to him, "Okay go." So, he goes, turns on the microphone and starts and then the imām comes out. From a lay person's point of view, he doesn't see all that drama behind the scenes. He just sees a door open

and an imām suddenly appear after the *iqāmah* has started. So, it's actually not so strange. But to get rid of all that, it should be a basic rule that the imām comes and that's when the *iqāmah* should be given, that's when the people should stand up.

(00:59:00)

Student: So, there is like a big gap between the end of the *iqāmah* and the imām coming.

Ustādh: No, no, not necessarily. Not necessarily at all. Let me explain to you the *sunnah*. The *sunnah* picture that we need to paint is that the prayer cannot start without the imām and the people should not disrespect the imām and he is the one who calls all the shots. Combine all of that and you have got it. So, for example, just seeing the imām should not be enough to say that he wants to pray. He should make it clear he wants to pray. So, if he comes in and he is trying to get his coat off or something like that or for example, it is 8:00 and we all stand up and we are all looking around where is the imām gone? That's not the way it works. If we are there for the right reason every five minutes and he actually mentions that here. He says:

حتى لو تأخر الإمام وزاد خمس دقائق أو عشرًا فإنك على خير؛

If people understood this, then they have understood this. He says that if the imām is five or ten minutes late, what's your problem? You are praying for those five or ten minutes. Stay seated and wait for the imām to come in. The imām must never feel like he is under pressure. Because we are then getting into another area where there is a *bid'ah* of 8:00 is somehow some magic number. 8:00 has no function in reality. It is only a *tanẓīmi* thing, it is only to keep order. And it is good, and we should try and stick to it. But maybe the imām is late, etc. In a masjid like this, which is pretty under control, after a couple of minutes they will work out, "Hold on is he even here?" And they will go and check and he might be [coming], or they will say, "I don't think he is coming," then the process will start after a few minutes. That's more like what it should be. So, it's a combination of these things.

Q: What if it is *Maghrib* time because the time is too...

A: At *Maghrib* it would be stricter because obviously you can't wait fifteen minutes if fifteen minutes is the ideal time to pray but you would still give a few minutes.

Q: Is the reward of waiting for the prayer linked to waiting for *jamā'ah* to begin in a *masjid* or can this be applied to one who is waiting at home for a prayer time to begin if they are praying at home alone?

A: That's a really interesting question. It is interesting because I don't understand its real reality. If you are praying by yourself what are you waiting for?

Students: Time to begin. For the time to enter. In *‘Aṣr* time for *Maghrib* to come in.

Ustādh: Oh, if they are waiting for a prayer time then no doubt that’s an act of *‘ibādah*. But I thought that the prayer time is in. When I was talking about the *masjid* I am talking about both—about time to begin and within time waiting for the *jamā‘ah* time. For example, at the moment *‘Ishā’* is 7:30 so if a person comes in at *‘Ishā’* time at *adhān* time he is waiting for half an hour so that wouldn’t happen at home.

Student: Like if you are going to pray with your family.

Ustādh: I think that if you are not going to the *masjid* and you have a good reason not to and you guys are going to set a *jamā‘ah* time at home then I think there could be some definite application there. Allāh knows best.

Q: From last week the Ḥanbalis say that if the imām realizes during his prayer that he does not have *wuḍū’* or breaks his prayer in some way while leading the *jamā‘ah*, not only does his prayer break, but the prayer of the followers breaks as well. The Ḥanbalis also say that the imām does not soak up the mistakes of the person who does not start with the imām.

A: Correct and correct.

Student: If that is the case, is the latecomer's prayer also invalidated with the rest of the *jamā‘ah* if the imām's prayer is invalidated while leading the prayer?

Ustādh: Yes, that is correct, according to that position of the Ḥanbalis. According to our class position, no.

Q: For *waqār* decorum?

A: I think decorum is a synonym of gravitas. I don’t think it is very different from gravitas.

Q: At what point are they [women] supposed to stand up for *jamā‘ah*?

A: When they hear something because they can’t see, can they?

Q: We don’t have a permanent imām and people wait around at a specified time for someone to lead the prayer? Can you stand and wait, or you have to wait for someone to take the place of the imām and then you stand?

A: It’s not very clear that situation.

Student: There would be certain people who would be imām, if you are not one of those you would stay seated I guess.

A: If you have absolutely no idea who is going to lead the prayer then you will stay seated but if there is a definite deputy and they know that he steps in then you would get up when that person gets up.

Q: Did you not say that the time of the *iqāmah* is the right of the imām?

A: Yes. That's why the perfect scenario is that the *iqāmah* is not given until the *muṣallīn* know that the prayer is going to be established and the prayer is only going to be established if the imām comes. So, the imām's presence is an important one. That's why I said that the scenario where the student was mentioning that, "I don't know how it works when the *iqāmah* is given." That *iqāmah* is given when the *muqīm* knows that either the imām is definitely not coming or he has just left the imām inside and he is just walking out.

Q: If the imām is not coming?

A: Yeah, but he knows the imām is not coming and he normally leads himself. The *muqīm*, the one who gives the *iqāmah* leads himself or he definitely knows he is going to put another person forward.

Q: If he doesn't know the imām is not coming. In our mosque in Sudan the imām lives in the mosque. Sometimes the time comes and after five minutes they start the prayer. After the prayer finishes you see the imām he is praying at the back.

A: Here is the situation, this is where it is delicate. This is where it gets sensitive—if you have an imām who is getting lazy with the game. Because we want to respect the imām by not putting pressure upon him when he is five minutes late. But if my man is doing five minutes late every day, ten minutes late—we are not respecting that kind of person. He is not respecting the *jamā'ah*. Especially if the reason to set 8:00 as a time was to make sure the people are kept under a system, etc. This man is not respecting that. So, I think there is space. There has to be a balance. There has to be respect for the imām but the imām can't be taking a micky all the time as well.

Q: Is ten minutes late or natural waiting time for a *ṣalāh* to begin?

A: Ten minutes after the actual time? Ten minutes! Ten minutes is like ten years. Five is alright. Ten is a long time.

Student: It depends on the culture.

Ustādh: I think it is a very good point what one student just said there. It is a very cultural thing there. So, a hot country with a more relaxed environment, in a village or whatever. Like I remember when I was in Africa, in the practising areas I mean, there are a lot of non-practising areas in Africa, but in the practising, practising areas ten, fifteen, twenty minutes either way. People don't even care about clocks. Everyone is chilling.

Student: In fact, in Alexandria they broadcast the prayer on the speakers and you see how different the start and finish times are in the different mosques. They all do the *adhān* at the same time. But you hear them pray at different times.

Ustādh: They do the *adhān* at the same time.

Student: The *iqāmah* then you hear it.

Ustādh: At different times?

Student: Yes, a half an hour.

Ustādh: But those are different *masājīd* though?

Student: But it's the same area. They did the *adhān* at the same time. But they wait around, some of them do and some of them don't.

Ustādh: The whole Egypt *adhān iqāmah* thing is a very politically charged situation as you know. Even when I was there, there was a lot of you know... and you can even feel it. It's a real din. Every single loudspeaker, you can't work out which one to follow to make your *tarjī'* to.

Student: My point is that it is not unusual to walk into a mosque and wait. Like people expect to wait.

Ustādh: Definitely. I 100% agree with that. I have experienced that. Oh, no in the west you will never get away with that.

Student: You set a time.

Ustādh: Yeah, yeah, but his point is that you will set up a time in other countries as well, but people are not so strict to that.

Student: Also, they go by the entry of the (inaudible) and the *adhān* goes and it is accepted that fifteen minutes after *adhān* that's the prayer time.

Ustādh: That's an in between thing. What you are saying is in between where they are not following Ḥanafī school. So, if you are following the other three schools they all pray after the *adhān* straight away. And if that's the case then they have set a time: This

prayer will be ten minutes after the *adhān* every single time and therefore no one ever need to see a watch because they hear the *adhān* and they know they have ten minutes. So, you have some of the Arab mosques in the West they do that system. And that system to be honest is great but it also has its disadvantages. You need to be on top of the calendar really, really well because we can't hear the *adhān*. Now in Regents Park Mosque, the most famous mosque that establishes this system, Arabs run it, Shāfi'i imām, Shāfi'i board. That's exactly what they do. You know that I think it is 25 minutes for *Fajr*, half an hour for *Zuhr*, fifteen minutes for *ʿAṣr*, ten minutes for *Maghrib* and I believe 10-15 minutes for *Ishā'*. You need to memorize the times and that's it, it's stuck in your mind. But also, you can hear the *mu'adhdhin*. So, the people who are around the locality they hear it and they know this is what I have got. Or you are on clock with your app, etc. There are different ways of dealing with that.

Q: I didn't know actually, about not rushing...

Ustādh: About the prayer?

Student: Yeah, do not rush it.

Ustādh: Do not be hasty, do not rush.

Student: I was very young when my parents lived in Saudi for a couple of years. The shopkeepers would definitely rush. Is this a bad thing?

Ustādh: It is a bad thing.

Student: Because they are scared.

Ustādh: By the way, I am never going to hate on a shopkeeper.

Student: They have to do business.

Ustādh: No, no, not because they have to do business but because I don't know how many times I have said, "Come on yara just serve me." I am that guy. We are all that guy. He is saying, "I have to close for prayer." How many times yara? Like every single couple of months when we go to get the dates and the guy says, "I have to close the *hay'ah* are around." And you are like, "Come on bro," because you know that you are not going to have to go and come back. I don't blame them.



# 27. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 2: THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PRAYER

يُسَنُّ الْقِيَامُ عِنْدَ "قَدْ" مِنْ إِقَامَتِهَا وَتَسْوِيَةُ الصَّفِّ

It is *sunnah* to stand when *qad* is said from the *iqāmah* and it is also *sunnah* to straighten the prayer line.

This phrase:

وَتَسْوِيَةُ الصَّفِّ

And it is also *sunnah* to straighten the prayer line.

Is what we are going to spend all session on and maybe even next week as well. It is a very, very big and detailed matter, one that there is a lot of confusion over, one where there is a lot of people that have very strong held views and interestingly the majority of which are just nonsensical. It is a very interesting chapter.

The first thing is again, the use of the word *sunnah*. We said last week that we are not really sure whether the *mu'allif*, the original author, Imām al-Ḥajjāwī, is using *sunnah* in a legal sense or in a general Islamic sense because immediately we are going to establish that it is absolutely not *sunnah* to establish the line—it is *farḍ*. It is a *wājib*. It's an obligation to establish the line. So, we do think that he means it is not obligatory according to one of the opinions in the *madh-hab*. As you are going to see, what Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn says (page 9):

يعني: تُسَنُّ تَسْوِيَةُ الصَّفِّ؛ لِأَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَأْمُرُ بِذَلِكَ فَيَقُولُ: «سَوُّوا صُفُوفَكُمْ»،  
وَيُرْشِدُ أَصْحَابَهُ لِهَذَا حَتَّى فَهَمُوا ذَلِكَ عَنْهُ وَعَقَلُوهُ عَقْلاً جَيِّداً.

The Prophet ﷺ in a *ḥadīth* which is narrated by Bukhārī he said:

سَوُّوا صُفُوفَكُمْ

“Straighten your lines.”

The Companions understood this very, very well because one of the times the Prophet ﷺ came out to lead the prayer and the *iqāmah* was given:

وفي يوم من الأيام خَرَجَ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ وَأُقِيمَتِ الصَّلَاةُ؛ فَالتَفَتَ فَإِذَا رَجُلٌ قَدْ بَدَأَ صَدْرُهُ

Suddenly he ﷺ turns around and he sees a person whose chest is showing. ‘Chest is showing’ here means it was sticking out of the line—he was basically forward. So, he ﷺ said:

فَقَالَ: «عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، لَتَسَوَّنَّ صُفُوفَكُمْ، أَوْ لَيُخَالِفَنَّ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ وُجُوهِكُمْ»

This is narrated as footnote 5. It is narrated by Bukhāri in the *Book of the Adhān*.

أَخْرَجَهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ، كِتَابُ الْأَذَانِ، بَابُ تَسْوِيَةِ الصُّفُوفِ عِنْدَ الْإِقَامَةِ وَبَعْدَهَا

This is very interesting. Imām al-Bukhāri included this *ḥadīth* and as it is clear from what happens in the *ḥadīth* he called the chapter title: Chapter: Straightening the Row at the Time of the *Iqāmah* and After the *Iqāmah*.

Why is that important in our current context? Us being Paks, what do we notice in Pak *masjids*?

They pray immediately. Have you seen that, right? You will see that they are getting ready, the imām is ready. Because according to the Aḥnāf, you have to establish the prayer immediately after the *iqāmah*. So, you will hear the *iqāmah* will be going—I am talking about classical hardcore Ḥanafī *masājīd* and a lot of the Deobandis are very much on this opinion and that is more due to some of the modern *riwāyāt*. So, you will see that they are there and as soon as he [the person doing the *iqāmah*] says, ‘*La illāha illa Allāh*,’ [the imām does *takbīrat*’l-*iḥrām* and says,] ‘*Allāhu akbar*.’ Then everyone will

say, '*Allāhu akbar*.' It's not random. It makes sense that you have had all this time to get yourself ready etc. Actually, the reason that the Ḥanafis make sense in this opinion because one thing that we didn't mention last week about when should people stand up. We said that it is correct that a person can stand up at any moment during the *iqāmah*. But the actual moment is when?

When you see the imām.

Now, when you see the imām—that's also a big statement. Does that mean when he is standing on the *muṣallah*? Does that mean when he enters the *masjid*? Does that mean as soon as he makes himself aware, or coughs, or x, or y? What does it mean?

One of the problems would be if you only stood up when he is standing there. Because if that happened then when would you establish the line? When would you get it straight? Etc. So, in actual fact the *iqāmah* should start off and people should stand up when the imām is seen, the *iqāmah* is given—people should now shuffle about, get themselves ready whilst the *iqāmah* is happening. So that when the imām gets there he now has something to play with. Because now what is going to happen is a process, as you are going to see. I am going to mention some narrations. You are going to see a number of *ḥadīth* where he ﷺ is going to warn about how the line has to be straight. But also, physically he ﷺ would himself walk up and down the line and he ﷺ would also send people. Sometimes he ﷺ would know a person and let them take responsibility for their line.

Bilāl ؓ was one of these people who used to be chosen. *Sayyidina* 'Umar ؓ he had a thing. It was authentically narrated from him he would never ever let the prayer start (when he was leading the prayer) he would never let the *ṣalāh* start until the people, *al-wukalā'*, the people that he had sent out deputising for him to deal with every single individual row, until they had come back to him or come back into their positions. It was at that moment that he then establishes the prayer. So, he is not even going to establish the prayer until the people have gotten back to their places and done their job. Because of course as you know the *jamā'ah* is growing. When the Prophet ﷺ was leading the *ṣalāh*, the Muslims were still less in number. By the time he ﷺ passes it is a big number. At the time of *Sayyidina* 'Umar ؓ, it's huge. The *masjid* had to be extended. As you know he is the first one who extended Masjid'l-Nabawi by moving the *ṣaff* forward. So, then he extends it from the sides and two *ṣaffs* to the front—so a significant increase in size for a significant number of extra people. That's too much for him to control, no speakers, no mic, so he would send, '*You, you, you, deal with your lines.*' They all go, they all fix their own lines, they all sort themselves out and then once they are happy that each line is correct they come back, and they give the sign, '*Yes go ahead.*' Then he says, '*Allāhu akbar.*'

So, it indicates there the *iqāmah* is not meant to be some chilling period. So, the Ḥanafis have got it right that people should be quicker rather than slower because the opposite is what? The opposite is everyone saying, '*I am not moving until the imām stands right*

here.’ Well, if that’s the case, and you guys haven’t even stood up and there is a whole period of time meant to happen right after the *iqāmah* as well, so you can see things working here.

Bukhāri titles this chapter by saying that the straightening the row during the *iqāmah* and after the *iqāmah*, indicates actually that the *sunnah* is to not immediately say, ‘*Allāhu akbar*,’ but rather give it time, get the lines straight, the imām to speak to people, advise people, give them some *adhkār*, give them a reminder. Look at what he ﷺ said when he saw this man’s chest showing. The *iqāmah* has happened, the *iqāmah* is gone, he ﷺ says:

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، لَتَسَوْنَ صُفُوفَكُمْ، أَوْ لِيُخَالِفَنَّ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ وُجُوهِكُمْ

“Oh, servants of Allāh! You will certainly straighten these lines or Allāh ﷻ will cause difference between your faces (meaning your selves).”

In another narration:

بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ

In another narration, between your hearts.

(0:10:00)

Certainly, indeed, without any doubt, Allāh ﷻ will cause this division between you. What is interesting in the Arabic language is the phraseology that is being used here:

لَتَسَوْنَ صُفُوفَكُمْ

There is a *lām*:

«اللام» واقعة في جواب قسم مقدر، وتقدير الكلام: «والله لتسَوْنَ»

The *lām* here in the Arabic, this *lām* is a *lām* of *al-qasm* and it actually means *wallāhi*. So, it’s like the Prophet ﷺ said: “*Wallāhi latusawwunna*,” I swear by Allāh you will straighten this line. It’s a threat. It is a very clear threat.

فالجمله مؤكّدة بثلاث مؤكّدات، وهي: القسم، واللام، والنون.

The actual sentence has been emphasised in rhetoric, in *balāghah*, in the Arabic language, in three ways: (1) the *qasm*, (2) the *lām* itself, and (3) the *nūn* because *latusawwu* is the Arabic and job done—that means to straighten. But when you add the *nūn* at the end, *latusawwunna*, that is the *nūn* of *tawkid*. It is an emphasiser. So there three linguistic emphasisers on just this one word, indicating therefore, this is definitely not a *sunnah*. This is an obligation. Why is it an obligation?

Because the Prophet ﷺ we know from the *Sunnah* generally, that whenever a threat is given then that indicates obligation to do the act that avoids the threat and it indicates that whoever does the act, it is something which is *ḥarām*. That can only happen for something which is *fard*. It can't happen for *sunnah* because it is not possible to be commanding someone to *sunnah* and they do *ḥarām* [by not doing it]. That is important.

“Allāh ﷻ will cause differences between you,” so much so, as Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says, that there is difference between the people will become so significant that it will settle in the hearts, which is the most serious—you start to have a hatred in the hearts to one another.

وهذا بلا شكّ وعيدٌ على مَنْ تَرَكَ التسويةَ

This is a clear threat against anyone who does not [straighten the prayer line] and that is why some of the scholars said that to straighten the line is an obligation. They indicated this because of the command of the Prophet ﷺ and a threat (as I just said). Whereas here, the author has said it is just a *sunnah*.

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says: For that reason, it is not possible to say that this is the correct opinion. The correct opinion, the preponderant opinion, *al-rājiḥ*, is

ولهذا كان القولُ الرَّاجِحُ في هذه المسألة: وجوب تسوية الصَّفِّ

It is obligatory to straighten the lines.

As for the group of people who do not straighten the lines in order to pray, they are sinners.

وَأَنَّ الْجَمَاعَةَ إِذَا لَمْ يَسُوُّوا الصَّفَّ فَهُمْ آثِمُونَ

But the prayer itself. Is it affected or not?

The prayer is not affected. The prayer's validity is sound, but they have earned sin. That is what it seems from the statement of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. When he explained this he said that anyone who does this then have they just left something obligatory or is the *ṣalāh* gone? He said:

فيه احتمال، قد يُقال: إنها تبطل؛ لأنهم تركوا الواجب.

He said that it is possible for a person to say that the prayer has been invalidated.

ولكن احتمال عدم البطلان مع الإثم أقوى

He says that however, to understand that the prayer is not invalidated but the sin is actually obtained (by the one who prays), that is a stronger position.

And this is an important sentence. This is an *uṣūlī* sentence:

لأن التسوية واجبة للصلاة لا واجبة فيها، يعني أنها خارج عن هيئتها، والواجب للصلاة يأثم الإنسان بتركه، ولا تبطل الصلاة به، كالأذان مثلاً، فإنه واجب للصلاة، ولا تبطل الصلاة بتركه.

So, he says why is this? Why are we saying that the prayer is not invalidated?

Because to straighten the lines is for the prayer, not inside the prayer, and anything which is outside of the structure of the prayer, then that thing is then obligatory for the

prayer and a person is punished for leaving it. The prayer is not invalidated thereby, such as the *adhān*.

So, if someone looks at the *adhān*, the *adhān* is an obligation. We covered that in general (in specific scenarios we know that it's not) but in general an area has to have the *adhān*. But if the person did not do the *adhān*, they will be sinful but the prayer itself will still be valid. So, he gives that example and by that we then understand the issue of the prayer line.

### وتسوية الصف تكون بالتساوي

And how do you straighten the row? What does it actually mean to straighten the line?

Because by our natural understanding that should mean that the line should be straight and meaning that no one person should be in front of the other. That's the only thing that immediately grabs you when you think about, '*What does it mean, straighten the line?*' that not one person is in front of the other.

But what is it to be understood that is a defining factor of 'in front'? Is it the beginning of the foot? Is it the back of the foot? What is it?

The answer is that it is the shoulder for the upper body and it is the heel for the bottom body. And this is for someone who is standing, and they are well.

If it's a person who suffers from crookedness in the back, if a person is hunched over then obviously for them the ruling is not the same. Anyone who is outside the norms of bodily reality, the ruling is not based upon that. And that's important because you'll see that even with using the shoulders and the feet or the heels for a normal person standing upright, there's going to be issues of difference. Not just difference in stomach, but some people are a very muscular build, so their entire body is set forward, or very big chested for example, or very skinny, recessed almost, and people with bigger feet for example. So how do you put all of this together? That's what we're going to demonstrate *in shā' Allāh*.

So, what does Shaykh continue? He says: If a person has a hunchback problem:

### فلا عبرة بالمناكب

So obviously for this person it's nonsensical to be talking about the shoulder for him to

straighten the line. So, this is something which is only applicable when the person is straight, able, and standing. So, at that moment in time we focus on the heels.

And the heels are the *‘umūd*, that they are the pillar that everyone is standing upon. And that's the actual leg and the shin and the bottom of it is what is given the ruling, not the shin and the leg itself.

فكان هذا هو المُعتبر. وأما أطراف الأرجل فليست بمعتبرة

(0:20:00)

Toes are not given any value. Toes are not what the ruling is based upon, because toes differ; some are very long, some are short etc. So, it is the heel which is to be given the precedence.

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn is now going to go into a long description of what it actually means, holistically speaking, to have a straight line. And we're going to talk about that in a minute. I want to physically demonstrate what exactly it means to stand in line because that the most important thing. I'm talking about the physical action itself. And then after that we can then talk about the rest of the narrations that deal with [things like]: Does it differ if the line is your line or the imām's line? So, if the imām is praying with two people, should they be in a straight line? What does 'straight line' mean when it's an imām? Does it mean children? Children's line, women's line, what does it mean for example, lots of people? There's lots to talk about.

I'm going to start talking about some *ḥadīth*. The key think to note is that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Why don't you line up like the angels line up in front of their Lord?" The Companions asked the Prophet ﷺ, "How do the angels line up in front of their Lord?" And he ﷺ said, "Straight in line, with each line complete, and then the next, and then the next," so in rows which are complete and straight. That's one *ḥadīth*.

Prophet ﷺ said, "You would straighten the line," that's another *ḥadīth*.

The Prophet ﷺ said that "Straighten the lines or Allāh ﷻ will then make difference between your faces." Anas said, when he ﷺ said: "I saw the Companions put together their necks, their shoulders, and their heels." And this *ḥadīth* is what has caused so much confusion across the *Ummah* throughout the years—but only with the people of very little knowledge. But they are very loud, and they've always gone against the people of *fiqh* when it comes to understanding this *ḥadīth* because they then understood that this is therefore something which cannot leave a single gap. What's the issue of the gap?

As we're going to see Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn talk about in a second, that the *bunyānun marṣūṣ*, a very clear strong building which is solid, cannot have gaps—it must be strong.



Likewise, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Do not leave a *furaj* for the *shayṭān*," do not leave a gap for the *shayṭān*. So, we do have clues as to why people would want to be super, super close—that is the key. So, then when you have all these narrations in an abstract way, when you put them together, you start seeing people do silly things. That is where you have the phenomenon of people putting their heels together.

The point is that if you are looking at this in a literal, linguistic way, because you could theoretically read the *ḥadīth* like that—*ilsāq* means to be together. First of all, you would have to put the heels in this kind of fashion [touching each other, no gap]. And if you are going to do that, as the scholars said, and Bakr Abu Zayd (one of the modern scholars, he has passed away now), he wrote a very, very important book on this, he said that the absurdity of this position is that they make all this focus on the heels but then they don't do the knees. And if they are able to do the knees, how are they going to connect the necks? You can't. That's the whole point. The important thing here is that it is not possible to connect knees and connect [heels and connect necks]. If something is not possible it therefore must indicate that the literal, linguistic meaning is not what was intended.

Likewise, what does it mean 'throughout the prayer'?

Anas of course has a very famous narration, and there are some scholars who said that this increase, Anas' extension, and it is found in books which are not what we can call the main books of *ḥadīth*, this extra part. It is very famous. So, this is Anas speaking decades later, and he is trying to indicate how the people have left the *Sunnah*. He said: "Today, if someone were to do that, then they would run from them," meaning if today someone were to put ankle to ankle and knees to knees, then the people would run from them—those are the actual words. What did those small group of Muslims understand by this narration?

They said this is a proof that it was touching because the only thing that happens today is that if I was to come to you and put my ankle right next to yours, you would think, 'What the heck are you doing?' and you would step away. This is his proof. He is saying this is what would happen: "If the *Sunnah* were established today, people would run away," trying to indicate that actually, that is the correct *sunnah*.

We will say two things. Number one: (and that is very important for us to admit), that the *ḥadīth* itself, this increase, is not super authentic. We can't say he definitely said it we can't say he definitely didn't say it. Number two: by the fact that we said that it is impossible for us to do anything else with the neck etc., then it cannot possibly mean that. What it does mean, is that today, when people become close to one another, then they start saying, 'No, I need more space.'

People sometimes will come, and they are just happy just to be like [standing next to each other in the prayer line and there is a large gap between the two people]—this is completely unacceptable. This is a rejected line. And this is now a reality today. You will

go into *masājīd* and people don't want to be closer. Back in the day it used to be a case of if you were to touch the other person's foot it would be stepping away. Let alone someone trying to do all this *bakwās* [trying to get the ankles and knees to touch]. Now we are at a time where even if someone gets close to touch the shoulders, people are like, '*What are you doing?*' That is how we interpret Anas's narration today. That is the correct way of interpreting it.

So, what therefore then is the actual ruling with respect to the prayer line in terms of standing?

We have another clue. We know it is *sunnah* for a person, when they are standing in the line, that their toes are facing towards the *Qiblah*. So, that automatically rubs out this idea of standing [heels pointing out to the sides and toes pointed inwards]. Likewise, we know that the general position of the feet is the width of the body. That automatically then takes this [spreading the feet beyond the width of the shoulders in an effort to touch the feet of the person standing next to you out. Because that is what happens right? If one guy goes that way and the other guy goes that way [i.e. the person on either side of you moves away from you] you see that—they increase, increase, increase, [spreading out their legs, lifting and raising their arms] to maintain some kind of structure.

The third scenario: Say I am the imām and you guys are praying behind me. If they are praying behind me (imagine that it is a left-heavy line). Let's say there are five guys on that side (behind the imām to his right) they start to move away. Now he is stuck, isn't he? Those people [standing next to him on his right] are moving away from him. Now he knows he has to do what now? Open up and spread himself out more and more?

(0:30:00) Because if [the person next to him is moving away], his natural reaction is to try and reduce the effect—he is going to big himself up now [to fill the space]. And that is what happens.

Does it mean from 'straitening the line' that he has to do that?

The answer is no. Where is his right? What is ground zero for him?

Ground zero is the imām. So, if [the person next to him] is moving away from the imām that is entirely his problem. You have to be confident enough to say to yourself when you are in that prayer situation, '*You know what? Good luck to you bro. I've done my bit. I made a little movement towards you and you are going miles away. Get lost. I am coming back into this position.*'

I will just give you a little tip by the way. When you see that happen and the person is moving away, or not even moving away but there is a little gap there that definitely needs to be closed, I make myself as thin as possible. And what that does is that it really emphasises just how much of a loser you are—because I have now doubled the gap for

him. I will bring my feet very close together and this is how I will stand now so that now he really feels isolated. And I am comfortable that I am doing that from a *Shar'* point of view because my *ḥaqq* is from the left-hand side not towards his side. Now if the imām by the way, is standing [further to the right of you] then it's the opposite. Then your *ḥaqq* is to go towards central. Always your focus is to go towards central. Don't take it upon yourself to be the *baqarah* that sacrifices yourself just to cover gaps because some plum is moving the other way. So, that is the combination of the *fiqh*.

Student: Just to clarify, this movement, you are talking about just people not wanting to stand next to other people, yeah?

Ustādh: No. You know people are so lackadaisical in their prayer a lot of them don't even know what is going on. They don't look anywhere. They never look at their feet, etc. Not looking at the feet is a good thing by the way. One of the other reasons Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd said it's nonsense, all this stuff in the prayer, is because people are not meant to spend time in the prayer shuffling around, getting your feet like this, pressing them [against their neighbour's feet], getting it straight—it's not meant to. You are meant to stand up and you're back in the prayer. You have a quick look to make sure you are not a million miles out this way or a million miles out that way, you make sure that there are no major gaps and that is it. Whatever I physically do between me and [the person next to me] I can't close every single gap. It is just not possible. If we are touching at the shoulder this is considered to be a closed gap according to the vast majority of scholars. If I am able to touch his foot in a relaxed fashion, that is also something acceptable. In principle, you should not worry too much about your feet. The real thing you have to focus on is no large gaps in the prayer line.

The next thing that I want to focus on is: What is the basis of the line?

The basis of the line is the heel. We do not make up the row based upon the front [of the foot]. It doesn't matter if we all stand in a straight line based upon our heels and then my belly sticks out or my chest sticks out—that's not a problem. But [if you base the line on the toes], no one is in line here. I am literally behind—my arm is behind him. This is not right.

Anecdotally, let me say to you, if I find someone standing [ahead a little and the rest of the line is behind him] in the prayer line, and I am [behind him], I am burning inside. There is definitely something that Allāh ﷻ put in the hearts which was specific for the prayer line. When a person is standing all the way down there and you are standing like this [in line], I am fuming. If this person refuses to move, not because of the fact that there is a gap but because he has been told, because, '*My imām said that you lot are Wahhābi you are not going to get close to me,*' etc. He has then become an enemy to me. I do now see him as a cult and as another group and I am one group. He has solidified that group idea. So, the prayer line is far bigger than just a prayer line. It is indicative of unity. It is indicative of the *Ummah*. It is indicative if there are people who do not

care about their position in the prayer line then they do not care about other things as well.

I remember reading a *maqāl* from one of the senior scholars that said that the little moves that you make in the prayer line are entirely indicative of your entire character and outlook in every other aspect in life, whether it is *mu‘āmalāt*, *adāb*, *akhlāq*, *dīn*, ‘*aqīdah*—everything. And *subḥān Allāh* I found that to be so true. Let me give you one example—even if a person does not agree with another position, if they allow themselves to be flexible in the line to go with others I still love that person more even if they come from a different colour, different age, different *madh-hab*, different ‘*aqīdah* even. I would be closer to this person than someone who is from the same ‘*aqīdah*, same culture, same whatever and refusing to actually submit themselves. And they are very, very important aspects.

I told you before that the Prophet ﷺ said that in the prayer line the very best of you are those who are flexible in shoulders. Our shoulders have to be flexible.

The Prophet ﷺ said in another *ḥadīth*: “Do not resist the hands of your brothers.” What does this mean?

This is what this means. You are in the line and what this means is don’t push back. When a person is going up and down the lines [to straighten the lines] and he is pushing you [to get into a straight line], do not resist. This is a *jamā‘ī* effort, it is a congregational effort which is indicating a plan etc. It is nonsensical. If it was in the war time, people would do it because they would be in the mood, they would be focused, they would know that any mistake could cost, there is defence issues, there is line of sight, etc. But in the *ṣalāh*, standing in front of Allāh ﷻ where Allāh ﷻ commanded it first and foremost people are not that bothered, standing there as they are. Those are the issues of the prayer line.

This is the same for women, women might think there is a difference, there is no difference whatsoever men are the same, everyone is the same.

I will mention one thing—child, three-year-old, two-year-old. They stand in the line, you build a line based on the kid and the kid after one minute he walks off. What happens now?

There are some scholars that said that the presence of a child is like the Arabic *qā‘idah* which we have covered many times:

وَجُدِّهِ كَعَدَمِهِ

His presence is like his absence—it is like he is not there. He is invisible. So, he does not have any legal meaning. And that has some kind of weight. However, he physically is a

mass, so if he is there, he is physically there. The real issue then is if he is going out of the way etc. That is the difficult one. But if he were to walk off, then you would close the gap and you would be fine.

Student: You know how you say that one guy might be standing back and another one in about in the distance what you prioritise?

Ustādh: Moving people?

Student: Or moving yourself.

Ustādh: If you are stuck in a situation where the line all over the place, some are front, some are back, then:

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾

“God does not burden any soul with more than it can bear” [Sūrat al-Baqarah: 286]

You are not going to be now trying to gather everyone in the prayer and try and be a hero. You can't do that. You have just have to make a call and make it as straight as possible. It might be that you know for a fact that that line has gone like this and the other line has gone like that and, 'That is where the correct place is and I am going to stand there like that.' That is not you being a hero, that is you being a plum because what you have done now is you have created this kind of movement [zig zag line]. Even though you are right, the line is there and the line has gone all the way like that and all the way like this, but you going forward is not going to save the situation. You are kind of are going to give it a softer belly here you are just trying to minimise the mess.

Student: Should you say something?

Ustādh: In the ṣalāh?

Student: No. If you are joining.

Ustādh: If a person was outside, yes. If a person is coming to join the prayer late and he sees that, absolutely. It's his responsibility in fact, if he understands.

I will tell you something interesting. There are some 'ulamā' who said that the statement of the Prophet ﷺ sawwu ṣufūfakum is not applicable if you turn around and all the people are ṭallāb'l-ʿilm or scholars. That this statement sawwu ṣufūfakum was for the ignorant and the masses who do not know. But then when you turn around and you see the people know, then you do not say anything to them because of course they

(0:40:00)

know you do not need to patronise them this is just basic. It is just like saying: You don't have to say to them, '*Pray this prayer like it is your last prayer*,' because they should know that and be focused.

Today obviously that does not apply because the vast majority of the congregation are people who do not know anything, so you do remind them. Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn says even if they are scholars, everyone forgets so you should say it to them anyway. The point here is that everyone can sometimes forget. So, it is our general responsibility if you were to come to the *masjid*, and say that, you would say, '*Brothers this line is not straight*.' Quietly. Not to destroy the whole ambience of the prayer. But you can go and straighten the people and take your position and then you can enter. That is absolutely fine.

Student: Pillars.

Ustādh: We will come to that later, that is a bigger issue.

Student: Can you tug at someone?

Ustādh: You should not tug. I know there is, this...

Student: If you know it is someone who would not mind, like it is not a stranger, like it his sibling, can you gently?

Ustādh: What I want to say here is that there is no definite right or wrong here because when we see why it is impermissible it because of two reasons (1) you, superfluous movement, and (2) distressing someone else and disturbing them. These are the two reasons it is impermissible. If you were able to do it very minutely and if the other person would no way get disturbed because as you said they are your sibling or something, then I think there could be space for that. But for there to be significant movements we cannot at a teaching level be telling Muslims to do that because we know that the masses do it and there are certain things that scholars need to be responsible about. They cannot just keep giving a greenlight for these folks.

Student: If someone was doing the tug thing and it was annoying you, how would you combat it?

Ustādh: If it is unfair or incorrect you could (shrug it off).

Student: If they stomp on your toes?

Ustādh: If a person stomps on your toes because they are trying to get whatever, you would take your feet away. You can push them away. There is no problem with that. This person has caused harm to you, he is ruining your prayer, you can just nudge him and you know show him a hand and that is it.

Student: Sometimes this just kills your prayer.

Ustādh: Of course it does. Of course it kills your prayer. Absolutely. It maybe kills your feet, athletes' foot, fungal infections, who knows?

About the movement issue we do not want to encourage people to be pulling, pushing, because we want to decrease that as whole even amongst educated people, not increase it. But I do not want to say it is *ḥarām*. Movement is clearly allowed in the *Sharī'ah* in the prayer—but it is hated. It shows, as the *Salaf* used to say, movement on the external indicates movement in the internal. And remember *khushū'*, when we talk about how to get *khushū'* in *ṣalāh*, people think it is some kind of magic, mysterious zone that you have to study sixty years for, read all kinds of books on *tazkiyyat'l-nafs* etc. *Khushū'* is stillness.

﴿تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً﴾ (٣٩)

“You see the earth lying desolate.” [Sūrat Fuṣṣilat: 39]

Allāh ﷻ says: You see the earth still and then We send the *mā'* upon it.

﴿أَهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَّتْ﴾

“It stirs and grows.” [Sūrat Fuṣṣilat: 39]

Allāh ﷻ says: When we send down the rain upon it.

﴿أَهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَّتْ﴾<sup>ج</sup>

“It stirs and grows.” [Sūrat Fuṣṣilat: 39]

The stillness suddenly it starts to rumble, shake and bam plantation then comes out of nowhere. That is all you have to do—be still, be calm, relaxed, focused. There is nothing else that you are thinking of.

Now if a person is moving around, scratching, checking their a '*abāyah*, *ḥijāb*, the *shimāgh* for men etc., it shows that their mind has gone from what they were saying



inside as well. So, there is no *khushūʿ*. They are not still inside. Every movement you do is going to have an impact on the internal and that is not acceptable in *ṣalāh*. That is the basic, simple summary of that.

Let us now go through what Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn now says to complete this section. He says (page 11): When it comes to the issue of straightening of the line, does it refer to only your line or the imām's line as well?

Shaykh says because we know that we have some of the scholars that say:

إنه ينبغي تقدُّم الإمام على المأموم يسيراً؛ لتمييز الإمام عن المأموم.

Some of the scholars, the people of knowledge, said that there should be a slight difference (you see this vary)—but why? So that the imām and the followers can be distinguished. That is the reason behind it.

The truth of the matter is that there is no evidence for that—number one. Number two, the need to distinguish also requires an evidence—there is no evidence to suggest that. Number three, we have evidence to the contrary which contradicts that and that is the famous *ḥadīth* that we covered a couple of weeks ago of ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās ؓ.

Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn says this is against the *ḥadīth* where Ibn ʿAbbās ؓ—the Prophet ﷺ took him by the head and brought him around.

أَخَذَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِرَأْسِهِ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ، وَجَعَلَهُ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ. وَلَمْ يُنْقَلْ أَنَّهُ أَخَّرَهُ قَلِيلًا

And it was not narrated in that same narration that he ﷺ pulled him back a little bit. This 'little bit' you will see vary between the *madhāhib* and the scholars. You will see this much, so if this is the imām, the guy will stand like [with a very small gap between the imām and the person praying with him]. Then you have the Ḥanafīs, who will [stand] not even a foot but a significant amount behind. And there is simply no evidence for that. It's an issue of *fiqh*. You wouldn't not join a *ṣalāh* because the guy is not doing that. But I am telling you that the evidence does not support that position. When people are standing with an imām, it should be straight even if the case is that there are two people and even if the case that there are people on the left-hand side. That is the key killer behind this, that you would stay in that scenario.



You might say, *'Hold on! Why would the imām have a straight line with people on both sides?'*

That is because if there is no space. Otherwise it would not be the norm. There should not be two people standing to the right-hand side of the imām—only one person, because there are only two people to pray. Once a third person comes, they have to go back and set their own line.

Student: Could it be argued that they are doing it because [inaudible]?

Ustādh: In terms of actually going in front of the imām physically, you mean end up physically in front of the imām?

Did you understand what he said? [He said:] Is it possible that one of the wisdoms of standing a little bit back is so that when you land in your *rukū'* or your *sajdah* and so on, you're not in front of the imām?

I want to explain this point. If that were the case, to some scholars there would be no meaning behind this symbolic [space between the imām and the single *ma'mūm*] because there is very little difference between this and that. But if you were to defend the Ḥanafis who come all the way back here, we would say that could be an argument.

What would the response be to that argument?

The response is that a person, when we are talking about being in front of the imām is not based upon *rukū'* or *sajdah*. Let's say there is a seven-foot guy praying behind a four-foot imām. In *rukū'*, my guy's head is going to be two feet in front of the imām. In *sajdah* he is going to be three feet in front of him. The ruling is not based upon the *rukū'* and the *sajdah*. The ruling is based upon the heels. If my guy is really tall, that's fine. He is not intentionally in front of the imām. It's about intention. Because of his size, he is himself keeping himself behind the imām—very strictly so. He is not allowing his heel to get in front.

Now, you may say, *'Fair enough. But I don't want to risk it so I'm just going to come back a little. Is that a problem?'*

We don't want to say that this is the world's worst *ḥarām* because this is an area of *khilāf* and the scholars have differed. But what we will say is that the *ḥadīth* of the one time that we see a clear example of the Prophet ﷺ standing with two people, he ﷺ did not bring him back. So that risk could happen in any scenario.

Student: Generally, if you are not standing with the imām, I think we have that issue in Madīnah, people standing outside...

Ustādh: Yes. In some *masājīd* like you just mentioned Masjid'l-Nabawi you do have that scenario. They do try to make it clear when people are praying in the courtyard and they are making the lines and some of them can sometimes go forward. The police are meant to not allow that.

Student: It's marked isn't it?

(0:50:00)

Ustādh: It is marked. It shouldn't happen. And it doesn't really actually happen a lot. It looks like it does. Now the really interesting thing is that 2-3 months ago it has all changed. All of us for our lives have been used to exactly where that line is. But three or four months ago, as you know, it was a historic move, but now the front is now not used. It has now gone back to the *Rawḍah*. It's now in the *minbar* of the Prophet ﷺ. The five prayers are now established there. That makes the lines outside even further back.

The front has now been designated by law to be only used by the people who want to give *salām* upon the Prophet ﷺ. So now people are actually standing back. That means you need to be even more careful outside. I've prayed outside a lot at the front when I used to visit there for long periods of time and live there. It's lovely to pray in those lines. They are policed very well and I'm sure they'll police it again.

Student: The original *masjid* was to the front?

Ustādh: To the back of course. The original *masjid* is to the back. That extension of what has been prayed in until now is an extension of 'Umar ؓ. Now they're back in the *masjid* of the Prophet ﷺ.

Student: So actually, we are back to where we should be?

Ustādh: Yes. They've gone back to the original place. As I said they have gone back to the *miḥrāb* of the Prophet ﷺ.

Student: If you were to end up in front, what's the issue?

Ustādh: If a person does it unknowingly, unintentionally, then nothing. The threat, the real problem (and problem here does not invalidate the prayer it is *ḥarām* to do) is when a person does it intentionally. That's where the game is a real serious one. And some scholars said it invalidates it. But the correct opinion is that you have done something *ḥarām*.

Shaykh then says that straightening the line has a deeper meaning.

يعني: الاستواء بمعنى الكمال كما قال الله تعالى: {وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَى}

Allāh ﷻ says in *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*:

﴿وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَىٰ﴾

“When Moses reached full maturity and manhood.” [*Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ*: 14]

Who is that referring to?

It is Mūsa عليه السلام. When he reached the age of maturity and he *wastawa*, and straightened up—from *sawwu*, *istawa*—and rose up and straightened up. That’s not meant in its linguistic term. What that means is that he perfected his human characteristics and attributes. He became a proper man. Therefore, when it comes to *taswiyat’l-ṣaff*, to straighten the row, means to perfect the row. That’s why when we talk about the rows we need to perfect the rows. We shouldn’t use the word straighten. We need to educate people that perfecting the rows means straightening, no gaps, etc.

Let’s go through the list of what that actually means.

Number one:

1— تسوية المحاذاة، وهذه على القول الرَّاجح واجبة، وقد سبقت.

It means straightness in the sense of standing parallel. So, everyone is standing absolutely straight. We have one *ḥadīth* where the Prophet ﷺ was described as preparing the line like the arrow, meaning the shaft of the arrow. It is absolutely straight, that means parallel. According to the actual correct view, that is obligatory. It is absolutely *farḍ* to have a straight line. You can’t have a wonky line or a wavy line.

Number two is making the rows compact, close to one another.

He makes a point here. He says:

ولكن المراد بالتراص أن لا يدعوا فُرَجاً للشياطين، وليس المراد بالتراص التّراحم

*Al-taraṣṣi*, this is when we say, “*Istawwu wa-tarāṣṣu*.” *Tarāṣṣu* means get close together. *I’tadilu*, straighten up. *Sawwu*, become in line. Those are three phrases: *i’tadilu*, *tarāṣṣu*, *sawwu*. *Sawwu*, straighten yourself in line. *I’tadilu*, stand straight chests up, focus, nice. *Tarāṣṣu*, means get close together, close the gaps.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَتِمُّوا الصَّفَّ الْأَوَّلَ ثُمَّ الَّذِي يَلِيهِ

“Complete the first lines first and then go to the next lines.”

وليس المراد بالتراص التزاحم

*Tarāṣṣu* does not mean stand on top of each other. It also doesn’t mean, ‘*We can get you in bro come on.*’ It doesn’t mean that everyone squashes themselves up to get another brother in and messes up the structure of the line, so everyone is praying squished to get one guy in. No. The line is normal, body width, touching, and Allāh ﷻ did not put anything more upon that. And if the guy can’t get in, there is nothing wrong with him standing by himself. He loses no reward. And I can tell you now, if a person thinks that when everyone is touching shoulders at a normal width and we get my guy in and we let my guy in and it caused that little bit of ripple, that his prayer has improved and ours has improved—that is incorrect. That’s the main lesson. If the line is compact and tight and nice and solid, we don’t need to let anyone else in. We just keep this situation like that, meaning go to the second line.

Now you might say to me: ‘*What if there is not a single space in the masjid?*’

That’s a different game altogether. If we know the *masjid* is full and they are coming from the front, like in Cheadle here. *Jumu’ah* starts, guy is still stuck in the *wuḍū’* area—standard it happens every single Friday. He is stuck in the *wuḍū’* area, the guy comes and he is trapped. He can’t now get to the back through 50-60 lines and the *masjid* is packed. In this scenario, yes. Why?

Because this is *Jumu’ah*, because this is a unique prayer, because this is meant to be the occasion where we ram people in, because we have evidences from the Prophet ﷺ that said in this scenario it is actually acceptable for people to even pray not even making *sajdah* on the floor but rather making *sajdah* on the Achilles of the guy in front of you. So, there is not even space in front of you to make it, you can’t even breathe in to go down to a *sajdah*. So, a person who is making *sajdah* (obviously you can see their Achilles, you know back of the foot), you can actually make *sajdah* upon that, upon his

leg, or go into a gap. So, in the extenuating circumstances, you can make extenuating moves. These are tight, compact moves.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

أَقِيمُوا الصُّفُوفَ، وَحَازُوا بَيْنَ الْمَنَاقِبِ ... وَلَا تَذَرُوا فُرُجَاتٍ لِلشَّيْطَانِ

“Make the rows straight and make the shoulders parallel and do not leave gaps for the devils,” meaning don’t leave big spaces in between you. That is what he ﷺ said.

Student: What about the first point? Say for example the line is straight and comfortable and then one person is insisting to come to the first row for example. Is it okay to resist?

Ustādh: I don’t think it is good to resist. Everything is case by case first of all. And everything is based upon *ijtihād*. My answer would be *ijtihād* and everyone else’s because there is no *naṣṣ* in this issue, there is no text in the issue. So, in this scenario now you know you resisting is just creating a bigger situation and a bigger disturbance. Here it is clearly easier to just slightly adjust your gait and move to the side and allow the person in. You resisting is going to mean them pushing and then someone is going to lose their temper, etc. Now it would be different if we had the exact same scenario but there is already a second line. That’s different. Then you definitely would hold your own. You would say there is a line there. But if they were on their own, towards the latter end of the prayer, guy is sweating, ‘*I don’t want to be standing on my own*,’ he probably thinks that it is *ḥarām*. Many people do by the way. They don’t understand the *ḥadīth*. They think it is *ḥarām* to stand alone in the back in a new line. The *ḥadīth* does not mention that. The *ḥadīth* mentions that meaning a person intentionally goes to stand by himself. So, someone might panic and want to try and squeeze in so you would let that person in.

Student: This is actually the situation here on Friday, everyone is standing row by row he suddenly comes seven rows in...

Ustādh: Correct. That’s why I said in *Jumu‘ah*, like guy coming out on the wrong side you would let that person in. It would be silly for you to try and do anything else. You would let that person in. And you would pre-empt it. You would see him and create the gap. Everything you do is to minimise disturbance and hassle.

(1:00:00)

Student: [inaudible]

Ustādh: That’s a good question. Let’s say someone were to come from the front. Should you leave a gap for them or should you take it and leave the gap behind?

That's difficult to answer. If there is space to get through to the second line, then yes. So, like in Cheadle absolutely you would because in Cheadle what we have is that our lines go all the way and then we leave a small gap at the side. So, you wouldn't say, '*Right, I am not going to step to the front there next to the gap because I will let the guy come through.*' No, because there is a gap for them to say... it is a case-by-case basis. But let's say that there is no space and it is full. Do you leave a gap for that person? *Allāhu a'lam*, maybe. If you know he is definitely coming, maybe. Because the answer would depend upon can you step back when he comes? Is that going to cause a problem? Is there a risk of when you stepping back then there is a problem that the space could be taken then you are having to make other people step back? You always have to choose that option which is going to minimise the hassle.

So, the third way Shaykh says of straightening the rows is to complete the first row and then the next. And this is part of the completion of the prayer. He says: If the people knew what there is in the *adhān* and the first row but they had no other way than actually drawing lots to achieve that, then they would draw lots.

So, we know that to get to the front row in *ṣalāh* is something very important, rewarded. A person should always try to make it to the front row. This *ḥadīth* is famous in *Bukhārī*. Meaning that if you understood how important this is, if there were two people were arguing over it then the only way out of it would be to actually draw lots. That's the attitude that it should be.

What do we see?

The exact opposite, '*Tafaḍḍal, Tafaḍḍal, Tafaḍḍal.*'

I am like, '*What are you doing?*'

Even worse, what irritates me even more—I saw it three days ago here in this *masjid*. That a person he was standing next to me (this is why it really irritated me). I was in the second line and I am standing there and the guy is standing there. But you know when he came and stood next to me, he stood next to me but not in a solid position for prayer, he was half in half out looking over his shoulder to an older person who was praying *sunnah* and just finishing, he is in his *tashahhud*, he is praying over there. And as it stands, by the way the second line had lots of gap on the left-hand side, there are 5-10 places. But as you know, to stand in the middle of the second row, any row is something which is more virtuous. So, I am bang in the middle of the second row behind the imām and he is standing next to me. So, it's a prime location actually. He has it, but he wants to be so respectful to the elder. I am not judging his intention, but this is complete ignorance that the *iqāmah* had gone and the imām is about to say *Allāhu akbar* and he is still like this (standing at an angle). That's why it really irritated me. Stand straight and pray! The guy will stand at the end over there. The prayer started, we are into *Fātiḥah*, and the guy is still at that diagonal level.

Student: Not started praying?

Ustādh: Not started praying.

As soon as the uncle finished the prayer (he wasn't even expecting that *bakwās* at all) he stands up to walk that way, my guy jumps out of the line, grabs him and pushes him in next to me. Then he runs and ... I was like, '*No! You can't do that! You can't!*'

Student: He didn't start praying, and then he grabbed him and moved somewhere else. Did he not want to benefit [inaudible]?

Ustādh: Of course! The intention is perfect, but the action is completely rejected. We said this at the beginning of this chapter. For *'ibādah* to be accepted it has to be done for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, so the sincerity has to be there. So, every person that does it for that reason is good. But a person doing it wrong?

Student: So where did he go?

Ustādh: [audio missing] His prayer is fine. I am not talking about the validity of his prayer. I am talking about the action of wanting someone else... Listen. People do that. Like all of us do that for our parents, like my dad. But that's before the prayer has started. You can't do that when the *iqāmah* has happened and the imām is about to make *takbīr*. Like if my father and I come to the *masjid* and there is a space there [in the middle] and a space there [to the left] and my dad walks that way [to the left] I am going to push him that way [to the middle space] and I am going to walk there [to the left] because that is the formation of the line. But when the line has now formed, and you are in that position you cannot be doing, '*Right, I am going to come out and put the elder one forward.*'

What's the same example of this?

This happens again in this *masjid*. Children are in that position already and the elder comes and he says, '*You go back,*' or he gets them and takes them back. Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn is going to go on a rampage in a minute. Ibn Taymiyyah wrote an essay on this issue.

Student: Like in a Deobandi *masjid*.

Ustādh: Deobandi *masājid* are hardcore messed up on this. First of all, they wouldn't even allow them. But that's a different argument about not allowing them.

We are now talking about children who are 7, 8, 10, 12 who have come earlier and as Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Whoever gets to that place they deserve it." That's the most important thing. If you are in that place, you deserve it. There is no he is the imām, he

is older, he is younger. No. You've gotten it, it's yours. That's it. Very important you get this right.

And you know why this thing irritates me? It irritates me because it shows a mind-set. The mind-set that I really dislike is this idea of over politeness. We do not have a liberal approach to this religion where everything is all about making the other person happy. That doesn't exist in Islam. Even keeping other people happy has a limit. We don't just do anything and everything and sacrifice everything just so that other people can do that. Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ﴾

“Let those who strive, strive for this.” [Sūrat al-Muṭṭaffifin: 36]

﴿فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ﴾

“Race to do good deeds.” [Sūrat al-Baqarah: 148]

Fight with one another when it comes to good deeds.

﴿وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ﴾

“Hurry towards your Lord's forgiveness.” [Sūrat Āli Imrān: 133]

Not, 'Okay, you win, go on.' That doesn't work like that. I mean in general that's fine but in specific scenarios we have to be careful.

Student: What about case like the guy comes to the *masjid* he is one of the first to get there and then the imām comes out and the imām brings a guest to the *masjid*?

Ustādh: Unacceptable. Completely unacceptable. A guest or your mate or whatever and you go back, that's completely unacceptable. A person stands his ground he has every right to. Obviously, there is going to be a big, you know, *sho-sha*. But he has the right to stand his ground. The only exception is coming up here.

(1:00:00)

Q & A



Q: During *ṣalāh* for the *Maghrib* and '*Ishā*' the person who is praying individually ...*iqāmah* and he wants to read out loud

A: He wants to read the *farḍ* prayer out loud, which is *Fajr*, *Maghrib*, and '*Ishā*'. Alone. That is allowed. It is allowed. There is difference of opinion over it.

Student: Is it a minority or...

Ustādh: It is a minority [position] and there are some good reasons for it. There is no *naṣṣ* on the issue, so it is an *ijtihādi* matter. But I think it is allowed. There are versions of this question. I think it is okay if a person is at home and he is praying by himself at home. Whereas a person who comes to the *masjid*, you know people who join the *jamā'ah* late, and then they start doing it.

Student: Doing it out loud in the house is fine?

Ustādh: Yes. That is fine. What I am not happy with and Ibn Taymiyyah spoke against, is the practice of a person who comes to the *jamā'ah* late. Imagine you come to *Maghrib* late and you miss everything and you just sit down then you stand up to pray your three *rak'ah*. And you do hear people recite out loud. Ibn Taymiyyah said in this scenario here, he is acting like he is praying the prayer loud, but that is gone. It has been missed. He made a differentiation between a person praying on time himself, *vis-à-vis* a person who misses the prayer and is coming late and praying out loud like the imām. Basically, Ibn Taymiyyah said that ship has sailed—those were basically his words. So, the person should just pray normally. It is debatable whether you should allow it here or not. But I think that it is sound.

Student: What would you say is better?

Ustādh: I think that you wouldn't. I like his argument. I am praying alone, I think that to give it some sound, that's okay. I think it defiantly helps. We all know that.

Q: A brother is asking: He has a *muṣallah* near him.

Ustādh: Why does he call it a *muṣallah*?

Student: Because it is in a university building.

Ustādh: That doesn't make it a *muṣallah*. What else makes it a *muṣallah*?

Student: There is no five times prayer.

Ustādh: There is no five times prayer. There is no regular imām.

Student: At *Fajr* time, he knows that if he goes there, he is going to be alone.

Ustādh: So, if he goes to the *Fajr* prayer, he has to open up. Most of the time he is alone.

Student: Is there any benefit to him going there?

Ustādh: Yes, if it is a place of prayer and there is no *masjid*. The real question should be: If there is a *masjid* and a *muṣallah* and the *muṣallah* is closer.

If there is no *masjid*, I think that the fact that he goes there, could hopefully encourage other people to go there. It would then take the ruling of the *Fajr* congregation. If he knows for certain that no one is ever going to come, and no one is ever going to use the *Fajr* prayer, and it genuinely has very little meaning as a mosque and it is just a room then no. Like McDougall's is a classic example in Manchester University. Now it is kind of like a *masjid*. But when it was Ambrose before it was more towards university building. And we used to go, and a few people would come. It is a designated *ṣalāh* area, but no one is going to come to it. But you know that if you started to go you could start something. So absolutely you should go. But if there is absolutely no chance of that happening because there is no one there, no one lives there, then no it is just like any other room. Allāh ﷻ knows best.

## 29. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 3: THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PRAYER

The chapter is the Chapter of the Description of the Prayer.

يُسَنُّ الْقِيَامُ عِنْدَ "قَدْ" مِنْ إِقَامَتِهَا وَتَسْوِيَةِ الصَّفِّ، وَيَقُولُ "اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ" رَافِعًا يَدَيْهِ مَضْمُومَتَي الْأَصَابِعِ  
مَمْدُودَةً حَذْوَ مَنْكَبَيْهِ كَالسُّجُودِ

It is a *sunnah* to stand when “*qad*” is said from the *iqāmah*, and it is also *sunnah* to straighten the prayer line. He then says “*Allāhu akbar*” raising his hands to the height of his shoulders with his fingers together but outstretched, just like when in prostration.

We’ve done the first part and we are on the prayer line. We said that this issue of it being the *sunnah*, the **class position** was that actually it is something bigger than that, it is obligatory. We went through some details and I showed practically what was going on. That was a couple of weeks ago. Today’s lesson is mostly going to focus on some of the *fiqh* of what it means to complete the line. Completing the line itself comes from the word of *al-kamāl*.

وهناك تسوية أخرى بمعنى الكمال؛ يعني: الاستواء بمعنى الكمال

When something becomes straight and complete. However, to say to straighten the line indicates other things as well. When we say straighten the rows, when we say, *istawwu*, *tarrāssu*, *atimu’l-ṣaff’l-awwal*, etc.—all these kinds of phrases that you are hearing. These are all Arabic commands which are indicating certain states and specific nature or characteristics of the line.

So, what does it mean then in conclusion? On page 12 of *al-Sharḥ al-Mumtī*‘ he says:

1— تسوية المحاذاة، وهذه على القول الرَّاجح واجبة، وقد سبق

The line has to be straight. It is not going to be bent or crooked, etc. It is a straight line—simple. Shaykh says that according to the correct position, it is an obligation. The line cannot be bent.

Is there an exception to that?

Student: Chairs?

Ustādh: Chairs? No, we shouldn't say chairs. The exception to that is if there is a problem with a person. That's the exception.

Let's not make the exception chairs. The exception should be that a person for example is oversized or hunchbacked—so, he has a major defect which makes unable to maintain a straight line. That's one of them.

If one of the defects or problems is a disability or a temporary injury, which means he has to sit down, then obviously he is taking an entirely different position as well. The issue of the chair is a very controversial one. What is the ruling based upon? Is the ruling based upon a person who is standing? Or is the ruling based upon a person who is sitting? Or is the ruling based upon both? Or is the ruling relaxed?

As you saw in our demonstration session, if you look at the line, we said that the line that you have in a *masjid*, or drawn, or in the rug itself, your heel is on that line. So, we have established what a straight line is and that the line is determined by the back not the front. Using that as a starting point, where does the chair go?

Here, it is very important to indicate that the chair itself is new and not good and it shouldn't have been introduced and for people who are desperate for it fine, but the *aṣl*, Allāh ﷻ says that a person remembers Allāh whilst they are standing and sitting and on their sides. The 'sitting' is on the floor it is not on a chair. That makes sense. That fits the line of the *sunnah*, that's what was around at that time. People might say there was no such thing as chairs. Of course, that's nonsense. Of course, there were chairs at that time, but it was not something which was right. Those people who know and have been through it, they know that praying on a chair itself, other than the physical problems it causes for the line, it causes problems for the people behind the line, and praying on a chair spiritually is horrible—not being able to prostrate when everyone else is, it makes you feel arrogant, you miss out on the *sajdah*.

I prayed on a chair for I think for 5-6 months one period of time. I cannot forget what it felt like when I when back to *sajdah*. My God, that was madness, very emotional, and I missed out hugely to be honest.

I have an interest in the *fiqh* of chairs because the chairs that we have in *masājid* cause problems as you know. If you are going to sit on a chair, what kind of person sits on a chair because the *aṣl* is to sit on the floor. First dibs goes to the floor. That is the place

to be. It will preserve your prayer, the feeling of being in prayer, your humility, and your spirituality is preserved when you are on the floor, even if you can't make *sajdah*.

When is it that you go to a chair? When you do not have the ability to be going onto the floor or actually sitting down. Someone might argue, '*I don't have the ability to keep getting up.*' That is not a problem. You don't need to get up. Once you get on the floor and if you don't have the strength to get yourself up on the chair, now you are then to remain on the floor. This is the example of a person who is able to pray [reciting] *Fātiḥah* standing and they have some kind of problem with their knees because they can't make *sajdah*. So, if someone can't make *sajdah* on their knees, this is how they pray: they pray normal then they go for *rukū'*, then they stand up from *rukū'*, and then they go down into *sajdah*. But because they can't go into *sajdah* then they sit on their backside. They sit cross-legged, the sit legs out, they sit however they want, but they sit down and that is when they do the pseudo-*sajdah*—they are sitting cross-legged for example, they put their hands in the air and they go as far forward as they possibly can [gesturing the *sajdah*], then [say,] "*Allāhu akbar*" (and come up from the pseudo-*sajdah* into the sitting position), then [say,] "*Allāhu akbar*," (and go back into the pseudo-*sajdah* position.)

(00:08:00)

Now a person may say that they're too old and too weak to get back up again. So, we say, so? You stay there and that's it. Now their *Fātiḥah* is like this (while sitting puts his two hands on his chest). And then they go for *rukū'* like this (leaning forward gesturing the *rukū'* position whilst in the sitting position), then he comes up from *rukū'* like that (returns from gesturing the *rukū'* position and into the sitting up position), then he goes for *sajdah* like this (gestures the *sajdah* position whilst still in the sitting position).

That is what should happen for this person if they do not have the strength to get up versus (that's the controversial part) a person sitting on a chair and then standing up because it's easier from the chair. And that is the debatable part, because they will say that sitting on the chair will allow them to fulfil the *rukū'* of standing because getting off a chair is easy, but they don't have the arm strength to get their body up off the floor. So here we say that it's allowed for them. The chair is the bigger problem bringing it in.

People could argue that now that the chair has made this permanent place in the *masjid*—it's there's now, we might as well just use it. Unfortunately, we have to accept that because it is, and that's why people are not sitting on the floor anymore, and that's why now the *masājid* are getting more chairs. When we think about this *masjid* here, do you remember when we started here at the beginning, we had what one chair, two chairs? And now we have six chairs, eight chairs are being used now. We can see it within the last ten years, just a small increase. And it's not like we haven't had old people. We've had old people from the beginning. But when one chair is there then another one feels they should add another chair and the presence of a chair will keep adding the presence of chairs. If there was a *masjid* that starts from the beginning with in a strong identity where people pray on the floor and they do that and the only person

that prays on a chair is someone who physically can't get to the floor, now that's fine. That's what the chair is for and that's what we use it for.

So, there's nothing wrong with praying on a chair technically. It's unnecessary praying on the chair which is the problem. When people do have the ability to sit on the floor they should and if they can't get up then they remain on the floor then at the end of the prayer someone helps them, or they get up as they normally would and that's it. So that's why I said it before (Shaykh Kehlan mentioned this before) and it's a very scary thought that our chairs, our *masājīd*, are now resembling the pews of churches and our rows are starting to look like that. If you go the Muslim countries actually the row is already set up. If you go to Saudi and the Gulf kind of countries you will see that the first row (I'm not going to lie it's incredibly luxurious and very comfortable) but the imām and then you have the first row, but the first row is an entirely sofa-backed front row. You girls are thinking, oh my God?!

Student: Like a bench?

Ustādh: Like a bench. You've never seen this because obviously [...]. Although I think some of the *masājīd* even have one for the sisters as well.

So, the front row is understood—a bench that you can sit on, cushioned, but also the wall of it is cushioned as well, proper upholstered. It's a pew that you can sit on but it's also then for the normal guy to lean back and read Qur'ān. But it's the front row, that's the point—the entire length of the front row. So that means that the second row, which we're going to come to in a second, is actually technically further set back. It's like the front row is 1 and 3/4 rows wide, and the rest of the rows are all one, one, one (if you imagine lines spacing). So, everything is one, one, one, front row is big and then the imām [is in front of that], which is also unacceptable as we're going to learn. So that's creating that gap.

You can see how it came to it. You can see the rationale of why that was created by the Saudis or the rich people. Why? Because first of all, it's an investment into a *masjid* and people are living in those areas and they're willing to put the money in. They have wealth, they put the money in—that's number one. Number two, they want to encourage the early people who get there to really enjoy their experience. And there are people, by the way go, who go and spend the whole day there in the *masjid*, so it makes sense then for them to be relaxed, lying there and sitting against something comfortable and that's fine. Number three, it gives decoration and aesthetics are very important and it gets rid of the ugly chairs. You don't need any ugly chair now. It's all very uniform, it's a nice wooden oak panelled long bench. And because the feet go right at the edge of where the seat is, so if a person is actually sitting down, they just sit down, and when they're standing, they're bang on straight with everyone else. So, everyone is standing straight the same and then if they want to sit down, they sit down. So, then they stand back up again and then they sit down. So, you have uniformity, no dodgy

chairs, etc. What's the next benefit? It's never going to affect the people behind because it's actually built into the floor.

So, it's difficult because once you see that and once you've used it, you enjoy it, it's comfortable, it looks nice etc. We've created the initial first step to the Islamic pew system. Now you go to the poorer countries, like in Egypt, and their *masājīd* is a different structure. They can't afford that whole kind of flex. What they have is a row of chairs permanently set at the back—two rows and three rows. I mean it's crazy! You'll go into a normal *masjid*, obviously it's a very practising Muslim country so the mosques are a lot fuller than maybe the Gulf, like Pakistan. You know what it is in Pakistan, the Ḥanafis have kept everyone at bay—sick guys! They've got the dandas out [and] they're not letting that situation happen yet. Egyptians are lax, easy, Arabs so they let it in. The Paks are holding on but they're about to lose that battle. And the reason that these *masājīd* have held out so long is because they've been Pak dominated—the Deobandis have dominated [and] they are super strict in everything. Now as you know that whole *madh-hab* kind of control is weakening and now the chairs are here. But like I said en masse, not yet. In Egypt you will go, and I mean it's crazy the chairs are there, but now what they do with the chairs is even more crazy. There'll be one line of people or half a line of people at the front and twenty people would be lining at the back—a fifteen-line gap. It's not like they're the second line, it's at the back of the mosque. And their rationale of course is another common-sense rationale that they want to keep uniformity, they don't want the chairs to get in the way [because] when there are other lines it's going to hurt people, etc., so let's stick them all at the back. They all pray and live, it's like a community back there I'm telling you.

Student: Do they not move the chairs forward?

Ustādh: No, they remain there. I have seen some *masājīd* where a few of them will bring the chairs in. The majority definitely don't.

You have some *masājīd* which are very big *jāmi'* general mosques. You know like touristy mosques, they are the worst, obviously. But who prays in a touristy mosque? You know people go to Sulaymaniyyah Masjid and Mohammed Ali Masjid—very few people actually pray in these mosques, because it's all full of people going in [looking around]. It's not like a *masjid* where you go enjoy it, and it's horrible. *Astaghfir Allāh*, you shouldn't say that about the house of Allāh but the *masjid* of Abu Dhabi (whatever that one's called) Al-Hassan al-Thāni Khamis—that one. I have been to both. They are desolate places. They are huge. *Subḥān Allāh* the arch to get into these places it's like you can't even imagine. It's like massive. When you walk in it's a huge space and you see six people at the front. And the rest 300-400 people are just walking around and gawking at everything. The al-Khāmis one is crazy it's on the edge of the ocean/sea and the Abu Dhabi one is massive but there are few people at the front.

(00:16:00)

This is a normal Saudi *masjid* (Image 1).





Image 1. *Masjid* hall in Al-Rajhi Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, from Beautiful Mosques Gallery; 2016; Web; 3 May 2017.

Student: Where is the bench?

Ustādh: That is the bench.

So, you see triple use, I should have said it. You are seeing the back of it. The back then triples up as a Qurʾān storage. You can't see it very clearly, but you can see that guy with the *shimāgh*, he is leaning against it. If you look at where the microphones are, to the right of the microphones, there is a guy with a red headdress—he is leaning against it. This is Al-Rājiḥi Masjid. By the way, Al-Rājiḥi Masjid is the most beautiful *masjid* ever. I have to say that. If you look at that guy, actually all of the people on the right-hand side, they are leaning against it and then you sit on that if you are ill. Then on the other side you are using it for Qurʾān storage, tissue box, etc.

You see, that's how they've rationalized it. And that by the way is the norm in every Saudi mosque. As I said, the Egyptian one and other kind of countries they will be empty, and they will have all the [chairs] at the back.

Student: When did this start?

Ustādh: I have seen it for at least twenty years—this idea, twenty years. Probably in the last 10-15 years it has increased massively of course, just like chairs have increased.

Obviously, mosques are trying to deal with this problem and we have this problem as well. What I was saying is that now, what the problem is, is that now Muslim kick-starter kind of projects are all trying to produce the new chair—which is great and a disaster at the same time. It's a disaster because they are bringing now chairs more into



the *masjid* and more people are going to be using them, which is now moving away from the goal of us getting people back on the floor. At the same time, we can't hate on it because it is getting rid of some of the significant problems that current chairs are giving us, which goes back to the issue of: Where should a person stand?

Now if you have a normal chair, a normal chair, if you put its back legs on the line that means you are standing in front of the line. That chair is not going to ruin the second line, which is very important because we do not want to ruin the second line because if you put the chair all the way back, when the person sitting on the chair stands with everyone else, then his chair has destroyed the second line. Then a person cannot stand behind that. Then we have a problem.

What is the solution for that? Have an open chair (so no cross leg on the chair, just the legs) and a person (behind the chair) goes (into *sujūd*) through the gap. That is a solution, but not a great one. That is, the scholars who said that the most important thing is standing and because *qiyām* is the most obvious part of the prayer, so a person has to push the chair back. That is the position of the majority, by the way—that a person has to push the chair back, that there should be a few chairs, so do it at the end and then maybe what we will do is that the one behind it will be on a chair as well, so he is not affected. That is the kind of theory—let's keep it to the edges. The problem of course, as you know, is that most mosques do not get more than one or two lines so that does not work, so there will be messing up of the second line, and third line etc.

Then the other scholars said no, what is important is that the back side is in line. If the back side is what needs to be line with the feet of the people, then you put the chair forward, and that is when the chair legs are on the line. That means when you are standing, you are standing two feet in front of everyone else, which is really weird and off putting. But at least when you sit down, you are in line with everyone else. The argument against that of course is that you are standing forward. You saved the guy at the back. Okay, fine, but for most of the time in the prayer, you are out of line.

You can see both positions have pros and cons. You have a third position which is the correct position, in my opinion. [It] is that there is no set position and you have to move the chair back and forth. You are the one who chose to use a chair. You have to move it back and forth. What does that mean? You are going to have to have a chair that does not affect the people behind you, so it has to be completely open. It has to be back because you have to stand in line with the other people. When you are in *rukū'*, that is fine, but when you sit down, you then need to move the chair forward, so that your back side is in line with the people and you are not sitting down miles ahead. Then when you stand back up again, you push the chair back, you move back, etc.

That is the correct position. Now who can do that in prayer all this back and forth, back and forth? You cannot do it. Which is when you come to the forth position, which is Shaykh Kehlan's opinion, and the opinion of some scholars. What did they say? They said something interesting, [that] when a person is deficient or [has] a disability, *min*

*ahl'l-a'dhār*—it is important that you understand these phrases. When a person has a problem, he comes under the category of *ahl'l-a'dhār*. These are those people who have excuses—*'udhr*, the people of excuses. The rules always become easy with people of excuses—legal excuse. For this person they do not actually have a prayer line, they have a prayer zone. The idea there then is that they have the flexibility to go within their prayer zone, it does not matter. Because they are exempt, then it does not matter whether they are at the front, or the middle, etc. because they are exempt. The theory makes sense actually. They said that if there was a person who was always sitting down, he would be out of shape, [in] one way or the other.

You know what? It is a *fatwa*. It is not the strongest position because we would argue that if there was a person who was sitting on the floor, he is always in line. Because if a person is sitting on the floor, he is in line, his chest is going to be in line with everyone else because his backside is going to be there and when he goes to *sajdah* he is going to be in line with people as well. So, actually that is not a strong evidence.

Now you have seen four opinions of where the chair should go, and it is an *ijtihad* opinion. We cannot come down hard upon people who choose different opinions. But what can we come down hard upon? *Masājid* being too lax in introducing chairs, people doing what they want. There was a time here when it was absolute nonsense. We don't like it being here, but it has to be here. But there were some people who were saying, '*I follow the opinion that it has to go back.*' Then the others were saying they had to be at the front. We had this mess with people all over the show. Then we just had to have a statement where we had a decision that all chairs are going to go like this—on the line, everyone stands forward and that's the ruling in this mosque, one system. So, that's important—when imām gives a ruling, everyone should stick to it. These are the problems we have with chairs.

As I said, there has been a race in the last couple of years, especially this kick-starter funder thing to make the perfect chair. The problem is you don't want it to happen because it is going to encourage it. At the same time, you are not going to say no because it is going to reduce the problem.

(00:24:00)

The second one is that there has to be:

التَّراصُّ في الصَّفِّ

That there are no gaps in the line.

You see the advantage of [this chair] (Image 2). The design basically allows the person to stand and sit without moving the chair and not impact the guy behind. It is actually quite an interesting design. That thing flaps down where it says *kursi*—that is going to become flat, so his backside is going to be in line with the seat rest.



Image 2. Prayer Chair

My concern here is how solid it is because they have put wheels on it so that they can wheel it in and out. My concern is when he sits down does the thing rock? The point is that from the design point of view, it is very good for the guy at the back. It is absolutely perfect for the guy at the back. He is not going to be affected by that, it's not going to irritate him. And standing next to this guy is also not going to be a bad thing, that's why the lines are straight. If you look at the legs they are straight because that also causes a problem when you are trying to get feet to feet with the person who is next to you. So that will help. My concern is that when you push down on the spring system to sit down, I think you are moving the thing back and forth. That's my concern—the non-stability part. I think it will handle the weight.

The second point: The Prophet ﷺ said that you should line up like the angels line up in front of their Lord: <sup>1</sup>

يتراصُّون ويكملون الأول فالأول

They are close together, in line, regimented, and then they fill up the first [then] the second and so on.

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says: Don't leave any space for the *shayṭān* and it is important that we say that leaving no gaps does not mean squeezing everyone to death, it doesn't

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<sup>1</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *The Book of Prayer, Chapter: The Command to Be Calm During the Prayer and the Prohibition of Gesturing With One's Hand and Raising it When Saying the Salām; And Completing the First Rows, Aligning in Them, and the Command to Come Together*, ḥadīth no. 430 a.

mean *izdiḥām*, that you have to crowd everyone in. That's important. So, if you see a small space then it is not about making that guy uncomfortable. However, as we have already established that small space will easily fit two people if everyone moves up. But the thing is that if everyone doesn't move up then you shouldn't then go in. Again, this is a case by case basis. You look at the gap if you can go behind and just touch a few people and make an indication, just touch I think that is okay, 4-5 people towards the end that they now bring it in, I swear to you that that gap will now be big enough for one and a half people. If they move fine. If they don't or you don't feel like [trying to get in], then you don't squeeze yourself in, so that's important. But today for example, people had already started making the third line and suddenly I looked at the second one and there was a space for at least one and a quarter person, so I went and filled it.

Student: Shaykh, in the context of a mosque that fills up, especially on Friday, is there an issue with (inaudible) because it is way too crowded?

Ustādh: Friday is different. Okay, now you really want my soapbox, don't you? Okay then I will get on that soapbox. One of the most irritating things about Friday is the Muslims that come on a Friday. Full stop. They act like some of the most privileged, *ya'ni, 'a'ūdhubillāhi min'l-shayṭān'l-rajīm*. They don't want to move, they don't want anyone to be close, they don't want anyone to come near their tootsies. They want to spread out like this and when they are told we are full we need to cut the lines, so you need to half the lines, they don't move. And I've had major kick offs because I really lose it against people like that. That, *'No, no where am I going to make sajdah?'*

I go, *'This is Jumu'ah! You want space for sajdah you come to the Fajr you plum! There is space for you in the front and there are only six people here.'* The guy comes once a week and he won't move because he wants space for *sajdah*. Wallāh, I slapped a person once. I did, I am not going to lie. I got into major argument with someone. They make you go crazy. The Prophet ﷺ he said that become close even so that one of you is making *sajdah* on the leg of his brother, meaning on their Achilles, their calf<sup>2</sup>—on the person!

*Jumu'ah* is the one time where a number of *arkān* of *ṣalāh* are relaxed, such as straight, such as touching the floor for *sajdah*, etc.—meaning that everyone is meant to cram in. The *Jumu'ah* prayer is an experience of *barakah*, full, letting people in, avoiding them getting dirty outside, wet outside. It's raining but you see Muslims they don't care. *'They came late,'* that's what they will say. *'What do we care? They should have been hear early.'*

The Muslims that come to *Jumu'ah*, wallāhi, you have to be an angel to deal with those Pakis. They don't care about anyone else, the way they park their cars, the way they don't care about anyone, whether Muslim, non-Muslim, the way they come in.

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<sup>2</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *The Book of Mosques and Places of Prayer*, Chapter: *The Prostration of Recitation*, ḥadīth no. 575 a.

Student: Because you were talking about straight rows.

(00:32:00)

Ustādh: You're right. *Jumu'ah* is the exception to the rule—not just *Jumu'ah* by the way, also scenarios where there is crowding, where there are problems where we need to give some kind of laxity for some reasons.

I think it was you who said last week or the week before—pillars. In an ideal situation we do not create lines involving the pillars. We try to design the *masjid* around pillars then they don't get in the way of the line. If it can be avoided, we avoid it. If it can't be avoided, then we include the pillar. What we don't do, which is going to come up in a second, is to have this system, similar to the Saudi problem, of one line, one line, one line but the front line is like one and three quarters of a line, is to create that system, where we keep this pillar line, big massive gap to cover for it [so it's uneven].

The second point as I said is being close together.

The third point is to complete the first line and then the second. The Prophet ﷺ said: "If the people knew what is in the call as in the *adhān* and to pray in the first line, they would draw straws."<sup>3</sup> What does this mean? It means that if two come for the line, both of them should try to go for it and when one of them says it's mine and the other says it's mine, someone should say pull the short straw, and the one who pulls it, they then basically get it—that is if people understood. Nowadays it's all *tafaḍḍal*, *taffaḍḍal*, you go forward. As if this is some kind of honourable action—it is not.

Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn says something that *shayṭān* really plays with the people is that people are so lazy, they see a line that it not even full, it has gaps at the end and they start a second line for some reason. He then goes in, Shaykh says the *iqāmah* is given and then someone says to them, 'Complete the first lines first,' and they all start looking around like, 'Who's going to do it? Not me,' kind of thing.

We have this problem in this *masjid* at a chronic level. On Friday I came for the second *Jumu'ah*. It was getting rubbish so I said let's cancel this and brings everyone back. Everyone was late and I didn't care less. I had all the time in the world. But the people, just to punish them, I'm not going to lie, it was my intention, I wanted to punish them. The *khaṭīb* went on for ages and it didn't finish until 2:00 which is when you're meant to be out. People are meant to be out by 1:50-1:55 to give them a chance to be back. Anyway, this guy finished the *khutbah* at 2:00 so he messed up as well. As you know when it's a larger *jamā'ah* we have to go then go forward into the rooms and if you go forward into the rooms.

أَتِمُّوا الصَّفَّ الْأَوَّلَ ثُمَّ الَّذِي يَلِيهِ

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<sup>3</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī, Book of Witnesses, Chapter: Drawing Lots to Solve Problems, ḥadīth no. 2689.

[This] means you have to maintain the lines so every line has to be filled along the corridor as well. You can't leave the corridor open. If you're going to justify that room being the *masjid*, then the only way it can be justified as a *masjid* is if you continue the lines forward.

That's the same ruling by the way, when people ask me: Is it permissible to pray in the mall when you go to Makkah and the Ḥaram? You see people everywhere. I said only if the lines continue. If the lines continue you can make anything the *masjid*. But if lines are broken it is entirely impossible and invalid to pray in the mall or even more stupid to pray in the hotel *muṣalla*. You have these five-star hotels and they make the *muṣalla* overlooking and people are praying in it. It is unacceptable. The lines have to be continuous.

Here, because it was taking so long, no one wants to go forward because they have this idea that I don't want to pray in the corridor, or because of x, or because of y, or because I want to get away quickly. They were taking so long. Honestly, it takes about 3-4 minutes of begging people and another brother pushing forward and after a couple of minutes I said, '*No, bring them back.*' All of the people who went forward, every single one, I brought them back into this *masjid*—every single one. We made it. I knew that we would make it and use the back area, there was not that many people. We started the pray at like 2:10 and make them learn a lesson. Just move forward, *khalās* but people are scared, worried and they don't understand. You have to move forward, and it is *ajar* to move forward and rewarded to move forward.

Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn says why is it that people always look around at others to do it? When the announcement is given, just move. He said the first reason:

أولاً: الجهل العظيم.

Incredible ignorance is the first reason.

The second reason is because the imāms themselves don't care about it. They do not have this concern (and that is so true) to actually complete the lines. It's like it's something, '*I'll just say it but I'm not going to bother.*' Rare is it that you see an imām that will not start the prayer until the lines are fixed—and it is his responsibility. I explained that in last week's lesson and the weeks before that as well. The Prophet ﷺ told a person to get back.<sup>4</sup> The Prophet ﷺ would touch people and push them.<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>4</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *The Book of Prayers, Chapter: Straightening The Rows; The Virtue of The Front Row and Then the Next; Competing With One Another for the Front Row; The People of Virtue Should Take Precedence and Be Closest to The Imām*, ḥadīth no. 436 b.

<sup>5</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, *The Book of Prayers, Chapter: Straightening the Rows; The Virtue of the Front Row and Then the Next; Competing With One Another for the Front Row; The People of Virtue Should Take Precedence and Be Closest to the Imām*, ḥadīth no. 432 a.



Prophet ﷺ would delegate Companions to go up and down the lines moving people back and forward. That is itself is a missing construct.

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says:

والأمر بالتسوية سنة عند الحاجة إليها

This is interesting. We are not talking about the line. He says it is from the *sunan* of leading the *ṣalāh* to actually command the people to straighten the lines—to actually tell them as well, which I think is a good point.

Student: You mentioned the importance of making the line straight and all the rest of it. So, what if the line isn't straight or it's missing or it's crooked or whatever? What is the consequence of that for the person praying? Is the prayer accepted and the reward is reduced?

Ustādh: If a person is himself liable in the line being incorrect then they are sinning, there is no doubt about that. The level of that sin punishment is not clear, but they are not fulfilling an obligation and they are the cause of it. As for the person who it is happening to because of someone else, then they are free and Allāh knows best.

# 30. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 4: THE DESCRIPTION OF PRAYER

It is a *sunnah* to stand when “*qad*” is said from the *iqāmah*, and it is also *sunnah* to straighten the prayer line. He then says, “*Allāhu akbar*”.

We started in the last session speaking about what it means to straighten the prayer line. We went into some details about the exact positioning. We are now completing the holistic aspect of what it means.

We did:

- Straightening the line
- No gaps
- First lines first
- Always move forward

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn makes a statement at the top of page 14, he says, what kind of *insān*, *mu’min* is it, that he knows that the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَتُسَوِّدَنَّ صَفُوفَكُمْ، أَوْ لِيُخَالِفَنَّ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ وُجُوهِكُمْ

He knows that the Prophet ﷺ said, “You will straighten these lines or Allāh will cause difference between your selves,” and then he still does not respond. There are people like that. They do not move for anything. I have always said that that is the real proof of the *ḥadīth*, because in the other *riwāyah* it is:

بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ

If I am next to a person and the imām has said, ‘*Please come forward, please come forward*,’ and there is a guy next to me who is standing thirty centimeters back, not bothered at all to look at his feet, or standing forward or standing back. My heart has rage against that person. That’s the *ḥadīth* articulated itself and authenticated articulates it itself, right there.



وهاهنا حديث مشهور بين الناس، وليس له أصل وهو: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى الصَّفِّ الْأَعْوَجِ» .

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says: It is also good for us to mention the *ḥadīth* of the people, because it has no basis in the *sharī‘ah*, that indeed Allāh does not look at a bent line. It is one of the *ḥadīth* that everyone knows by heart, because the *khaṭīb*s repeat it all the time in their *khuṭbah*s. The meaning of this *ḥadīth* is correct-ish, in that it is meant to be a cursed reality and of course, the one that Allāh does not look at is a cursed person. If you are keeping the line dodgy and bent, then you are definitely a cursed person, there is no doubt about that. But, you should never say that the Prophet ﷺ said that, because he never did.

The fourth aspect of straightening your lines is:

وَمِنْ تَسْوِيَةِ الصُّفُوفِ: التَّقَارُبُ فِيمَا بَيْنَهَا، وَفِيمَا بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ الْإِمَامِ

They have to be close together. It is a principle in *sharī‘ah* to be close to the imām, and it is a principle in *sharī‘ah* to keep order.

Let’s start from the beginning. You see in some of these touristy mosques, he [the imām] takes a position twenty metres ahead, and the first line starts well behind—again, in Arab mosques mostly. He has a lot of equipment around him sometimes, lots of mics, wires, so they give him a lot of space. So, he is all the way out there.

Shaykh Keḥlān absolutely detests, and always has (in fairness to him), speakers and mics—big time. The *fiqh* of that is that not only are these things new and they cause a headache, and he, because they are loud, and they disturb him, he hates to be disturbed. What’s happening here is [that] the speakers themselves are introducing issues. If we are justifying for the imām to stand five metres ahead because of the audio equipment and cables and speakers that have to be there to produce a sound, then we are the ones who have caused that problem, and that is unacceptable. That is an example of it.

So, we are meant to be close to the imām. There is *barakah* in being close to the imām. Some of you have attended the class, *Fitnah*, the *tafsīr* of *Sūrat Ali ‘Imrān*. One of the things that I mention about that *sūrah*, is that some of the *ayāt* of *Sūrat Ali ‘Imrān*:

﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ﴾

“Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us. Grant us Your mercy:

You are the Ever Giving.” [Sūrat Āli Imrān: 8]

There is some *tafsīr* behind this. Obviously, it has a number of meanings, but one of the applications is *fitnah*, when Muslims themselves, who are guided, something happens and it causes *fitnah* amongst the people and they start leaving the *dīn*. One of these things of course was the *riddah*, the war of *riddah*, when the tribes who all became Muslim at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, after he passed away they made mass apostasy. Why? They said, when he was alive, we followed him, we became Muslim because of him. They said, as for *zakāh*, we were giving that to the Prophet ﷺ, and now, we are not giving *zakāh* to anyone.

Abu Bakr was the *khalīfah*. He said, you will give it to me and my collectors, because it is not me who is collecting it, it is the state which is collecting it. It was not the Prophet ﷺ who was collecting it, it was the state of the Muslims that was collecting it. It is not connected to the body of the Prophet ﷺ, it is connected to the Islam, the *sharīʿah*, the *khalīfah*. They said, no. That is when Abu Bakr made the big shout, big call where he made *takfīr* on the people. Everyone was shocked. How could this man do that? He is the gentlest etc., because to make a *takfīr* means that you have to go to war against these people. ‘Umar said, ‘Are you serious?’ And ‘Umar is the kind of guy you expect to be at the forefront of that shout. Then Abu Bakr said, “I will not differentiate between that which Allah does not differentiate [between]. Allah says, you establish the prayer, and you establish the *zakāh* as well.” So, there was a war of apostasy. They left Islam and were killed as apostates.

Part of these kinds of *fitan* and political strife, and yes, amongst the Companions themselves, [there] are a lot of issues going on, ‘Ā’ishah issues, Fāṭimah issues, etc. (you can study and read about all of this, it is known as the *fitnah*.) [This] would lead Abu Bakr to regularly make this *du‘ā’*. Not normally though, like you would make in *du‘ā’*, but he would recite it in *ṣalāh*. There is a narration in the *Muwatta’* of Imām Mālik, where (I think his name was) Abu ‘Abdullāh al-Ṣanābihi, one of the *tābi‘īn*. He said, “I learnt that Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq... If I’ve got it right, or maybe he was narrating from a *tābi‘ī*? That’s my memory. Forgive me if I get this wrong. The point is, either from Abu Bakr, or one of the other *tābi‘īn* he took this. He said, “I learnt this *du‘ā’*, from the tongue of X (I think it is Abu Bakr) because he would recite it at the end of every *Maghrib* prayer whilst he was in *ṣalāh*, in the third *rak‘ah*. You know when you pray *Maghrib*, you pray two *rak‘ah* with a *sūrah* and then the third one is without a *sūrah*. After he finished *Fātiḥah*, he would repeat these verses like a ‘*sūrah*’, and he would repeat it. He said, “I heard this from Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq.”

(00:09:00) You know what he said? Imām Mālik narrates that Abu ‘Abdullāh says, “My *thawb* was touching the *thawb* of Abu Bakr.” You tell me how that’s possible. “My *thawb* was touching the *thawb* of Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq.” So, he’s praying behind him, yet he’s that close.

The assassination of Sayyidina ‘Umar. Abu Lu’lu’ah al-Majūsi, he was taking people out. I want you to understand, he has the dagger, and after he’s ripped ‘Umar to shreds, he didn’t run around—it’s not a gun, shooting everyone. He had limited space and he was swiping, I think thirteen people he hit—I want you to think about this logically. Thirteen were wounded and six of them passed away as *shuhadā’* with this dagger. It was dark obviously, but they had clocked on to him because one of the Companions (I can’t remember who) threw the chador over him. They had him, they brought him to the floor and then he stabbed himself. There was not enough time for him to go round, everyone was close.

A *ḥadīth* that described the prayer of the Prophet ﷺ, they said that “We knew he was reciting by the movement of his beard.” We learn things about that. We know that his beard is long, we know that it is a beard that can be seen over the shoulder, we know that people have to be close to see the beard, and we know that the Prophet ﷺ said you are meant to look at the place of *sajdah* when you are in *ṣalāh*, which would indicate that it’s in the eyeline and yet so close. The evidences are very clear that you are meant to be close.

And forget everything I’ve just mentioned, because everything that I have mentioned are all observations from deep studying of the *Sunnah*, secondary evidences. There's a primary evidence as well, where the Prophet ﷺ said:

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ النَّاسُ مَا فِي النِّدَاءِ وَالصَّفِّ الْأَوَّلِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَجِدُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَسْتَهْمُوا عَلَيْهِ لَاسْتَهْمُوا

“If the people knew what the excellence was in giving the *adhān* and praying in the first row, they would come even if they had to draw straws.”

And the Prophet ﷺ also said:

لِيَلِينِي مِنْكُمْ أُولُو الْأَحْلَامِ وَالنَّهْيِ

“Get close to me, let the clever, wise, experienced people be close to me.”

*Yalini*, meaning be very close to me. So, one part of straightening rows is to have no weird gaps and sending the imām all the way over there. Be close to the imām.

What’s the distance? Enough for *sajdah* and a little bit. That's what should be between you and the imām, and between you and the row behind you, and so on and so forth, and that's basically what you see in all the *masājid*. That’s what should be between you

and the imām and between you and the second line and between [the second line] and the third line.

I'm telling you again, in the Arab lands, the Ḥanafis are not funky enough to do this kind of behaviour, they keep things regimented, but in the Arab lands you will very commonly see in the normal kind of mosques these kinds of crazy lines, where there are short lines then big lines—even with the absence of pillars. The pillar thing, we'll allow it to be used as an argument, but we've said before it shouldn't. But if there are no pillars, what's the justification for that? It's crazy, but you will see it—line, line, line, gap, line, line, gap. That is unacceptable. That is something which is important. He makes that point and I want to make that point.

Shaykh makes a random point. He says that if there's a person who comes to the *masjid* in the fourth line and all the lines are full, does the *ḥadīth* of 'you would draw straws to get to the first line' apply to the third line as well because that's *his* first line, because it is the line in front of him? The answer is no, because the first line is a line which is sought for the sake of it, intrinsically, because that is indicating someone coming earlier to the *masjid* and sacrificing more time and being there for more *'ibādah*. Because we know once a person leaves their house, they're in a state of *'ibādah*, and obviously someone leaving earlier is increased in their *'ibādah* over some guy who comes late.

And it's important by the way that you start tying things together. If you study these things like I'm teaching you right now, you'll start to develop viewpoints as opposed to just *fiqh* understandings. So, if you understand, for example, the issue of how important it is to fill up the line, you will then automatically understand that the person who gets to the *masjid* before you is better than you. If you also understand that if you get to a gap but you are meant to fill a gap, not crowd (which you have learned). You have also learned another very important lesson: You are not privileged that you push people aside and say I've got to get in. You're late. If it was there, fine. If it's too small, tough. You're the one that loses out, go and stand behind.

The third thing, it also indicates to you (because it's like a jigsaw puzzle, it starts to make sense)—the Prophet ﷺ criticised the people who "climb over the people's necks". Climbing over the people's necks is a phrase referring to *Jumu'ah* and crowded [prayers]. You know the people who come late and then they go place-hunting. So, they look at the back and they work out where's the space then they are moving people aside, climbing over people [trying to find a spot for themselves]. That's *'ayb*. I am sitting here listening, folks are listening and someone [pushes past me].

Now here's the point, you can have two viewpoints here, but if you understood the lesson you can only have one viewpoint. The two viewpoints would be, you shouldn't do it at all or no, that's a gap and we should fill the gap. But hold on. If you've understood what I've said, you've come late. You have no right to the excellence of that gap, and that gap, we will deal with, the imām will deal with when everyone gets up and he'll say please move forward. But you're not getting it and you don't deserve it. So, no, don't

come in and say to a person, that is close and press on them and say, '*Move aside*,' like it's your right.

You know when you look at the Malaysians, one of the things you love about Malaysians is that they've understood this issue very, very well. They're already a humble people anyway, and they're very polite. But if you see what happens when they walk between people, they will not walk until you give permission. First of all, they get their hand and hold it [at the wrist] (it's a cultural thing) and they put it down and they bend double. When they walk they bend double. So, they crouch when they go through the lines and they bring the hand even lower and they indicate, '*Can I just go through there please?*' And they will wait until people separate to allow them through. They will never walk over someone—never. And I mean even if two people move their shoulders [out of the way for them to pass], they will wait for the person to indicate for them to go ahead, as opposed to the obvious. *Adab*, you have no right to be going in and out.

Now wait, don't get confused between what a person he does and what I do. I, as the believer, I have already told you about the *ḥadīth* where the Prophet ﷺ said: "The best of you are those with softest shoulders." As believers, we should always be looking to make space for people—but we should be looking for them. But as believers, we shouldn't be the people demanding that other people do that. That's the different hats that you wear. If they're not interested in helping you out, well you know what? Tough. Even if it were you, you would. Okay, you're great. But you know what? They are not so great, so you stay where you are—you pray outside, you pray in the rain, you don't deserve it. But if you're inside, I'm telling you it's shameful if you're not doing that. When people come you should move your shoulder to the side. When you hear someone come in and you look and you realise, then you do the move that will encourage the other person to make the move and a gap is caused. So, you understand the balance, yes? So *Jumu'ah* is an important one, people just assuming they have the right to come in and do what they want.

Student: Well you've just got this weird situation where people prefer to be at the back and there are these gaps.

Ustādh: You are right. But that's the dichotomy of practicing versus non-practicing. The vast majority of the people who don't want to go forward are not practicing people. They are people who came late, and they wanted to come late, they are not interested, and they want to get out of there super quick as well. Or they are the very small minority of people who genuinely have a reason, like their cars are blocking everyone for example and they are genuinely late and if they do come in then everyone is going to get blocked. That's fine. We are never talking about people who have genuine reasons. We're talking about the rest, who don't want to move. Now it's the youth. They are a whole waste of space. They sit in their groups of people and they just chat to each other. Then you have, not just youth, obviously made up of youth and that millennial and older generation who are on their phones in the *khutbah*. So, they just want to be

as far as possible from the eye of the *khaṭīb* and just sit there all the way through the *khuṭbah* on their phones.

(00:18:00) It's a miserable place back there. I've been there for a long time. And it's important for the imāms, the people that give *khuṭbah* to just wake up and see what the real world is like. And you know, the blame is all around. The *khaṭīb* is sitting there talking about some nonsense giving the 1:00 news every Friday telling us about all the countries X, Y and Z. Just tell us something about Allāh, connect to that guy on the phone. I'm serious. I don't like giving *khuṭbahs*, I am not good at *khuṭbahs*. I'm a very poor *khaṭīb* actually. But I never remember that a person was on his phone when I speak—because I look at them in the eye. I genuinely bog out people who are on their phone and I have also called out people who are on their phone. But *khaṭībs*, they're lame—rubbish subjects, sending people asleep, and they don't do the *sunnah* of calling people out. It's *sunnah* to call people out in *khuṭbah*, people speaking, people want to ask a question, people not praying.

The *khaṭīb* is meant to help out. They turned it into some kind of act of worship that has no parameters. There is a lot of flexibility in these parameters—to fix the *jamā'ah*, to get people to move around, 'Move in brothers come closer,' 'Hey, I'm sorry about that if it was too loud,' etc. There is a conversation going on, if an announcement needs to be made, there is a car blocking, we do not need the other guy to come and have to say it—you say it yourself. But culturally people think, as you know Paks especially, for them the *khuṭbah* is like a *ṣalāh*. And you know the Bareilvis establish this properly and then Paks they follow this. When the first *khuṭbah* is being given then hands are here, and then in the second part of the *khuṭbah* the hands then go down to the *tashahhud* position. It's like they are in two *ṣalāh* zones, so you don't blame them. And how are they to blame when the imām says, 'Alḥamdulillāh, Alḥamdulillāh wa kafa,' and then he goes into his little praise thing that he has memorised and then he says, 'Oh Allāh be happy with Abu Bakr,' and this that, and 'Oh Allāh forgive 'Abbās'—like 'Abbās did something. What did 'Abbās do? What did he do?! We've been asking all our lives what he did. Wallāhi it's my favourite question, I've been asking it for donkeys' years. What did he do?

So, people are in that zone and when the imām is memorising the *khuṭbah* and he is depending upon the *bayān*. Because of course the Ḥanafis consider (and of course it is a very strong position) that the *khuṭbah* is an Arabic act of worship like *ṣalāh* so it can only be said in Arabic. So therefore, the modern *khuṭbah* of English with Arabic in it doesn't cut it for them. So therefore, they will ask the people to come early and they will give them *bayān*, a little circle a little lecture, in their own Urdu language, and then they will start the *khuṭbah* formally. So, when you make it such a formal ritual act which no one connects with, then that's what you create. You create that problem with no one watching, no one listening, then when they hear the last few words everyone then suddenly relaxes, 'Oh yeah I know this, I should stand up.' People turn it into an act. So those are the issues that affect some of that. So, we should be close to the imām.



ولهذا جاء الحثُّ على الدُّنُوِّ مِنَ الْإِمَامِ فِي صَلَاةِ الْجُمُعَةِ لِأَنَّ الدُّنُوَّ مِنَ الْإِمَامِ فِي صَلَاةِ الْجُمُعَةِ يَحْصُلُ بِهِ الدُّنُوُّ إِلَيْهِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ، وَفِي الْخُطْبَةِ، فَالدُّنُوُّ مِنَ الْإِمَامِ أَمْرٌ مُطْلُوبٌ، وَبَعْضُ النَّاسِ يَتَهَاوَنُ بِهَذَا؛ وَلَا يَحْرِصُ عَلَيْهِ

In the *ḥadīth* of Abu Dawūd in the Chapter of *Ṭahārah*, the Prophet ﷺ encouraged the people in *Jumu‘ah*, to be close to the imām. And again, we are not talking speakers are we? And people hide from the imām. When you are close to the imām, even if you don’t like it, you are under pressure to make yourself look as though you like it. And you’re close so you hear everything, and you are in the direct eyeline, so you feel everything. There’s a *fiqh* in being close. That’s why the one who becomes closer has come earlier. The one who comes earlier is more rewarded—and not only are they more rewarded they will probably benefit more even if they had no intention to. Maybe just being close you will get the *barakah* of the imām, maybe just being close you feel the message more, you feel you’re being spoken to more directly. These are things that are important.

Another thing I make a point of when I’m in *Jumu‘ah* which people don’t do, another lost thing, is actually pointing towards the imām. You are not meant to sit in prayer rows when you’re in *Jumu‘ah*. You’re meant to point towards the imām. All of you should be turned round looking at the imām—he is speaking to you. Can you imagine if I’m talking to someone and you’re turned round looking that way? I mean how stupid is what you’re doing and how stupid must I feel? So, it’s *sunnah* it’s actually from the Companions that one of their *sunan* is to face the imām when the *khuṭbah* is being given. So, we know that in *khuṭbah* you’re encouraged to be close to learn and benefit so *ṣalāh* is even more deserving of that. So, in the prayer you should always be encouraged to get forward as close as possible.

What does that mean, being as close as possible? That does not mean that you crowd upon the imām, but it means definitely get into the first *ṣaff* and get into the middle. That’s what it means. So, when you’re trying to get the *masjid*, get to behind the imām because the people behind the imām are the best people. They are the ones who are either the *huffāz* and the best qualified to correct the imām if he makes a mistake. They are the people who are, if not the *huffāz*, they are the most learned to take over from imām in case he breaks his *wuḍū’* or there is a mistake. They are the most alert because they are the ones who are watching the prayer and in it and the most spiritual, they can feel a mistake—numbers wrong, etc. They are on top people, they are levels people. They are the best of you because they are the ones that came an hour before you did to sit behind the imām. So, the people who are close to the imām are the best and they deserve it.

This is important for you to understand because this is now going to play a very important role in how we determine what happens from the rest of the rules of straightening the rows: children, sides, left, right, etc.

(00:27:00)

Let's move to the next one in the middle of page 15. He says (number 6) from the completion of the rows is that you complete from the right side because the right is always the best. So, whenever you are going to a row in the *masjid* you go towards the right. But people have to understand this correctly, the right side is not the best in a *muṭlaq* sense, in an unrestricted sense. It means it is the go-to side, not the pack up side. So, you go to it but then you have to balance, because the objective behind a prayer line is that it is equal behind the imām and he is always in the middle. It's not like you have [a right heavy side] then [a light left side]. No. You start building on the right of the person in the middle and then the next person is on the left [then person on the right and next person on the left and so on, alternating between right and left]—you build on the right complete on the left.

Student: It starts from the middle.

Ustādh: Yes, the first one is going to start in the middle, then the guy is going to go the right then left, then right then left. That's what we mean.

And it seems, *Allāhu a'lam*, that the evidences would suggest that this is the *sunnah*. We shouldn't be too strict on this because I have heard some of the 'ulamā' mention some the points, *ya'ni*. But I think this is a good, well established position in light of the evidences—as long as you understand that what's more important. Is it to fill up the right or to have an equal line? Always an equal line. That's the point. And that's why it is important for people when they are coming in and they see a line getting out of shape that they grab other people.

Can the imām tell people?

Yes, the imām should also look at the line and say, '*I want couple of you to go to that side, I want you people go to that side,*' and move people around.

The next part of completing the rows is to understand that women are part of the rows. Women being part of our prayer line has its own specific *fiqh*. Number one, the completion of the row is only complete perfectly when they are as far away from the men as possible. That's why al-Nabi ﷺ said that the front lines for the women are the worst of the rows and the back lines are the best of the rows and for the men the front rows are the best and back rows are the worst. I have covered this in detail don't need to go over this. We went into huge detail in the Chapter of...<sup>¶</sup>. And if you remember I said that the gap between the last guy and the first woman was virtually nothing, we are talking this much [about 30 centimetres]. There was no barrier at the time of the Prophet ﷺ. We were in the same room. And if the man is standing here, the woman is right [behind]. That's why people don't understand when we said that the women should delay raising their heads when the imām says, *Allāhu akbar*, standing up for *Fātiḥah*, the women stay down. Why? Because when the men are in their state of very

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<sup>¶</sup> This issue was covered the Chapter of the Conditions of the Prayer in the subsection of covering the 'awrah: *Logical Progression*, Year 5, Chapter 15, Lesson 21. (MT)



little clothes you can see their genitals. And you might say, ‘*How is that going to happen?*’ Because they are that close—literally right in front of you. That’s why the Prophet ﷺ said the worst lines are the front [lines] for the women. So, we learn then that the women should be as far back as possible in the *masjid* and that is from the completion of the rows.

Question: Is it from the completing of the rows when we say, ‘*Establish the lines, make the rows straight,*’ is part of that telling the kids to go back? What is the standard practice of the Muslims when it comes to the prayer lines?

Men [in the front], children [behind the men], women [behind the children]. Yes? Women are either behind something or in another room or in a prayer hall. If you go in a strict Pak mosque you will see the children will be praying behind in their own line. What’s the idea behind that? That the line is only straight when *bāligh*, ‘*āqil*, understanding, people of intellect, sane, post-pubescent people are making up that line. And therefore, everyone else is not of the quality to be establishing themselves in that front row.

The *fuqahā’*, you will see actually the majority of the *madhāhib* they follow this principle. The truth is that there is very little evidence for this. There is very little evidence for it. And I want to read because I think that is some of the best stuff that has been written on this subject in these two pages what Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says. He says that people will follow this opinion to the extent that they will push back the kids as far as possible and give them the same line. The basis for this is because the Prophet ﷺ said:

لِيَلْنِي مِنْكُمْ أُولُو الْأَحْلَامِ وَالنُّهَى

“Let those people who are wise and experienced and older kind of people be close to me.” And they took this *ḥadīth* and they said because of this *ḥadīth* the kids should be back, the kids should be far away. Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says that I don’t know about that.

ولكن في هذا نظر\*

No, actually we should say if the kids have come forward to a place and got to the front before you have, they have a greater right to it.

## فهم أحقُّ به

(00:36:00)

If a child is in the front row because they came early, they sat down, they waited like everyone else did then they have the greater right to it because of all of the evidences in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* that whoever gets to a place then he is of the greatest right to it. That's with objects, places, positions—that's across the board in the *sharī'ah*. The *masājid* are the houses of Allāh, the slaves of Allāh in the house of Allāh are all the same. There is no difference between people whether they are different race, ethnicity, age, this that they all have a right to get what they get to first.

If we were to go along with the opinion that we should remove children from the front line and from a better position—this is what we are going to do, we are going to now start putting them in a place, which is basically a doss area. We are going to encourage the dunce line. The kids' line, the concept of the line where you can chill and mess about. How is that helping them? How is that protecting them? How is that making sure they pray correctly and properly? If you have now created a line for them that is like a pseudo-line. A door numbered line that basically only kids are in. How is that going to be helping them?

Then he says that also we have another problem. He says what about another person who comes in late, a man? Does he feel good about coming in and standing next to the kids? You know people are like that? You will see them come in late and all the lines are full, but the kids line has space. He doesn't want to stand with the kids, yet he's the one who has supported the idea that the kids should have their own separate line. Where did this idea come from in the *Sharī'ah* that kids have a separate line? This is not from any Qur'ān or any *Sunnah*. It causes a problem for that person. Then what do you find?

So, what does a person do? And what about another situation where a man comes in and sees a kid in the line in front? He takes the kid out of the line, in *ṣalāh*, and takes the position of the kid. Now the kid is a kid and he is not going to complain, he's just like, 'Okay, uncle has just pushed me back. That's uncle behaviour, that's fine.' But on what basis did it happen? We want to know the basis, the *dalīl*.

Shaykh then says pushing the kids back to their own separate lines leads to a few other problems. The first *ḥarām* thing you are establishing is that you are going to lead for the kid to eventually hate the *masjid* and hate the uncles and the people who pray there because they are never considered to be someone of worth or an equal. 'I claim early, I wanted to be close to the imām, to listen to the Imām, I wanted to see the imām. I wanted to enjoy it because I came early and you're putting me back with the kids.' Maybe you have an 8-year-old or a 9-year-old who has to stand next to 3-year-olds. Now you have destroyed him as well making him feel like a baby too. So now you have caused a problem on top of a problem.

Secondly, you will also find that the people themselves will then involve themselves in moving people around and not want to come in that line. That is another *fitnah* that is caused. Therefore, we say this is a weak opinion. There is no basis for this opinion that kids should have their own line. Rather, kids, if they line up with the adults, they should line up with the adults. That way they will learn the prayer. That way their parent will take responsibility for them that is the way they will learn, and they learn the *adab* of what it is like.

Also, Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn made a really nice point. He said as for those people who said the evidence for this is the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ:

لِيَلْنِي مِنْكُمْ أَوْلُو الْأَحْلَامِ وَالنُّهَى

“Let the people of wisdom and knowledge be close to me.”

That *ḥadīth* does not mean only the adults should come forward and the kids should go back. It means if you are any kind of person, you should aim for that front line. It doesn't mean let's kick the kids out.

Listen, this is a very important point. We have got *tarawīḥ* coming up as well. In this *masjid* and so many other *masājid*. You will see the same situation going on. You will see that the children will not be allowed at all. The old uncles maybe they did not realise this. But our generation, we know fully what happens because we did it when we were young. Our fathers would go to the front and they would tell us to go to the back. We would let the *ṣalāh* start and we are out of there. We'd go to the car parks, shops, this and that. We'd time it and come back exactly fifty minutes later. We'd come back in just at *Witr* time, perfect, look at Dad at the front there, give him the thumbs up, 'I've been there all this time Dad.' Dad doesn't know Qur'ān, so he can't test me. What's he going to do, ask me what *sūrah* was recited? 'Well you tell me Dad.' What's the uncle going to say? He's not going to say anything. We know that, but we are still carrying on that situation.

The truth is that if we want children to be the next imāms and lead us in *ṣalāh*, we have to be able to develop them in a way where they feel respected, that they know that they have a place, that if they come early, they deserve the front. They need to understand that the front is not for the old people, it is for the big people—the people who deserve to be there, the people who are in the mosque all the time, the people who come early all the time. It gives them something to aim towards. These are the people who then become the next imāms. If we don't establish that, I'm telling you now, we will have a crisis when it comes to the children moving forward and establishing themselves in this next generation—if we keep relegating the kids to the kids' scenario.

We don't need to go all crazy and put on youth clubs and crèches and youth *qiyāms*, etc. You know what these are? To me, I have to say, I am not a fan of these things. I don't like it and I'll tell you why I don't like it. For me, these things are just guilty consciences. It's the guilty conscience of a community of elders that basically failed to incorporate them into normal acts of worship. If they were doing it right they would have made them feel equal in normal acts of worship. Because they don't, they put on all this Play Station *bakwās*, camps, and pizza, etc. because they don't make them feel equal in a normal situation. For me, it's like the father that beats his children. He beats them, why? Because he has failed at parenting and it's just a valve—let me just beat them. There's a lot there to reflect upon.

All of these are factors. When we talk about straightening the row and the line, let me summarise what the rules are in one minute.

- 1) It is obligatory to straighten the row. The row must be straight.
- 2) The straightening of the row starts from the back, your heel. It's your heel that must be on the line not your front, toes or anything else. It doesn't matter if you are especially big/fat, you've got a big stomach, or you've got a big back. The heels are what establish the row.
- 3) Chairs and everything else should be in line so that a person and the chair beginning are in line with the feet. The chair should not go back and affect the line behind even if that means you standing forward.
- 4) It is a *sunnah* for the imām to command the people to straighten the rows. The Prophet ﷺ would go up and down the rows as we heard. He would push the chests of the people, '*You go back please, and you go back.*' He would command 'Umar and Bilāl to go up and down the second line and the third line. And until he got the okay from them, they would give him the thumbs up, the line is straight, then he ﷺ would establish the prayer. It didn't matter if five minutes had been taken, the *iqāmah* had already been given—he ﷺ would never start the prayer until the lines were all straight. He ﷺ would say to all the people, "You will definitely straighten the line or Allāh will deviate between your hearts."
- 5) From the straightening of the lines is that the people must be close. The shoulders must touch. You don't have to have the feet touching and it shouldn't be everyone standing on top of one another and all this nonsense, but general touching is okay or a small gap as long as there are no gaps between the shoulders.
- 6) The lines should be equal in their length. The imām should not be standing far ahead, the lengths should be equal, and the women should be as far back and separate as possible from the men. Children should be wherever they come to. If they are at the front, if they are at the back, they should remain with whoever is responsible for them.

# 31. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 5: THE DESCRIPTION OF PRAYER

Today *in shā' Allāh*, we will be jumping into one of the key *arkān* of the prayer. This lesson is going to be all over the show. I want to share quite a few notes from different places—from *muṣḥaf*, from *Divine Link*, from Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Shinqīṭi's class, and from Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn's points from his commentary of Imām al-Ḥajjāwī's text.

[First], we need to do two things. One, [is] to answer one final point that Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn asks, that is related to the prayer line from last week. Then, the questions that's are outstanding from the last week or two.

Q: If the women are in a room that is adjacent to the men's room (the imām is not in front of them). Do they also start their lines at the center and build right to left?

Ustādh: It is a really good question. I do not know the answer to that, and I need to think about it.

Student: Are there any restrictions on the women's lines? Are they comparable to the men's restrictions?

Ustādh: That is a really good point. Let me explain something, it is the preponderant opinion, the *rājiḥ*, the correct opinion, that every single *fiqh* ruling that applies to a male, applies to a female, except when there is distinct clear evidence to suggest the alternative. Therefore, rules that apply to the lines, all apply, other than the exception. So, straightening, close together, gaps etc., until we are told that the female imām is in the middle (and that is not from the Prophet ﷺ by the way, just the actions of the Companions) until we see that the Prophet ﷺ says that the worst lines are at the front and the best line are at the back. Those are the exceptions, otherwise it stays the same.

So, in theory, the women's line will stand in the middle, and they will build to the right and equal left and keep equalising like that. That is the correct position. But, here, the imām is over here, the men are behind the imām directly, and they are not behind the men—which if they were, of course there would be no question here. They would follow the same system as the men. [However, the women] are actually on the right-hand side or left-hand side. They are adjacent to the men, and there is a barrier in between. Or, let's say there is a big gap in between. What should their principle be?

I think what she asks is correct—that the normal rule would not apply now. The normal rule of creating a pseudo structure in their section, as if there were an imām standing

in front of them, I think would not apply. I think that they would continue the first line to the left-hand side—connected to the brothers.

Student: Is that because they are right next to them?

Ustādh: That is only because they are right next to them. This is a unique situation.

Student: Let's say there is a balcony.

Ustādh: Now, let us look at different scenarios. The *aṣl*, as we said, is that they should be behind, and they should be straight. But, if they are being put out at different angles—first of all, I think the issue will be flexible. There is no doubt about it, because they are being put in a situation which should not theoretically be like that. So, the response would be a flexible one. If someone was to [ask]: What is the best? I would say that the best would be case by case. So, I think the adjacent one is pretty straight forward. You would connect the line, so you would go to the extreme left or right. If you are on the balcony, you could probably do straight behind the imām.

Student: Usually the balcony is not at the back of the room. Usually a mosque in the UK is adapted from some random building and the women's room is somewhere else.

Ustādh: Let's assume it's somewhere else, there is no relation to the spatial arrangement of the of the actual main hall. I think it would make sense for it to be an independent center of the room construct. And Allāh knows best. That's what makes most sense.

Student: This might seem like nitpicking, but we have a big problem in (inaudible) which is that most of the women's sections are ahead of the imām.

Ustādh: This is something which is not permissible unless for a need. As part of the *aṣl*, a status quo basic, is that it is not allowed for a man or woman to be in front of the imām—regardless of man or woman. They need to be behind, unless there is some difficulty. If there is a real lack of space, or some issue, then an exception could allow it.

Student: In a situation like this, would it be preferable for the women to pray at the back because it's segregated. Is it okay to pray there?

Ustādh: *Wallāhi* to be honest it is a difficult one to say 100% what's best. When you've got this kind of situation where the thing is coming all the way up to the side of the men, the barrier, in my opinion, negates the actual reason why a woman prays at the back—because there is no barrier. In the presence of a barrier, should she still pray at the back? That is up in the air for discussion. That is why my answer to you would be, if she prays here or there, I think it is okay. I think that if a person were to pray at the back, it would be more rewarded. Everything which is more covering and more hidden for the woman in any aspect of life, what is more covering, more modest, more out of

the eye, for a woman, in any stage, is more rewarded—when it is done intentionally. If it does because the person is ill or something that is not rewarded. But, a female who intentionally keeps themselves out of the public eye is rewarded. [There is] no doubt about that. If a person went back, I think they would be better [rewarded].

So, I think that they wouldn't build the center and build right to left unless it is a separate area. If they are in the same prayer line I think it's okay.

Q: There are two people in a *jamā'ah*, there is no evidence that there should be space between the imām, and the follower. What do the Ḥanafis and others use to support their position? According to them, there would be no application of a *ṣaff* in this situation. Also, after knowing there is no evidence, should I encourage at least my own family to follow that?

A: I want to answer the second question first. Obviously, everyone is studying here in this class and it's *fiqh*. We are not studying *ʿaqīdah*. And when we are I will make it very clear and when I say that this is *ʿaqīdah* then there is no doubt about that and you have them promote that and so on. *Fiqh* you are always easy with. As we said in year one, flexibility is *fiqh*'s essence, and you always have to look at the *maṣlaḥah*. You always have to look at what the reaction is going to be. How authoritative are you? How serious do people take you? Is it the right moment? Look at the emotions. This is a case by case basis. Are we at a birthday party or are we at a funeral? At a birthday party there is an option to say a few things, at a funeral you are always going to be keeping your mouth shut. People's emotions are running very, very high.

The *fiqh* ruling does not change, the political application changes all the time, and that is what you need to always be aware of. You have to understand that Ḥanafis especially are the most stubborn and most ignorant out of all of the four schools. There is no doubt about it. They are the most ignorant when it comes to their own principles. I have absolutely not a shadow of a doubt, having lived with all the four schools, there is no doubt that the Ḥanafis are the most extreme. That is why I say ignorant. When I say ignorant I do not mean stupid, [I mean] that they are very, very stubborn, very non-compromising. We all know that in this country. In this country, the Arabs are sick to death of this situation. They compromise, compromise, compromise, always trying to keep the Paks happy, Gujjis happy, Bengalis happy—always. Yes, you could argue that the Arabs have gone to the other extreme—super tolerant, super flexible.

We have had this discussion before. When it comes to studying the anthropology of people and their association with *madhāhib*, there is a cultural issue, there is a political issue, there is a historical issue. You will see that certain *madhāhib* fit certain people. As time goes, they start to mold the *madh-hab* around themselves. So, when you look at Paks, they are conservative people. They are more conservative than less. When you go to the Arab countries (and this is a big shout as well), they are less conservative than more. I am speaking very big stereotypes. If you were trying to make a call to unity



amongst a group of people, your Arabs are going to respond, in general. I am talking of the practicing [ones], not secular—I am talking about practicing Ḥanafis, practicing Arabs, practicing Shāfi'is, etc. You will see a flexibility on that side, versus a real stubbornness on this side. It is very rare to find educated, tolerant, open-minded Ḥanafis. It is obviously increasing.

Compare three paradigms in front of you: South African, British, and American. All three are incredibly different communities (the Ḥanafī communities). We are bang in the middle. We are a 50, 60, 70-year strong established, second, third generation now moving into, community that has close links—that is important, the closeness to Pakistan and India, and people coming and going. Because we were here early, not before the Arabs, but in a bigger number with respect to the Arabs. Ironically, the Arabs were here first in the UK, as a Muslim community. Yemenis, I believe is what the research shows.

If you see, the British community have had some time, so they have got long roots they are well established. They are poorer. This is why it is so important to understand when you are giving *da'wah*. Anthropology is a very important tool—understanding how people think, and politics and history has played [into] that. So, when you look at the Muslim community in the UK, they are a much poorer community. The Pakistanis are a much poorer, lower social class. The majority are in social housing. They live in ghettos. When the uncle or the cousin comes over, they live together, first of all. Then, if they separate from the actual house, they live very close. When new people come, they gravitate towards those areas. So, they become ghettos. When they become ghettos, the mosques form. Mosques are reflecting villages back home. They then bring the imām over. They have literally created a western village of the one back home.

Let's say that is the *aṣl*. We will put that at zero on the scale. Then, you have South Africa going to the real extreme right. Then, you have the other one going to the extreme left. For example, South Africa, they have been there for hundreds of years. They are like tenth generation Muslims—Deobandis, Indians, Ḥanafis. The Ḥanafis there, they are nuts. They are so strict, and they are so disciplined. They have also got incredible structures. Their financial structure is very good. The Gujaratis or the Muslims of South Africa are like the Jews of the UK—very powerful, very good business links. They are able to have impact (I think I have spoken about this before). Their restaurants and businesses are the big ones in the country. The others are desperately trying to seek their business. So, a normal shop will be quite proud to put '*ḥalāl*' in huge figures. In this country, people are rubbing that off. They are scared of the backlash of when you put *ḥalāl* on.

(00:15:00)

Likewise, you will see that some of the *madāris* over there that you go and study at are so extreme—the kind of things we only associate with mental cases in the UK. You'll find Ḥanafī scholars making *takfīr* of people, and of their own—the classic kind of ghettoization of communities and doubling down on what they believe and absolutely not need to consider anything else.



America is the exact opposite. You have Ḥanafis there that you can't recognise, like Abdul Nasir Jangda is a classic example. People would try to give him as an example of a Ḥanafi—you're having a laugh the guy is American, he doesn't know what he's doing. He's got a Ḥanafi upbringing but the rest of it is combining here and there and just chilling and enjoying himself. Just American style relaxed *fiqh*.

Where does that come from? It's because the Paks are not a dominant number there. The Arabs are bigger, Arabs first, and you can't just go and ghettoize a place. You have to have others on the board—you have Nigerians, Latinos, converts, Blacks, Arabs, doctors that are killing it with lots of money. So, you have communities that are probably a lot more mixed than they would've wanted, and now they thrive off of it.

When you go to a mosque over there, a representative standard community mosque, it's an unbelievable institution compared to what nonsense we have here. They have all types of people, all types of activities, a day for Latinos, a day for *da'wah*, a day for x, a day for y, they have people that are mixing with one another, eating with one another, going out with one another, interracial marriages, etc.—the standard melting pot that we understand America to be is actually being reproduced in the *fiqh*. So, their *fiqh* is a melting pot. The *madhāhib* are weak and discipline in *fiqh* is weak in the States.

The reason it's important for you to understand that is that is a reality that has existed in the Muslim world when it comes to concentration in different communities—historically—even more so now, even more so in minority countries, and even more so as time goes on. You'll remember in the first lesson, if you can, I said it's important to study *fiqh* in a *madh-hab* and we teach people to come up in a structure, but I told people that when I started studying 15-20 years before then, people were super sensitive about the whole *madh-hab* thing, and anyone trying to do what Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn does i.e. I believe the strongest opinion is this or that, you'd be a Salafi or a Wahābi, a sellout, etc. and the majority of the people would be following their parents.

Now 20 years later, kids have no idea about what their parents are following, and they themselves don't care about their own identities as a Ḥanafi—they don't identify. They identify with Facebook, they identify with Snapchat, they identify with YouTube videos, they identify with anyone sending them a WhatsApp messaging telling them to pray like this or do it like that, etc. Obviously, our generation which was following our parents, but then we had an intellectual revolution where we started to question. These people have got that, meaning they question. They've got the revolution part where they question, as well as the fact that they're becoming very weak with their association.

It's very important to make sure that we don't overplay *fiqh* in our current paradigm. And I think many *madhāhib* have now matured to that. And if they didn't mature to it, they can't help it because they realised that their imāms themselves because they are dealing with more and more new issues that the *madhāhib* themselves traditionally couldn't deal with by themselves, and having to create new *fatwas*, and when you're

creating new *fatwas* and borrowing from other *madhāhib*, that's an eye opener as well for some of these people as well. So now we are in that new state...

So back to the opinion where she says: Do I tell my people about this? It's all about how powerful you are, how strong your voice is, how much respect you have, and just how nuts or hardcore your family is. At the moment, I think we still have another 10-20 years. After 10-20 years no one will care about the whole emotional issue of *raf' al-yadayn* at home, the whole 'my parents will kill me if they saw me raise my hands,' etc.

As for what the actual point of standing in the line is, then the truth is that the Ḥanafis didn't have a textual evidence of having someone step back. They use an '*aqli*' evidence, where they said that the word *imām* comes from *amām*, meaning to be in the front, so there has to be by definition, someone up front. So, we say to them: What about the *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās when the Prophet ﷺ brought him over to the side? They will say: Yes, he did but there's no doubt that there must have been a gap. We'll argue that they have to prove that there was a gap, because when someone brings someone from the side to the side, you are the one who now has to establish the evidence to say that there was a gap.

For what she's asking, that's the evidence for them—not a textual one, but an '*aqli*' one, and it's a valid argument, and that's why it's a valid opinion to have that gap and we don't make a big thing of it. So, no I don't think you should be making an issue of it. But if you're with practising people and students of knowledge, then you will grab that person and bring them forward.

Q: After this class, I understood that when women can't see the *imām*, they should stand up for prayer at the start of *iqāmah* in order to have time to straighten their rows rather than at *qad* or at the end of it.

A: Yeah, I think that's okay. When women can't see the *imām*, and they know that he's coming, and they need a bit of time to set the rows, standing up a bit earlier is fine.

Q: You're a late-comer and you assess your line and get ready to join. Is it more of an obligation for you to straighten your line alone as there are too many other lines, too many people in the row in front, more so than joining the *jamā'ah* even if it means you've lost that *rak'ah* since you'll be joining the *imām* after he's made *rukū'*?

A: So basically, I don't quite understand that because if you're by yourself, what's there to straighten?

Oh, you mean you're the only one straightening the line in a line you're joining? So, if that's the case, then of course, you'll do what is the *sunnah*, and it is not *sunnah* to rush to join the prayer. The *sunnah* is to establish yourself and get yourself in the right frame of mind, as we're going to be covering today by the word of *Allāhu akbar*.

Q: A prayer scenario at home: a Ḥanafī Imām, leading a single male *muṣalli* and a single female *muṣalli*, they'll stand directly behind him in separate lines, correct?

A: No, that's not correct. The Ḥanafīs will also have the second male *muṣalli* to the right, but back a bit, that's all. When I say back I mean like two inches to the right, two inches back or four inches back, not actually behind. And the woman will be behind, behind. Correct, behind in a separate line.

Q: Earlier you said that the first line is preferred for the learned, seniors. So, if I'm young and not very learned, shall I still race for the first line?

A: No, I said that the first line is for whoever gets there, and I said that the one who prays behind the imām directly is for the *ulu'l-aḥlām* and *al-nuḥa*—people who are top people basically. Those are people who should be behind him. And by the way, there should be some congregants there that the top people of the Qur'ān and *dīn* should also be the people *'ibādah*. There's an idea that just because I'm a scholar, I can bowl in whenever I want. The classic people combined both. They are the people of *'ibādah* as well, they're there early, so they're there by right as well. To everyone else, young or whatever, you come to the front and you get the reward.

Q: You mentioned that the center of the second line is better than the sides.

A: That is only if you are first. So, the center of the second line is better when you are first because that means you're there earlier and it's because you're closer to the imām. If you come late, then you have to accept that you can't get the same reward as the guy who got there earlier and you're farther away from the imām. But you've done the right thing by going to the correct side to balance the line.

One question from Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn that I want to mention before we get into *Allāhu akbar*:

At the bottom of page 18 he says:

مسألة: قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم: «إذا توضأ فأحسن الوضوء، لم يخط خطوة إلا رفعت له بها درجة... الحديث (3)، فهل إذا خرج الإنسان من بيته قاصداً المسجد، ثم توضأ في دورة المياه التي في المسجد، يكون له هذا الأجر؟

The *ḥadīth* that was mentioned two weeks ago, the Prophet ﷺ said if a person makes *wuḍū'* and he does it perfectly, then leaves his home, he will not take a single step except that for every single step he will be raised a status, and a sin will be taken away, and an *ajr* will be added, etc.

The question: If a person leaves their home without making *wuḍū'* and goes to the *masjid* and makes *wuḍū'* there, does he have the same reward?

Student: No.

Ustādh: No. Okay.

Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn says: From the apparent meaning of the *ḥadīth*, he will not get the reward. And that's because there's a difference between a person who leaves the home in preparation for the prayer and a person who comes to the *masjid* who's not ready for prayer, and then prepares himself for prayer at the *masjid*. And I think that's the correct position.

He says: Yes okay, if his house very far away and he did not have time to make *wuḍū'*, or he did not make *wuḍū'* but he'll be on the road for a long time to actually get to the *masjid*, then it is hoped that he will get the reward because he put a lot of *mashaqqah* in, a lot of planning in, a lot of time in, and so on.

So that finishes prayer lines from my side. This is obviously a big subject, so are there any questions on the prayer lines?

Q: What would be the optimum way for a prayer area for women?

A: The optimal *sunnah* way, ideally, a perfect prayer area would:

1. Recognize ratio, so the women's area would definitely be smaller.
2. They should be in the same prayer hall, so the women should have immediate visual access to the imām.
3. The entrances should be unique. The Prophet ﷺ gave them unique entrances. We were just touring the Masjid al-Nabawi on our 'Umrah trip and we were looking at *bāb'l-nisā'*, which was something specific, which is still there now—ironically not used by the women. But it's there in the original *masjid*. And the men's entrance, Abu Bakr's entrance, is separate from the women's side. So, we'd have separate entrances so there would be no mixing. The Prophet ﷺ was very strict on the issue of intermingling to reduce intermingling. Intermingling between men and women should be avoided unless necessary, unless you are traveling or studying or something. But in a *ṣalāh* situation, women should be able to come in and out

independently of men, and men should be able to come into the *muṣallah* independent of women—again this is ideal.

4. There should be no barrier in the actual section itself. They should be at the back. They should operate the rules of the Prophet ﷺ meaning they should hope to be in the back lines and not at the front, and the ones that are in the *masjid*, the men, should try to get to the front and stay away from the back, depending on timings and so on.

That's ideal, but that's very difficult to achieve spatially. So, then you start playing with various things. I think the barrier is a real problem, which is why I like the idea of women having a mezzanine floor. I like the mezzanine Regent's Park style. They have some nice lattice thing going on, but they can see the imām clearly. It's an upper balcony.

(00:30:00)

The situation is, in these scenarios we have to accept compromises inside and good compromises is definitely a screen. To have a big screen in a section that gives women a full on [view]—because I think that is the most important thing.

Student: I think they may as well of stayed home and watched it on a screen.

Ustādh: No, no, I do not think so. If you ask any of these women if they would rather stay at home or they watch a screen in a *masjid*. By the way, just because I want a screen doesn't mean I want you to look at the screen. There is still *sajdah* to be looked at.

Student: It is more than that, it is not just the fact that there is like TVs and microphones involved now where there does not need to be because architects exists to stop the need for that happening.

Ustādh: In an open area, 100% agree.

Student: It is more than that, is s social space, you have 'Umar ؓ on the *minbar* saying something and the women saying, '*Kitāb Allāh says this.*' Now the woman says it, and no one hears it.

Ustādh: No one knows, now one sees. There is no doubt about it if you have an ideal situation you have space, you have to have women in the same space. Every *ḥadīth* that you see of the Prophet ﷺ is about the same space. There is no doubt about it. Exceptions, as I said are in play for huge *masājid* and for minority countries and all their planning issues etc., that is what they are going to have to use to get around it.

Student: I think it is more than that, I think there is a legitimate problem with the Muslims mindset in this country, we do not have any...

Ustādh: In this country compared to others, definitely, there is no doubt about that.

Student: And actually, this why the question keeps arising, what do women do in this unnatural situation they are in? They are in a separate room now they are not going to be starting at the back anymore, they are not going to be queuing up. All the questions just do not make sense because they should not even be there.

Ustādh: Yes, like we said before, all of the problems that we have when it comes to women's *fiqh*, 'What did they do with this?' 'What did they do with that?' We have created (it). Like this issue of the speakers cut out: Do the women separate or do they put an imām forward? What a stupid scenario, the reason I cannot give you an evidence is because it does not make any sense. How can it have ever happened in history? It never has. That is why none of the *fuqahā'* have mentioned it. We have to give a *fatwah*. I have told you, my personal opinion, my own *fatwah* is that women go pray by themselves, I do not like this idea of women going forward etc. Pray by yourselves. When the speaker comes on forget the speaker, forget in the imām, you got the reward for the *jamā'ah* that is it. I am every confident that that is the answer even though there is not a single *salaf* for it (a precedent) because we have created that stupid scenario that we have women utterly dependent on a *samā'ah*, which itself is *bid'ah*. The situation is a mess.

This has huge ramifications in not just issues of *ṣalāh*. This has a massive issue in the issue of imān. We have a major problem of women turning to feminism and the *masājid* not there to offer a space, a service, etc. Women have had enough, and they have had enough for a while and that 'had enough' equals frustration. And that frustration just turns into emotional nonsense because they have no leaders to help them. Then you have women who just chat rubbish and say come to us, then you have women only mosques and women imāms and Amina Waduds and Irshad Manjis and all that *bakwas*. As usual we are our own worst enemy.

Q: I was wondering when Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn taught this *Sharḥ al-Mumtī'*, were his students already grounded *tullāb'l-ilm* in the *madh-hab* of the Ḥanābilah?

A: Absolutely, but of course the classes are open, so you had so many other people in the class. But yes, the majority of the people would be coming specifically as Ḥanābilah.

Q: What if you drive to the mosque with *wuḍū'* and not walk?

A: We said that the person would get reward *in shā' Allāh*, but the same reward as a person who walks? No, because it's about difficulty.

Q: If there was no barrier for the women's area would the *ṣaḥābiyyāt* pray with *niqāb* or without (those who covered)?

A: Without, there is no *niqāb* in *ṣalāh*. And that just goes to show the situation. That is another problem. It is not just about giving the space, you see? Let me tell you

something, women also like the barrier, or the separation—I know from many sisters that just the fact that they have their own private space or chill, relax, not have to wear *ḥijāb* etc. That though, should not be the mosque. But because it is the only place, so they embrace the barrier separation—it is our chill zone, we still get the mosque feel out of it, still get the *jamā'ah* reward out of it, we can chill without our *ḥijāb*, we do not have to wear *niqab*, they can relax, etc. Non-Muslim country, you have been in some nonsense outside, you just want to come in and relax, take it all off etc.

So, it is a difficult one. You have that paradigm and then add another one: You give them a space at the back, let us say, in an open prayer. But you cannot because of law or practicality give them separate entrances. If you are giving them a mixed entrance, with an open area, you have actually created a scenario where you will have a large number of women who would rather have the same entrance and a closed area as opposed to a different entrance and an open area because of the *sitr* that their one and only space gives them for the prayer. The situation is a mess because we created it.

Personally, I really like the idea... The *masjid* is a very simple construct and we have a lot of space from a *fiqh* point of view to play with it, to work with women's needs. That is why I think perfection is with the idea of having a main huge prayer hall which is men only and the women go at the top and they have an open view in front. By the way, even if they were at the back or they had a full floor I still believe that they should have TVs at the side along the side like you have at seminar when you are far back. It does not matter if you can see the speaker, you want to see a close up as well. I think that technology can be used in that way as well. They are on the top, they have open access, they can see and hear everything, they can take a peep if there is an issue or some confusion and those that want to relax without *ḥijāb* they can do so at the back of the room because it is so high and far back. It ticks a lot of boxes and Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Then he says:

ويقول "الله أكبر"

We have now established the prayer line, we have stood straight, the imām has told everyone to get ready and now what do we do? He (Imām al-Ḥajjāwī) says: He says *Allāhu akbar*. The *muṣalli* will say *Allāhu akbar*.

'Say', Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn says:

أي: يقول المصلي: «الله أكبر» والقول إذا أطلق فإنما هو قول اللسان



If the word ‘say’ is mentioned in a general sense, in an absolute unrestricted sense, then it means to actually say with speech i.e. with your tongue. If it is going to be with something else, then there has to be another word to specify it i.e. to say it with your heart, or to say within oneself, then that has to be there, in heart or by oneself etc., that is the first point.

Second, this *takbīr* is known as a *rukn*, this is a pillar from the pillars of prayer. I want to remind you guys what the issue of pillars is—*rukn*, plural *arkān*. People translate it as essentials, people translate it as literally like a pillar, which is what it is, it is a corner of something. I want you to visualise that if you have a chair with four legs. If you take one away, the whole thing falls down.

An act of worship cannot survive if the *rukn* is not there. That is why the best technical, legal definition of *rukn* is: An evident and constant attribute whose absence necessitates the absence of the *ḥukm*, but whose presence does not automatically bring about its object. It is part of the essence of the act itself.

Let us translate this now in normal human language because that is the legal kind of thing. ‘A *rukn* is an evident and constant attribute’, meaning that it is an actual thing that happens. It has to be continuous, meaning that it lasts throughout the actual act that you are doing—that the *rukn* is part of. ‘It is evident’, meaning that it actually has to happen whether it is an action or a statement, or an intention etc.

(00:44:00)

‘Whose absence necessitates the absence of the *ḥukm*.’ If it is not there, its absence will then lead to the absence of the *ḥukm*, meaning the ruling itself, in this case, *ṣalāh*. So if there is no *takbīrat’l-iḥrām*, if you forgot to make *takbīrat’l-iḥrām*, if you were standing there like this (hands raised), stuck with your *niyyah* and you got lost and you thought ‘Oh forget this,’ and you start with [Sūrat al-Fātiḥah] and you forgot *Allāhu akbar* and you prayed the whole prayer, you didn’t pray at all. Because you never entered the actual prayer in the first place cause the *rukn* was absent. Therefore, it leads to the absence of the *ḥukm*.

However, it says: ‘but whose presence does not automatically bring about its object.’ So presence of the *rukn* does not mean that *ṣalāh* has been established—it is only part and parcel of the game itself.

The final part, ‘it is part of the essence of the act itself.’ So, it’s not a *shart*. A *shart* is a pre-condition. That’s why the word ‘pre’ is used—it happens before. *Rukn* happens within the act itself. So *arkān* are within an act, *shurūṭ* are before it.

The main thing about the *rukn* that you need to understand is that these are essentials, they can never ever be missed, whether it’s the *arkān* of *Ḥajj*, the *arkān* of *ṣiyām*, so the *arkān* of *ṣiyām* for example is to start at dawn, at *Fajr*. The *arkān* of *Ḥajj* is to have spent at least one minute before *Maghrib* on ‘Arafah—even though we spend five hours there. *Arkān* of *Ḥajj* is to make *ṭawāf* of *Ḥajj*, even if it means x, y and z, even if you might



not have *wuḍū'* or something like that, according to some scholars, etc., etc. so we are talking the bare minimum, absolute essentials, bare bones.

Now: It's a *ruk'n*. Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn says: Prayer cannot start without it because the Prophet ﷺ said to *al-mūsi fi ṣalātihi*. *Al-mūsi fi ṣalātihi*—this is very important for all of you to understand what this phrase means and who he is. *Al-mūsi fi ṣalātihi* is the Companion who erred in his prayer. As far as I know we don't authentically know his name, but he is a Companion رضي الله عنه and his *ḥadīth* is narrated in Bukhārī. Abu Hurayrah narrates this. I am just going to read out the actual *ḥadīth*. This *ḥadīth* is in Bukhārī and Muslim. I want to read in Arabic first so that you get to hear some of the key phrases because there are some very important, essential phrases in this *ḥadīth*.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ دَخَلَ الْمَسْجِدَ، فَدَخَلَ رَجُلٌ فَصَلَّى فَسَلَّمَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَدَّ وَقَالَ " ارْجِعْ فَصَلِّ، فَإِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَلِّ ". فَرَجَعَ يُصَلِّي كَمَا صَلَّى ثُمَّ جَاءَ فَسَلَّمَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ " ارْجِعْ فَصَلِّ فَإِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَلِّ " ثَلَاثًا. فَقَالَ وَالَّذِي بَعَثَكَ بِالْحَقِّ مَا أَحْسَنُ غَيْرَهُ فَعَلَّمَنِي. فَقَالَ " إِذَا قُمْتَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَكَبِّرْ،

That's our part for our lesson today.

ثُمَّ اقْرَأْ مَا تَيَسَّرَ مَعَكَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ، ثُمَّ ارْكَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمِئِنَّ رَاكِعًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَعْتَدِلَ قَائِمًا، ثُمَّ اسْجُدْ حَتَّى تَطْمِئِنَّ سَاجِدًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمِئِنَّ جَالِسًا، وَافْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فِي صَلَاتِكَ كُلِّهَا " .

A man entered the *masjid* whilst the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ entered as well. The man prayed two *rak'ah* and then came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "*Assalāmu 'alaykum*," the Prophet ﷺ said, "*Wa 'alaykum assalām*." then said, "Go back and pray because you have not prayed." So, he ﷺ was obviously watching him whilst he has prayed the two.

So, the man went back, and he prayed two *rak'ah* like he did the first time and then came back and repeated the *salām* and the Prophet ﷺ replied and then said, "Go back and pray because you have not prayed." And he did that and that happened again once, twice, and three times. The man each time praying as best as he thought that it is.

The third time when Prophet ﷺ said that to him, the man said, "By He Who sent you with the Truth O Messenger of Allāh, I do not know any better than this, so, teach me." The Prophet ﷺ said, "When you stand up for *ṣalāh* say, *Allāhu akbar*." Or let me be more accurate, "When you stand up for *ṣalāh*, then *kabbir*."

We need to have a discussion of what that actually means. *Kabbir* you say to anyone who understands Arabic, it means: say *Allāhu akbar*. The Prophet ﷺ did not say: *Qul Allāhu akbar*. He didn't say: Say *Allāhu akbar*. He said, "Do *takbīr* (*kabbir*)," from the root verb of *kabbara/yukabbiru/takbīran/kabbir*.

So, "When you stand up for *ṣalāh* make the *takbīr*. Then read what is easy for you from the Qur'ān, then bow until you are in a relaxed position in your *rukū'*. Then stand up until you are standing up straight, then prostrate until you are in a relaxed position in your *sajdah*, then sit until you are relaxed in your *julūs*, your sitting state. Now do this in your entire *ṣalāh*."

That's the *ḥadīth*. This is now famously known as *ḥadīth'l-mūsi fī ṣalātihi*, the *ḥadīth* of the one who erred in his prayer. A number of important lessons and rules come from this *ḥadīth*. The most important is the concept of *arkān*. Because the Prophet ﷺ said:

صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي أَصَلِّي

"Pray like you have seen me pray."

*Ṣallū* is a command, it indicates obligation. This is very important. There are some people who are not very great in *fiqh*, a movement, a reformist movement that using this *ḥadīth*, actually even entitled the book as *Pray as you Have Seen Me Pray*. They took the opinion that every single act of the prayer is an obligation as a result of this statement. They said that Prophet ﷺ said, "Pray as you have seen me pray," a command, which indicates that every single thing that has been indicated by Prophet ﷺ is obligatory. And therefore, anything missed out would therefore be sinful or even worse invalid. This a classic literalist approach to *ḥadīth* and that's why *fiqh* and *fuqahā'* are so important because they are able to classify. And this *ḥadīth* is the most important weapon for the *fuqahā'* to prove that there are levels to the prayer—that there are *sunan*, *nafl*, *wājibāt* and that there are *arkān*, i.e. that there are some things which are more important than the others.

That's why the most important knowledge that you teach your children at the very beginning are the *arkān*. You teach them the most essential aspects of the act that they want to do and once they have the handle on that you start to then develop the rest of their knowledge, the rest of the things that they need to learn. And this *ḥadīth* indicates that Prophet ﷺ saw a prayer that he was not happy with, in fact not just not happy with but considered it invalid. Abu Hurayrah is narrating every detail. He ﷺ did not say, "Recite *sūrah* after *Fātiḥah*," he ﷺ did not say, "Make the *takbīr* of that," he ﷺ did not say, 'Say *sami'a Allāhu li man ḥamidah*'—a lot of things were missed out.

You might say that, 'Well, he was being brief,' you could argue.

We say no. Why no?

Number 1: It's the Prophet ﷺ, he is not allowed to be brief. He is not actually allowed. When we say: *adda'l-amānah, wa naṣaḥ'l-Ummah*, when we make this *du'ā'* for him ﷺ: He completed the trust and he was sincere to the *Ummah* (in his job, in his advice, etc.). And Allāh ﷻ has praised the Prophet ﷺ for doing this job perfectly. Therefore, what we know is that it is not permissible for the Prophet ﷺ to miss out anything that is part of the *sharī'ah*, especially that which is obligatory. And here the guy has said ﷺ, "I want to know, by Allāh, teach me." And he ﷺ has told him the most important things. It would indicate that the things that were missed out were not of the *rukṇ* level and that is why when he said, "*Fakabbir*," this is the clearest proof that the *takbīr* is a *rukṇ* of the prayer. And there are other *arkān* of the prayer that will come into this.

But the real thing is that what do we think about this Companion? What did he make the mistake on? It's clear from the context of the *ḥadīth* that it wasn't the *takbīr*, he was basically up and down, up and down. He was doing that thing where he was not stopping in his *rukū'*, where he is quick up from the *sajdah*, you know how people pray as if they were kind of like pecking, like Pinocchio, all over the show—no solidity, no relaxation, no breathing, not allowing the bones to [come to rest]. And that's why the words are very important: *ḥatta taṭma'in*—until you reach the state of *ṭuma'nīnah*.

This is very important. *Ṭuma'nīnah* is what?

*Ṭuma'nīnah* has been used in the Qur'ān in different contexts, Ibrāhīm عليه السلام when he said that I am asking all these questions because I want to have *ṭuma'nīnah* in my heart. I am asking about this, how is this, how is that, so that I can have full certainty, full relaxation, full confidence, assurance—there is no issue of doubt.

Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾ (28)

"Truly it is in the remembrance of God that hearts find peace." [*Sūrat al-R'ad*: 28]

Is it not in the *dhikr* of Allāh that you find *ṭuma'nīnah* in the hearts? What's this? That the hearts find rest, tranquility, serenity, calmness. If you want a practical example of *ṭuma'nīnah* here it's stillness. Stillness is very, very important in this aspect.

There is another narration of the *ḥadīth* that is narrated by Bukhāri where the Prophet ﷺ said:

(00:58:00)

إِذَا قُمْتَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاسْبِغِ الْوُضُوءَ، ثُمَّ اسْتَقْبِلِ الْقِبْلَةَ فَكَبِّرْ

“Perfect your *wuḍū*’ and face the *Qiblah* and then *kabbir*, (make the statement of *takbīr*).”

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says that it is not valid to pray the prayer without it. It is absolutely impossible for a person to pray the prayer without it.

Now I want to have a discussion about what is it that it actually is. There’s a lot of discussion about that.

First of all, this *takbīr* is known as a *taḥrīmah*. It is also known as *takbīrat’l-iḥrām*. This was a naming that was done by the scholars—never from the Prophet ﷺ. This name was not given by the Prophet ﷺ or the Companions. This is a name that was given by the ‘*ulamā*’. The reason for that is only from the obvious aspects of the *Sunnah*.

The Prophet ﷺ said in a *ḥadīth* that is narrated by Abu Dawūd and al-Ḥākim with an authentic chain. He said:

مِفْتَاحُ الصَّلَاةِ الطُّهُورُ وَتَحْرِيمُهَا التَّكْبِيرُ

“The key to the prayer is purification and its sanctification (or the entrance into its forbidden state) is the *takbīr*.”

That’s the first and only place where the word *takbīr* or *iḥrām/taḥrīm* or *ḥarām* has been associated and that is why the scholars after that used to call it *takbīrat’l-iḥrām*—from *aḥrama/yuḥrimu/iḥrāman*. In Arabic that means to make something *ḥarām*.

Effectively what you are doing is when you say *Allāhu akbar*, you are creating a state of body, of mind, of law, of rules, where everything else becomes subsidiary to the prayer. Everything else becomes *ḥarām* compared to the state now that you are in the prayer. Not only prohibited, but then the meaning of *ḥarām* in the sanctified state—the sanctuary you are entering. Once a person has entered into this, the scholars have three opinions on what its reality is—the reality of the *takbīr* itself.

The first statement: It is not valid to enter any prayer *nafl* or *farḍ* unless you say *Allāhu akbar* by itself—nothing more or less. Without it there is no prayer. Not a variation of it, not the perfect form of it, not the definite form of it—*al-akbar*, *Allāhu’l-akbar*. No. It has to be *Allāhu akbar*. That is the only phrase. This is the position of the Ḥanbali school and the Māliki school.

Likewise, if they said *Akbar Allāh*, which is theoretically the same statement. If I said *Allāhu akbar*, Allāh is the greatest and I said: *Akbar Allāh*, that could also, with my intonation, I could indicate: The greatest, Allāh! Theoretically I could make the statement try to be close to the original. No, it is rejected. According to the correct position, the **class position**, the Ḥanbali position, the Māliki position. It has to be *Allāhu akbar* and no possibility of it being any other way. The prayer will not start in any other way.

The evidence is the *ḥadīth* of Bukhāri and Muslim that we said. The Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا قُمْتَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَكَبِّرْ

When you stand for prayer, then say *takbīr*.

The only way that anyone in history has ever said *takbīr* is to say *Allāhu akbar*. This is what has been established in *sharī‘ah*. It is the only thing that has been said by the Prophet ﷺ. Never has something different been said by the Prophet ﷺ and it is a command. So, there is no option in this other than what has just been said.

The second position is that of Imām Abu Ḥanīfah. Imām Abu Ḥanīfah said: No, it is allowed to enter the prayer by any form of praising Allāh ﷻ (this is a very famous opinion from him) that is similar to *Allāhu akbar*. It is well known that in the Ḥanafī school, a person can say *Allāh’l-‘Azīm* or *Allāh’l-Karīm* or *al-Jabbār*, etc.

What is the evidence for this? Why do the Ḥanafīs say that you don’t need to say *Allāhu akbar*?

Their famous one that you see in the Ḥanafī books is that you can say *Allāhu kabīr*. They said it is not *akbar* that is intended by the Prophet ﷺ, but that which indicates the same status of Allāh ﷻ.

The evidence of the Ḥanafī School is the statement of Allāh ﷻ saying:

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى﴾ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ﴿١٥﴾

“Prosperous are those who purify themselves, remember the name of their Lord, and pray.”

[*Sūrat al-A‘la*: 14-15]

The translation of this is in *Sūrat al-A'la*. He is the one who has succeeded who purifies himself (he is a good person and he purifies himself)—*man tazakka*—and who mentions the name of his Lord and then prays. ‘Mentions the name of his Lord’, they said that Allāh ﷻ said in the Qur’ān ‘mentions the name’, so however you mention the names is good enough. *Allāh’l-‘Aẓīm* or *Allāh’l-Karīm*, *Allāh kabīr*, anything in the meaning of *Allāhu akbar*, anything else can work. They said the prayer is valid for such a person to pray with this. They said it is *sunnah* to say *Allāhu akbar*, but they said that the prayer will start by any way a person will say it in this kind of manner.

Imām al-Shāfi‘i was in between. He said: No, it has to be *Allāhu akbar* but if a person says a version of it like *Allāhu’l-Akbar*, *al-Akbar*, then that will be acceptable. He said: If a person does a version where he says *Allāhu kabīr*, that will be acceptable, or *al-akbar*, that will be acceptable.

We have three opinions:

1. The majority and the correct position, which is the only way that the prayer starts, is by saying *Allāhu akbar*.
2. We have the Shāfi‘i position which says it can be: *Allāhu akbar*, *Allāhu’l-akbar*, *Allāhu kabīr*, *akbar Allāh*—you can have versions of it.
3. Then we have the Ḥanafi opinion which is any phrase that is similar in meaning to *akbar* can be accepted.

The correct position is the position of the majority.

What about the *ayah*? What is the response to the *ayah*?

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى﴾ ﴿وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى﴾

“Prosperous are those who purify themselves, remember the name of their Lord, and pray.”

[*Sūrat al-A'la*: 14-15]

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mukḥṭār al-Shinqīṭi said that the vast majority of the *mufasssirīn* have said that this refers to *‘Id*, that this is referring to the one who has paid *zakāt’l-fitr* on *laylat’l- ‘Id*. And that:

﴿وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ﴾

That is now those people making *takbīrat* l-*Īd*—so this is for the actual prayer.

And:

فَصَلِّ

*Faṣalla* is the prayer of *Īd*.

So that *ayah* actually means something completely different. Even if it didn't and it was general, the *ayah* was talking about Islam and *ṣalāh* in general, the *ḥadīth* make it very, very clear. *Fakabbir* can only be a command that only indicates the actual *takbīr* itself. That is why that is the position. A person has to absolutely say *Allāhu akbar* and nothing else.

That I think is very important for us because this has an impact upon the ruling for a new Muslim. Is it something that has to be said by the tongue? What about someone who is a new Muslim? What do they do? Is it something that has to be said in the heart as well? Is it more than just a statement of the tongue?

The answer is yes. When you say *Allāhu akbar*, you are saying it in three ways the scholars said: (1) you are saying it upon the tongue, (2) you understand the meaning, (3) your heart is expressing it as well.

If a new Muslim were to come who couldn't speak Arabic, what would they do? That person, the only thing they can't do is say *Allāhu akbar* in the Arabic (we are just going to assume). But they can know what it means, and they can say it in their hearts. So, they will definitely at least say something that indicates to them the same meaning of *Allāhu akbar*.

That is not the same for a person who is mute, a person who can't speak. If a person who can't speak has to do *ṣalāh*, there are some scholars said that he should pretend to say *Allāhu akbar* [just moves his lips], which is the biggest nonsense ever. Because a person is meant to *aṣl* say it in his heart. If he says it in his heart and he can't speak it in his tongue, he is forgiven for what he can't speak upon his tongue because Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ﴾

“Be mindful of God as much as you can.” [ *Sūrat al-Ṭaghābun*: 16 ]

Have *taqwa* of Allāh ﷻ as much as you possibly can.



## 32. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 6: THE DESCRIPTION OF PRAYER

We are in the chapter of the *takbīr*. We mentioned last week a couple of things about it and I want to finish off some of the points. The one thing I missed from *Sharḥ al-Mumtī*, the text that relevant to this is:

وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

And he says *Allāhu akbar*.

This is after having established the prayer line. Last week we spoke about different opinions with respect to the ‘*ulamā*’, as to whether you can enter the prayer with words other than *Allāhu akbar*. We said only the Ḥanafis have this position and it is not acceptable, neither is the Shāfi‘i position which is that you can only use *Allāhu akbar* but you can change the order. We said no, the Ḥanbalis and Mālikis have it correct. It has to be exactly *Allāhu akbar* in that way, in that manner, no change, no equivalent meanings, no changing order—that is a condition. That’s because the Prophet ﷺ has only been reported doing that, because the Prophet ﷺ insisted that is one of the key actions of the prayer—one of the pillars.

We also mentioned that if a person is unable to say something like that, what do they do? We said he tries his best, but he does not fake it because the *takbīr* is more than just being said on the tongue or the lips—it’s a meaning, it’s an expression, it’s a feeling, it’s a belief, it’s a living when you exclaim the greatness of Allāh. It is not just on the lips. The lips are just one aspect. If the lips fail you, then the rest of it has to work. This idea that some scholars said you believe it in your heart but brag it on the lips, there’s no such thing. If you can’t say it or you’re mute or whatever, then you don’t say it on the lips, you believe it in the heart and that is sufficient.

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says at the bottom of page 20. He says: The author says, “He says *Allāhu akbar*”. What is the meaning of ‘says’? What is the definition of ‘say’? Say means to speak and speak means to use your tongue and what is the condition?

As many people will know when you are taught as kids you are told that you need to hear yourself, you need to hear yourself when you recite for it to be considered.

Shaykh says:

في هذا خلاف بين العلماء فمنهم من قال: لا بُدَّ أن يكون له صوت يُسمع به نفسه. وهو المذهب

He says that in this issue there is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars. From the scholars some of them said it must have a sound. The position of the Ḥanbali school, the established, *mu'tamad* opinion of the Ḥanbali school is that he must be able to hear himself. If he can't hear himself then the recitation is invalid. If the recitation is a condition for the prayer, so if it were recitation of a *sūrah* then it wouldn't matter technically. But if it is the *takbīr* or the *Fātiḥah* (as we are going to find out) these are essential aspects, *arkān*, of the prayer therefore if you didn't recite it and therefore the prayer would be invalid. According to them that is a condition—that you have to be able to hear yourself. They add the caveat that even if the person next to you doesn't hear you, you have to be able to hear yourself.

فإن نطق بدون أن يُسمع نفسه فلا عبرة بهذا النطق

If he recites and he knows he recites but he can't hear his recitation, then this recitation is not considered—it has not been given a legal position. Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn comes straight in and says this is a very weak statement. The correct position:

والصحيح: أنه لا يشترط أن يُسمع نفسه

It is not a condition that he has to be able to hear himself. As long as he knows that he recited it and fulfilled the conditions of the recitation, meaning the *mukhārij* have been felt. Of course, *aḥkām'l-tajwīd* is a big thing these days. You need to know that there are different aspects to knowing how to recite. *Mukhārij* is the plural of the word *makhraj* and *makhraj* means an exit point and in the art of recitation, the *makhraj* is referring to the actual place and manner that a particular sound and letter is recited when you read Arabic and then of course, more so when you recite Qur'ān because that becomes a more important science. If a person knows he recited and said it but didn't hear himself, Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn is saying then that recitation is fine because there could be different reasons, maybe his sound is weak, maybe he is ill. And he maybe he is in a very loud area—there's lots of sound and he is actually reciting quite loud, but he can't hear himself. It's not even a case of feeling like you are reciting, the Ḥanbalis are saying you have to actually hear yourself and to be honest there is not even any evidence for that.

Shaykh says so long as a person is absolutely sure and certain that the sound has been made, that the words have been recited then we are okay.

فالراجح أن جميع أقواله معتبرة، وأنه لا يُشترط أكثر مما دلت التَّصوُّصُ على اشتراطه وهو القول.

It's clear that he is okay, and it is clear that he has fulfilled that which the general evidences prove, and that is that he just has to say. He makes a nice point here. He says when we tell a person, 'Say this,' then we say, 'Say it so you can hear yourself,' this is *ziyādah* 'al'l-aṣl—you are actually asking him to say something more because what you are saying is to say it loudly. Then you define loud and you will say, 'loud enough for yourself,' or 'loud enough for the person next to you' or 'loud enough for everyone to hear'—these are all extra parts. When the *ḥadīth* says, 'say' then the saying is just to say it. It is not a condition to actually have to make it loud enough to hear yourself.

Obviously, people do that to be able to do that to keep concentration. That is fine, and it is okay for you to be able to increase that because that is a human response and the issue is flexible. But there is a problem if you become so loud you start to disturb someone. You shouldn't be doing it so loud so that the person next to you is getting disturbed.

Then we spoke about the words, that it has to be *Allāhu akbar*, and not *Allāhu'l-Akbar* or *Allāhu'l-Ajal*, etc. because the *dhikr* is *'ibādah* and the *'ibādah* is *tawqīfiyyah*. *Tawqīfiyyah* we have spoken about before, meaning from the word *waqf* meaning that it is not something you can make up yourself and make your own decision to change. When it is revealed from Allāh ﷻ as an act of worship, then it has to be brought exactly in that way, it has to be done in that fashion because if you don't, the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ comes into play.

مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ

“Whoever does an action that is not from our actions then it is rejected.”

So, someone who is making it up as he is going along, especially when the Prophet ﷺ has never ever given a version of the *takbīr* other than *Allāhu akbar* then what on earth are you actually trying to say?

What about if a person says *Allāhu'l-Akbar*? What do you think?

Student: It's the same?

Ustādh: That is why the discussion has to be said. As an Arab he said it's the same.

Student: No, it's the same argument. You either accept that you can have a synonym, or you use the same words.

Ustādh: Good. You are either going to say you can use anything else, or you have to stick to the exact words themselves. That's fine.

But let's just say that *al-Akbar* and *akbar* are the same thing. Are they the same thing?

To break it down: *Allāhu al-Akbar*, which would be *Allāhu'l-Akbar*, which to be honest you hear people saying anyway because they can't say it right. Or *Allāhu akbar*. What is the difference between the two?

What does *Allāhu'l-Akbar* mean?

Student: Allāh is the greatest.

Ustādh: Allāh is the greatest?

(00:13:00)

What does *Allāhu akbar* mean?

Student: Allāh is bigger.

Ustādh: Allāh is bigger.

What does *Allāhu akbar* mean?

Student: [inaudible]

What does *ism tafḍīl* mean? What does *af'ala* as a verb mean then? If you say 'Allah is Great' that's *Allāh kabīr*—Allāh is Great or Allāh is Big.

Student: *Allāhu akbar* describes that He is greater than everything and *Allāhu'l-Akbar* is more like 'He is the Great One' or something like that. Greater encompasses everything and...

Ustādh: Because of what reason, from an Arabic grammatical point?

Student: The structure of the word?

Student: Is it *mawṣūf ṣifāh*?

Ustādh: No.

Ustādh: You are there, you have explained it, but what is the reason for what you have just said? It's a simple reason.

Student: The *alif lām*.

Ustādh: What about the *alif lām*?

Student: The *alif lām* means 'the'.

Ustādh: Yes, it does. But she is saying that the other one is greater. Which one is better?

Students: *Akbar*.

Ustādh: Why?

Student: Because it is not definitive.

Ustādh: What is that called when it is not definitive?

Student: *Nakirah*.

Ustādh: *Nakirah*. Correct.

The *tankīr* of the word, we've said before and you will see this all over the Qur'ān, that when you find a phrase which is left undefined—*nakirah*, without an *alif* [and] *lām*, because *alif* [and] *lām* makes it 'the'. The argument basically is, if you say *Allāhu'l-Akbar*, technically speaking *al-Akbar* is good because it means you are the perfect. But, in actual fact what's going on when you are saying *al-Akbar* is that you are kind of saying that a person could be *akbar* and Allāh is *al-Akbar*. It is like you are comparing two kinds of states and saying that one is actually bigger than the other one. You would use *al-Akbar* to basically say that he is actually bigger than that person. You specify the discussion, and by specifying the discussion, what do you unwillingly do? You restrict Allāh ﷻ—that is the beauty of the Arabic language.

Whereas, if you keep it as *Allāhu akbar*, Allāh is Greater, and then don't even include the *al-mufaḍḍal*, that which is being compared to, you are leaving it open, then it basically means that Allāh is absolutely greater than everything and anything and absolutely the perfect, etc. It is ironic in the Arabic language, that by making it indefinite, you make Allāh ﷻ supremely and the most definitive greatest of all. That is why *Allāhu akbar* remains like that, other than the argument that you just heard that the Prophet ﷺ never ever recited *al-Akbar* anyway.

Then back to the bottom of page 22 to finish off this particular section. Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn [asks], what does it actually mean *Allāhu akbar*? What does the phrase actually intend when we say that? Shaykh says, that Allāh ﷻ is greater than every single thing in His self, in His names, and in His characteristics.

أَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى أَكْبَرُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فِي ذَاتِهِ وَأَسْمَائِهِ وَصِفَاتِهِ، وَكُلُّ مَا تَحْتَمِلُهُ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةُ مِنْ مَعْنَى.

Allāh ﷻ is greater than absolutely everything in Himself (as a self), in His names, and in His characteristics. He is greater than absolutely everything possible, and every single possible meaning that the words and realities that they can actually have, Allāh is perfect and greater in that as well.

Allāh says:

﴿وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ سُبْحَانَهُ﴾

"These people have no grasp of God's true measure. On the Day of Resurrection, the whole earth will be in His grip. The heavens will be rolled up in His right hand– Glory be to Him! He is far above the partners they ascribe to Him!" [*Sūrat al-Zumar*: 67]

Allāh says in *Sūrat al-Zumar* that they did not describe Allāh ﷻ in the correct way meaning that they did not do justice to Him ﷻ in how He should be described, in how He should be seen and considered. I translated this to be more accurate, so that we get a proper feel for this.

"These people have no grasp of Allāh's true measure." That is a beautiful description in the Qur'ān in *Sūrat al-Zumar* verse 67, of what we mean when we say *Allāhu akbar*.

"On the day of Resurrection, the whole earth will be in His grip." Think about that. We are talking about discussions of great, and power, and big, and important, etc. "The whole earth will be in His grip and the heavens (which is absolutely everything else) will be rolled up in His right hand. Glory be to Him."

Allāh also says:

﴿يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ وَعْدًا عَلَيْنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ﴾

"On that Day, We shall roll up the skies as a writer rolls up [his] scrolls. We shall reproduce creation just as We produced it the first time: this is Our binding promise. We shall certainly do all these things." [*Sūrat al-Anbiyā'*: 104]

"The day that we shall roll up the skies like a scribe rolls up his scrolls after he is finished." Just as a person finishes his writing, he holds up his scroll and waits for to dry and then he just rolls it up. Of course, there is nothing we can use as a parable to compare Allāh to, especially using His creation, but Allāh gives a metaphor for us to at

least [gain] some context. On that day, the entire heavens will just be rolled up like a scroll rolls up. "We shall reproduce creation just as We produced it the first time. This is our binding promise, and we shall certainly do all [of] these things." Again, an expression of the power of Allāh ﷻ. Of course, we only really get that feeling when we start to study [the] Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and the *tafāsīr*.

It is encouraged for us to read *ḥadīth*. Always read *ḥadīth*, because it gives you a very good close connection to what Allāh ﷻ has allowed us to know about Him. It is a mercy. Imagine He didn't tell us about these things—that the size of the *kursi* to the 'arsh of Allāh ﷻ is like the ring which is thrown into the desert. Anyone who sees these programmes today and they see the vast expanses of these deserts, it is not something which the mind can grasp. That is why the word *akbar* is perfect, not *al-Akbar*, trying to restrict Allāh that He is better than him, so he is *al-Akbar*. He is great, *Allāhu akbar*, everything you are about to think of, everything that you consider, everything that you thought you did a really great job of, every attempt, every modelling, every quantum computer model that you used, every scientist, every kind of development of the size of this and greatness of that, all of it is a poor attempt because Allāh has said:

﴿مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ﴾

"They have no grasp of God's true measure." [ *Sūrat al-Ḥajj*: 74 ]

That is very single CERN, and every single reactor, and every single splitting of the atom, and every attempt to try and understand the power of the creation, the size of the creation, which is happening all the time at the cost of trillions. After all of that, Allāh still says, and they did not give Allāh His true measure. They did not judge Him correctly. They did not understand Him correctly. That is why *Allāhu akbar* is great.

That is why, when Ibn Taymiyyah spoke about the *takbīr* in the prayer, he said that, what is sometimes so important in the prayer is to understand that the *takbīrat'l-iḥrām*, which is the entrance, has partners with the *takbīrat'l-intiqāl* in the middle of the prayer. Because when a person starts the prayer and then *shayṭān* comes to him and starts whispering—you start to get lazy, you start to forget where you were, your mind starts to wander elsewhere etc. That *shayṭān* at that moment is taking your mind elsewhere. At that moment you have made the subconscious decision to say that Allāh is not as important as my lunch, as my work, as my whatever I need to do, whatever I need to find, whatever I need to plan, because it comes to your mind. You made that decision because Allāh ﷻ is looking at you in the prayer.

The Prophet ﷺ said in the *ḥadīth* of Tirmidhi, that when a person starts to pray, then Allāh ﷻ is with them in *ma'īyyah*, which is not physical, but He is with him in his presence, looking at that person directly, and He continues to look until the slave turns



away. The slave never turns away physically. Nobody does a 90-degree turn saying, *'I am not looking at you Allāh.'* It is a turning away of the heart and the mind. Something came in at that moment in time, and you made a subconscious decision that it is more important, or more fun, or easier, or more relaxing to think about that thing, or to enjoy that thing, or stress, or worry about that thing. It doesn't matter whether it is positive or negative or good or bad. The point was that it was more important than your divine audience right now. At that moment you decide that something is greater.

So, one of the beautiful wisdoms of the *takbīr*, and Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn will ask a question in a minute about why is it that we have this *takbīr*. And we don't know, but we can give some wisdoms. One of them is that it brings us back into the game—Okay, listen, I need to now re get control of this prayer, *'Allāhu akbar,'* and then you into *rukūʿ*. And when you go into *rukūʿ* you now reset everything that you were doing with respect to your mindset. Now you are in a different chosen act of worship, where you are just proving to Allāh ﷻ that you are willing to sacrifice, you are willing to obey.

When you think of the prayer itself, the prayer has not been legislated because of intrinsically the prayer. Just like charity has not been legislated because of charity and fasting has not been legislated because of fasting. All of these are expressions of one thing, and that is sincerity and discipline and sacrifice. Basically, Islam—submission. Are you willing to listen to Allāh and obey Him? And if you are, then Allāh wants you to do that by submitting through forms of expression, whether that is a prayer, whether that is fasting, whether that is *Ḥajj*, whether that is *ʿUmrah*. Sometimes He will mix it up, so He will change the descriptions and the types. So, *ʿUmrah* is going to be different to *Ḥajj* and the *janāzah* prayer will be different to the *farḍ* prayer, and the *farḍ* from the *nāfilah*, etc. If a person does not see it like this, he is always going to be very peripheral from his religion.

(00:26:00)

These are the people you often see get invited to talk shows and radio shows etc. when they come up with stupid answers to: Why do you wear *ḥijāb*? *'It allows me to not have to wash my hair in the morning.'*

This is the stupidity of people representing us and our religion publicly.

Why do you pray five times a day? *'Well, this is Allāh's grace upon us, it allows us to practice aerobic exercises and stretch ourselves and achieve yoga thingies.'*

You see all these people, do all these studies about the physiological benefits of *sajdah*. Are you flipping kidding me? You think that the *sajdah* was obligated because of physiological benefits? Or was it to test whether you are willing to completely humiliate yourself? Because you would never, ever do that to a human being. It would be complete and utter humiliation or defeat or whatever to do it to a human being. Allāh is saying: I want you to do it to Me, and by the way, it will not be humiliation for you it will be perfection for you as a human being. That's the motivation.

But the truth is that if we didn't know the *ḥadīth* or had the motivation, it's still a command, and obedience which is being judged ultimately, not the *ṣalāh* or the manner—these are details which are very flexible. Because if we come across a paraplegic. If we come across someone who is mute, we are not going to put any of these obligations upon them. If we come across someone who has no money, we're not going to make them pay a single penny. If we come across a woman who doesn't have any money or whatever, she's not going to even think about *Ḥajj* or give charity or anything. If we come across a new Muslim and enters into *jihād*, prayer is irrelevant. You come across Ḥanḍalah who enters the battle and he is in a state of *junub*, we don't even care about *ghusl*—the angels will make *ghusl* for you. All these acts of worship are expressions of a single, focal requirement from the slaves, and that is obedience, sacrifice, and submission.

It's very, very important that when you're in an act of worship and you forget that value, you forget that feeling, that you remind yourself by the *takbīr*, 'Allāhu akbar. *What am I doing? Let me get myself back in the game here. Let me get myself focused back again.*'

This will now move on then to what... because the next part (I am jumping the gun, but I just want to finish the thread) how do we understand the reasons behind these things is difficult because it's human interpretation. Like why do we raise our hands for example? I do think there is a connection of the raising of the hands. Many scholars have said many types of things and all of them could be as good as the other or as rubbish as the other because there's no evidence from the *Sunnah* of why we raise our hands. But I do think that it is almost like an expression, an opening up, just like the *ta'zīm* of Allāh ﷻ—that is how I feel anyway. That's why when I raise my hands, I get very irritated when I see people who do this just nonsense [slightly lifting their hands at the waist level], playing with their hands. So instead of raising their hands properly, they just go like that, basically Gulf Arabs—they get so used to the game that their hands don't even move from their place.

But there's a danger there. I've made a judgement on that person, very irritated by that person because in my mind, I have a mental belief of what is actually meant to be happening here. So, I always like to raise my hands and hold it a little as well, but that's dangerous because now you're starting to move out of the *sunnah*. Because do we have any evidence from the Prophet ﷺ that when he used to lift his hands that there was a pause? No, there's no evidence. We could have a debate that what does 'raising' mean. Does raising mean slow? Does raising mean flip? What is that? What is this act? 'Raising' means to raise, right? But what would describe that [action of raising the hands to the level of the shoulder]? I don't know, and I can't even think of an English word let alone an Arabic one.

I do think that it can be justified to have that kind of idea to hold it [the hands] a little bit is acceptable because it generally comes under the concept of raising. But I do believe that the *ḥadīth* kept it so simple with no description that a person shouldn't play around with holding up the hands. Because then a person could technically say

that I can follow the *ḥadīth* but then keep my hands up here like this [raised up and stretched in front of him]. If you were to try to use too much *‘aql* to try and explain these things, and you were to say for example that the raising of the hands is my kind of accepting of submission. Imagine a lion was coming to attack you or to jump at you, you’d put your hands out to protect your face. If a lion were jumping at you, you won’t leave your hands down. Even if you’re trying to stave it off from your body, you wouldn’t put them here [lowered], you would put your hands up there [held up in front of you]. This is the problem with the *‘aql* when it starts to get too wild. If you start to justify that this is a kind of me expressing complete and utter submission to what is in front of me and therefore when I raise my hands, I’m doing this to Allāh ﷻ—it gets silly. A person can turn around and say that is just nonsense because once you try to rationally prove something, you can be rationally disproved. That’s why it’s always best to stay safe and stick to divine reasoning—there’s no understanding, we don’t have any evidences, we don’t know why, and that’s it.

This is also something not related to *takbīrat’l-iḥrām*, but later as you all know, the Ḥanafis don’t raise their hands during the *ṣalāh*. The other *madhāhib* do, Mālik doesn’t either. They also have ridiculous statements as well. This is what happens when you lose the plot, when you start to use too much *‘aql*. You’ll see some in their books some classic lines because the *ḥadīth* is in *Bukhārī*, so it’s a very big issue for the Ḥanafis on how to deal with the *ḥadīth* raising of the hands. So, they’ve always had different approaches. You won’t hear this from top scholars of course. The top scholars will go for the *ḥadīth* and focus on the *ḥadīth*. But those that are not but are louder voices said things like, ‘*Well in the early years of the da‘wah, the Prophet ﷺ when he was giving da‘wah to the Companions, they were weak in their faith and they used to carry idols underneath their arms.*’ Honestly, it’s in their books! ‘*So, the Prophet ﷺ legislated the raising of the hands so that the idols would fall down.*’ Can you believe that coming from a *madh-hab*, a school of *fiqh*? But it’s expected once you reduce these arguments to rational arguments—they’re not rational. You either take it, or you don’t, because it’s in the Qur’an and *Sunnah*.

Shaykh says:

مسألة: كيف تُنطق بهذه الكلمة؟

What he’s intending is the *ṣalāh* within the *ṣalāh*. So, Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says: How do you pronounce the *takbīr* during the prayer? What they are talking about is do you change the form of... The word is *Allāhu akbar*.

Let’s spend a few seconds on that. The *lafẓ’l-jalālah*, the Divine Name, the Exalted Name, which is always ‘Allāh’ (the *lām*) is always said *mufakhkham* (thick) in the *takbīr*. In an *ayah*, if preceded by a *kasrah*, it’s pronounced *muraqqaq*, lightly. But when an imām says *Allāhu akbar*, it’s always thick. Second, on the *kāf* of *akbar*, a lot of people make the

mistake of doing a *qalqalah*, a bounce. This *qalaqalah*, this bounce, which happens on a *qāf*. We want to hear that *kāf* but not with what we call a reverberation. The final one is a strong, *mufakhkham*, 'bar' in *akbar*, and the *ra* can't be light because of the *fathah* before it on the *ba*, and it can't be recited lightly.

Student: Can it be in *muraqqaq* in another *qirā'ah*?

Ustādh: I don't think it is possible. Allāh knows best. I think the *ra* [in *akbar*] cannot possibly be recited *muraqqaq* in any because of the *fathah* before it.

So, that's the recitation of *akbar*.

The question that Shaykh 'Uthaymīn is saying is something that Shaykh Abdul Ghaffar and I actually had a discussion about years ago, and that is the pronunciation of *akbar* at different aspects of the prayer. Everyone recognises because it is a layman kind of thing, that they know that they are late to the prayer or this prayer is over because the imām from the last *sajdah* elongated the *Allāhu akbar*. Whereas in the first *rak'ah* when he is standing up [it is not an elongated *Allāhu akbar*].

So, that is the question now: Does the *takbīr* change or not?

(00:39:00)

If you think about the opening *takbīr*, it is a louder one, it's a longer one. But when you are in *sajdah* when you are going down, it's *Allāhu akbar* [slow and long], [then when coming up from *sajdah*] *Allāhu akbar* [is quicker] also the *Allāhu akbar* [going back into *sajdah* is quick]. There are clear differences, not just differences in length but in intonations as well, where you are putting emphasis. And if you are then stopping for two *rak'ah* you are kind of mentally say to yourself, '*I want to make it clear that I am stopping for two rak'ah and this is not the end*,' so you will say *Allāhu akbar* (quickly, not elongated).

Student: Do they do this everywhere or is it some regions?

Ustādh: No, no, it's a human thing, not a culture.

Student: I think, correct me, I think Moroccans and the West don't do this.

Ustādh: No, I think humans do it based upon a decision to try and control, couple of reasons, as Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn identifies, (1) to control the *jamā'ah*, what that means is let everyone have the best chance of knowing where we are so you kind of feel in the game. And there is some sense there, especially from the sisters' point of view, think about it from sisters' point of view, they are behind a barrier, they have no idea. Imagine. Honestly, I have no idea how women pray. I swear, I have no idea. In any *masjid* when you are walking in, with a barrier and you are lining up and you hear *Allāhu akbar* and you haven't got a dally which *takbīr* the imām just said. He could have said *Allāhu akbar* and you have no clue whether that *Allāhu akbar* is to go to a *rukū'*, *Allāhu akbar* is to go to a *sujūd* or *Allāhu akbar* to be the penultimate *takbīr* before the

*taslīm*. That's a very real problem. So how do the imāms try to mitigate that? What I can definitely see myself justifying myself knowing that I have sisters behind me, going *Allāhu akbar* (elongated one) and definitely that will be the one going for *rukū'* or for going for *sujūd*. And never using that in any other place. And definitely at the end, after praying four *rak'ah* *Ḥuḥr Allāhu akbar* (elongated) there is no doubt anyone hears that and says that this prayer is finished. He is basically kind of said, 'Right, that's enough, we are done.' So that's the human justification that I am trying to help people who are coming late. Now, Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn is going to have his say on this.

So, he says some of the scholars they said:

يكره تمطيط التكبير

The word is *tamṭiṭ'l-takbīr*, meaning to elongate the *takbīr*.

حتى في النهوض من السجود إلى القيام مع طول النهوض

Especially when it comes to long time getting up, long time going down into *sajdah*. You will see a person they will come up from *sajdah* they will say *Allāhu akbar* (long and loud, prolonging until they have completely stood up) because you know they might be on their knees and trying to get the strength to get up and they will keep going, going, going until they are standing up.

وحتى في الهوي إلى السجود.

And, and, and....

These scholars said it is *makrūh* because it has not been narrated from the *Sunnah* and therefore it is a person who is doing it and that is something which has been stated by the *fuqahā'*.

Shaykh says:

ولكن؛ الظاهر — والله أعلم — أن الأمر في هذا واسع ما لم يُخل بالمعنى

“Allāh knows best, but in my opinion, I think there is some flexibility in the issue as long as you don’t change the meaning,” as long as you don’t start playing around with the words. And that’s important, we have had this discussion before, we don’t need to take more bad deeds of others and lose all my good deeds of cussing the *mu’dhdhins* of the Ḥaram. But the big problem there is that you know they are going *ash-hadu anna la* (elongating the *alif* in Allāh) and you have lost now about five minutes ago the word Allāh, it got left behind the word and now we just went into the, ‘Aaaaaaaa.’ That’s now no longer Allāh. You have now changed the meaning. You have now just gone into a musical sound and you left *lafẓ’l-jalālah* behind. So as long as you don’t go into the issue of changing the meaning then Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn is like: I think there is some flexibility people elongating the *takbīr* when they are going up to down and down to up—he specifies that specifically. He says that upon the condition that no people believe that its elongation is better than the shortening:

مَدَّهَا بِأَفْضَلٍ مِنْ قَصَرِهَا

So like if you pray behind the imām and he was going like *Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar , Allāhu akbar* (short) and he was doing that all the way through the prayer, not meaning rushing but that was the length and you come out thinking, ‘*Man, the guy didn’t give us any heads up, they guy didn’t help us out, it was all a monotonous kind of prayer.*’ Now if you come out thinking that, then you are to blame because there is no excellence in the imām saying *Allāhu akbar* (elongated). There is no excellence—that’s his point that he is making. They are the same.

كَمَا يَتَوَهَّمُهُ بَعْضُ النَّاسِ

Unfortunately, some people that’s what they think. Then he says because the problem is some people say that for the *rukū’* you have to have a certain type of *takbīr* and for the *sujūd* you have a certain type of *takbīr*:

لِلرُّكُوعِ هَيْئَةٌ فِي التَّكْبِيرِ، وَلِلسُّجُودِ هَيْئَةٌ وَلِلجُلُوسِ هَيْئَةٌ، وَلِلتَّشَهُدِ هَيْئَةٌ، وَبَيْنَ السَّجْدَتَيْنِ؛

And it’s true what he actually says. We do perceive certain types of *takbīr* for between the *sajdahs* and the ones from the *tashahhuds* and so on and so forth.

لَأَجْلِ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْمَأْمُومُ خَلْفَكَ آلَةً مَتَحَرِّكَةً



This is where he actually makes a really good point. Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says it’s almost like people are waiting for these *takbīrāt* and see them as kind of an instrument of movement, meaning that it’s there to make them move in a certain way. So, the sharp kind of *Allāhu akbar*, *Allāhu akbar*, you know that coming up from *sajdah* and going back to *sajdah*, is like the short sharp ‘get up, get back down again’. Whereas the one that is coming down from *qiyām* to *sajdah* *Allāhu akbar*, is like a slow, long descent and you are meant to kind of flow with the [*takbīr*]. He says that’s wrong. And he says:

لأن المأموم إذا صارت التكبيرات تختلف فإنه يتابع هذا التكبير،

The people then start to become more connected to the sounds than the prayer itself so much so that the heart starts to disappear from the actual prayer itself. A person becomes so connected that they themselves will move accordingly to the *takbīr* they hear as opposed to the sound they make. We have a certain guilty party here in this imām. Sometimes, he will do a *takbīr* in a certain way and people will become confused.

Student: That’s good. You need to do this.

Ustādh: That’s what Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says. He says that’s why it’s good to not follow this system.

Like I have prayed behind Shaykh Abdul Ghaffar and he has done the fourth classic that we all understand [to be] the fourth closing *takbīr* on the third *rak‘ah* and everyone has sat down, and he stood straight up. And the people know for certain that he is on the third *rak‘ah*, but they have sat down. I am not talking about a mistake from Shaykh where he is hesitating, and he is not sure whether it’s the third or the fourth. He knows, everyone knows, it’s a short prayer. It’s not been a long, long prayer that there is confusion. Everyone knows that this is the third *rak‘ah* and we are meant to stand up and imām has stood up, but he has done the *takbīr* of *Allāhu akbar* (elongated) and he has actually stood up, the cheeky Pak! And everyone is confused and sitting down because they are saying, ‘*But this is the takbīr of sitting down. And the imām is standing up.*’ And despite knowing that... and that’s what Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says that this is what happens to people. *Wallāhi* I have seen it myself, in this *masjid*, let alone other *masājid*. And most imāms who do this are not aware of the *fiqh* issues they are just doing it out of like you know, ‘*I guess this is how I help people.*’ Whereas Shaykh and I have sat down and discussed the *fiqh* of this before. And that goes to show that in a *masjid* where there is knowledge and where there is understanding, people do it.

So, Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn is spot on to make a point of this. He says, actually what should happen that:



## صار المأموم قد أحضر قلبه وفكره، يُخشى أن يقوم في موضع الجلوس

This person he basically loses the plot where he is. And that's why Shaykh says it is important for people to get rid of this act to make people scared of losing track of where they are in the prayer. He is absolutely right there by the way. Because there are so many people, especially elderly, who come in for the prayer every day, the five timers, the front row folks, it becomes an automatic thing. You have to understand where that comes from. We enjoy a better prayer because we are working, and we come and enjoy the prayer, we come, and we are looking forward to it. Whereas you have the people who are there every single day, five times a day, their mentality is different. They come in and go into the prayer, same old, same old. So, they become very attached and used to the form of the *takbīr* and they can switch off and not need to worry. This is the point, they can switch off and they know that sound will keep them in check. Now, imagine a new imām comes, or the imām basically says, '*That's it. I am just going to do equal takbīr lengths,*' that guy now has to be present. He has to now be thinking, '*Right, I have to be really concentrating here,*' and that of course is the *maqṣad* of the prayer. So, it is actually a requirement sometimes. And that is a really nice point that Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn makes, he says that outside of the legal discussion there is a practical one that's needed, which is that sometimes you require the imām to do something to change the game, to make people more focused.

Shaykh then says:

## وأهمُّ شيءٍ

Actually, more important than all of that is to follow the *Sunnah*. And the fact that the Prophet ﷺ didn't change it and the *muṣallīn* will become more present in the prayer then it is good to keep it short without the changing of the lengths. And that's basically everything on the *takbīr*.

(00:52:00)

Q: Reciting *ṣalāh* with voice is not a condition so what about moving lips? Is it required?

A: Yes, because it is not possible to recite some words or some letters whilst your maintaining your lips closed so it is not the voice which is the condition, it is that the letters are pronounced, and the lips are required for pronunciation.

Q: I take the contraceptive pill, so I have a very regular period. For the past year I have noticed that after my usual break of five days I begin to bleed again after I have relations. At first, I used to ignore and pray but sometimes it lasts a couple of days and it feels like *ḥayḍ*, but I'm not too sure.

A: There is not enough information in this question.

Student: She is not praying sometimes after the five days and she feels like she should.

Ustādh: The usual break is the break in the pill.

Student: [inaudible] carry on praying but because it is happening she feels like it is menstruation.

A: The problem here is that the menstruation is not based on the five days of the pill free period but rather upon whatever happens that is what the ruling is based upon. You then need to make determination on the actual blood itself, the rules of menstrual blood and non-menstrual blood then come into play and not necessarily a length of time. There needs to be a discerning between the two types of blood thus it requires more detail it is very difficult to answer menstruation questions like that.

He says:

ويقولُ "اللهُ أكبرُ" رافعاً يَدَيْهِ

He then says, 'Allāhu akbar' raising his hands.

Whilst raising his hands—that is the state that a person is in when they say *Allāhu akbar*.

What is the evidence of that? A number of *ḥadīth*, in fact we have over fifty *ḥadīth* that authentically narrate the raising of the hands of the Prophet ﷺ when it comes to the prayer, especially so when it comes to the beginning of the prayer. Because some of them mentioned the beginning only, some of them mentioned three, and some of them mentioned four points in the prayer. The raising of the hands in the prayer has been narrated from sixty *ṣaḥābah*, sixty of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ, that is why it is considered to be a *mutawātir* act, meaning that it is not possible for all of these Companions to have colluded and lied about it or made a mistake on the issue. Far too many Companions, at far too many different time zones, at far too many different locations doing a singular act in a regular fashion make it impossible from a physical way for it be a false act.

One of the most interesting things is that even the scholars that differed over the raising of the hands basically (Mālikis and Ḥanafis versus Shāfi'is Ḥanbalis and the rest of the salaf), even the scholars that did not raise their hands within the prayer, they agreed that it is a *sunnah* to raise the hands at the beginning of the *ṣalāh*. None of the scholars that are considered from the people of *fiqh* considered it to be an obligation to raise the hands. Evidence, the *ḥadīth al-mūsi fi ṣalātihi*, (the *ḥadīth* we did last week) when the

man said, "Teach me oh Prophet ﷺ because I do not know other than which I have already tried three times." The Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Stand up, *fakabbir*, (say the *takbīr*) and then recite the Qur'ān..." This *ḥadīth* does not say 'raise your hands'. This is strong enough for us to understand therefore that the raising of the hands in a *sunnah* and not an obligation.

There are, as I said, fifty plus *ḥadīth*, sixty plus Companions, *mutawātir* act. The most famous of the *ḥadīth* are two *ḥadīth* narrated by Imām al-Bukhārī that Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn narrates at the top of page 26. He says, for example the *ḥadīth* of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ؓ, may Allāh be pleased with him and his father that the Prophet ﷺ

كان يرفعُ يديه حذو مَنْكبيه؛ إذا افتتح الصلاة، وإذا كَبَّرَ للركوع، وإذا رفع رأسه من الركوع

"[The Prophet ﷺ] would raise his hands to the level of his shoulders when he would open the prayer, when he would make *takbīr* and go into *rukū'*, and when he would lift his head coming up from *rukū'*."

This *ḥadīth* has been narrated by al-Bukhārī in the Chapter of *Adhān*, the chapter titled: Raising of the Hands When You Make *Takbīr*, When You Go for *Rukū'*, and When You Come Back Up (*ḥadīth* number 739). It has also been narrated by Imām Muslim in the Chapter of Prayer (*ḥadīth* 390).

The other *ḥadīth* which is famous is also on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar ؓ, that the Prophet ﷺ

يرفعُ يديه إذا قام من الجلسة للشَّهْدِ الأول

"[The Prophet ﷺ] would raise his hands when he would stand up from the first sitting, i.e. after two *rak'ah* in a four *rak'ah* prayer."

That is also narrated by Bukhārī in the Chapter of *Adhān* as well *ḥadīth* number 739.

This is something which indicates that from the *ṣaḥīḥ sunnah* there are four positions that the hands are raised according to the majority of scholars and as I said sixty of the Companions, a *mutawātir* act, fifty plus *ḥadīth*, which cannot deny this practice. These four positions are:

1. At the beginning of the prayer, when you say *Allāhu akbar*.
2. When you go for *rukū'*.

3. When you come back from *rukūʿ*.
4. When you stand up after the first *tashahhud* i.e. in *Ẓuhr*, *ʿAṣr*, *Maghrib* and *ʿIshāʾ*, when you are standing up after the first *tashahhud*.

These are the positions or the places where a person will [raise their hands].

The next question that needs to be asked is that how and when do they say, at what point? Is there a relationship between statement and action? There are three opinions of the scholars.

1. You start by saying *Allāhu akbar*, then you raise your hands—so *takbīr* comes before the raising of the hands.
2. You combine it—the statement and raising of the hands are at the same time.
3. A person will raise his hands then say *Allāhu akbar*—the raising comes first and then *takbīr* comes afterwards.

Shaykh says that when you look at all these positions and you look at where these opinions or possibilities come from, none of the scholars ever said that it was possible that a person says *Allāhu akbar* (first) and then raises their hands. That is not possible.

There are some people who said you raise your hands then say the *takbīr*. But the vast majority of the scholars (practically all of the scholars) said that there should be *jamʿ*, that a person should be making the *takbīr* and statement in one fluid motion. ‘One fluid motion’ basically means you are combining between the two acts. I want you to focus very carefully on this point. A normal practicing Muslim who has a general understanding of his *dīn* knows that there is no such thing as verbal intention (we spoke about this a so much detail). Therefore, it is quite easy for a person to stand in the prayer line and say, ‘*Allāhu akbar*,’ [while raising their hands]. The problem is with those of us who want to recite an entire essay to ourselves of our intention then say *Allāhu akbar*. That is a problem because it is neither of the three positions. It’s a whole different one. The *sunnah* is to say *Allāhu akbar* [as you raise your hands] and start, not to stand there [with hands up] waiting, waiting, waiting, waiting and then say it.

# 33. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 7: THE DESCRIPTION OF PRAYER

I think we got to the point of just raising the hands, and the fact that it is established, the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Umar, the *ḥadīth* of Bukhārī—I gave two references. Then, I mentioned what Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mukhtār al-Shinqīṭī said, which is that this is the position of all of the imāms, even those who did not consider raising the hands within the prayer. No one disagrees over the issue of at the start of the prayer. We spoke about the timings. Should a person say, “*Allāhu akbar*,” at the same time [as raising the hands], and should he say, “*Allāhu akbar*,” and then raise his hands, or should he raise the hands first and [then] say, “*Allāhu akbar*.” We said that there is flexibility in that because all have been narrated. Some of them are more flexible than others. Obviously, what is best is to do it all in one concurrent flow.

Even though there is so much I want to talk about, [and] so many narrations that I want to mention, especially from some of the Companions, I do want to stick to the text of *Zād al-Mustaqni‘* to just stay disciplined.

So, in the text, we are in the part where he says:

ويقول " الله أكبر " رافعاً يديه مضمومتَي الأصابع ممدودةً حذو منكبيه كالسجود

He then says “*Allāhu akbar*” raising his hands to the height of his shoulders with his fingers together but outstretched, just like when in prostration.

That is what we are going to be covering today, which translates as, that he says *Allāhu akbar*, raising his hands to the height of his shoulders—and height, *ḥadhwa*, does not mean height, it means in-line with (that is obviously the same thing as height)—in-line with his shoulders, with his fingers together but outstretched, just like when in prostration.

That is what we are going to cover today. The positioning of the hands. The reality of the hands itself. When it comes to the actual raising of the hands, the Prophet ﷺ has been very clearly, authentically copied by a number of the Companions in raising those hands. We want to go hardcore on these narrations to educate the ignorant who think that it is some kind of prehistoric practice, or it was a practice that was done because we want to let the idols fall out. You have got people, especially amongst our own generation, uncles, who think you are a Wahābi and you are the enemy of the state, mankind, Muslims, and Pakistan if you raise your hands. We will go hardcore with

respect to the actual *ḥadīth* narrations. We did that last week, to teach them a lesson. We also need to learn a lesson as well, especially those who practise the raising of the hands a lot. That is why I just want to finish off this point here.

Look at some of these narrations. Al-Ḥasan ibn Muslim said, "I heard Tāwūs, he was asked about raising the hands in the prayer. He said, I saw 'Abdullāh, 'Abdullāh, and 'Abdullāh raise their hands during the prayer," meaning all the way through the prayer. So, that is at the beginning, when you go for *rukū'*, when you stand up from *rukū'*, when you (as in one of the authentic narrations) finish from the *mathna*, when you finish from the two, meaning you are standing up from the first *tashahhud*. So, all of those authentic narrations are clear.

Who are 'Abdullāh, 'Abdullāh and 'Abdullāh? Who is Tāwūs referring to? Tāwūs of course, the Imām of the *tābi'īn*, one of the major *tābi'īn*. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās... And?

You would have thought 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, but this would be a statement made in haste without thinking because 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd is the most famous protagonist for not raising his hands—as is, 'Ali ibn abi Tālib and Ubay ibn Ka'b. These are the three big ones when it comes to exposing us to a different way of praying. Major Companions [are] exposing us to the idea that there are differences.

Whereas 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās is the king when it comes to establishing this. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar [is] probably the most authentically understood. The reason I give the status of 'king' to 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās on this issue is because 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar is seen as the Imām of which *madh-hab*? 'Seen', he is not the Imām of any *madh-hab*. I mean who is he seen as the lynchpin? Where did he travel to? Where did these schools develop? Where did 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd go so that people don't raise their hands? Kūfa, Iraq—so, that is where you have the Ḥanafī school who do not raise their hands.

Where did 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar go? Madinah—he stayed in Madinah which is the school of Mālik. You see in the Mālikī *madh-hab* very little raising of hands comparatively. You have within the school that difference of opinion there. The Mālikīs are the only *madh-hab* that will formally support the Ḥanafī school when it comes to the issue of not raising hands, which is interesting considering that they take so much of their *fiqh* from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar—so much from Nāfi', from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar. You will see that is so common. So, there are always these little quirks that you see.

Whereas 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās of course goes to Makkah. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās becomes one of the champions of Shāfi'i, Shāfi'i really depends upon him. Shāfi'i we know is very big on the prayer. A lot of the scholars will tell you that when you want to clock the prayer then study the *madh-hab* of Shāfi'i—very good and strong in the aspects of the prayer. Just like we say that Shāfi'i is also very good in *Ḥajj*. In *Ḥajj* we find they seem to be particularly strong.

These are not random statements. They are not statements which are absolutely correct and without question. Obviously, there are some problems in these statements as well. However, you do find some interesting support for these ideas. For example, when it comes to rule and law, and things like that, you automatically gravitate towards the Ḥanafī school. So much experience at the sharp end of ruling, of *qaḍā'*, of court. You are looking at Hārūn al-Rashīd, you are looking at those glory years when the Caliphates started to prosper. You look back historically, and you will see for example, Qāḍi abu Yūsuf and Muḥammad al-Shaybānī as well (these are the major companions of Imām Abu Ḥanīfah) they were given the position of *qāḍi'l-quḍā'*, the chief judge of all judges, they were given governor positions. So, the *madh-hab* was spreading a lot, and then it was being used in rule.

So, it is true to say that there are certain areas... Just like today when you are studying, we will always respect, more than what is normal, the '*aqīdah*' qualities of the Saudi scholars. Maybe we won't consider their political opinions very much because they have been bought out by that *bakwās* a long time ago. But when it comes to '*aqīdah*' etc, they seem to have a good handle on that. When it comes to the protective ideas—and even that is a big statement, because they have made some mistakes in that frankly as well. Some have had a significant consequence when it comes to making those too extreme against those who make mistakes in for example, praying to a grave, or thinking there is someone in the grave and they go to them and they ask that person, what to the wider world, seems like they are asking that person to give them something, whereas in actual fact most of the time they are asking that person to ask Allāh, [saying] '*I consider you to be closer to Allah than I am, you've passed, I am still sinning. You are a holy man, I am not.*' So, they put these ideas in their minds, like modern Bareilvi practices. The laity might look at some of the Saudi teachings and start to think that these kinds of modern day Bareilvis are all *mushrikīn* because they are all asking someone to do something, i.e. 'give me a child', when they can't. Nuance and reality teaches us that actually, even though it is definitely a *bid'ah*, and even a *bid'ah* at a very, very serious level, maybe even lead to *kufr*. It is not to the level that people have understood.

That doesn't [mean] that if people have an area of speciality that they don't make mistakes. But they do have specialities. Different areas and regions have specialities reflecting historical specialities. So, the Ḥanafīs are good in law and *iqtisād*, in economics, in financial issues, in taxes, etc. Today, if you look at the modern-day Islamic finance industry, it is entirely built by the Deobandīs—entirely built by Mufti Taqī and his father, etc. If you look at the Malaysians that are seen as the second lot, they came miles later onto the scene. Today, it is only their financial power, and the fact that is such a modern strong democratic country that they have been able to fund a lot of conferences, develop a lot of Islamic finance seminars. But them bringing their *fiqh* to the fore, they children, as Imām Shāfi'ī even said back in the day: "We are children compared to Abu Ḥanīfah, we are dependent on Abu Ḥanīfah in *fiqh*." The Shāfi'īs and their modern interpretation of Islamic finance is entirely dependent upon the



formative work that the Deobandi school has been doing in the last couple of hundred years.

It is important to recognise the strengths and the weaknesses of different schools, and that you will see as a common thread goes back throughout history, and even goes back to the Companions themselves. The proof of that is that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Take your Qur’ān from Ubay. Take your Qur’ān from ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd. Take your Qur’ān from Sālim, *mawla* Abu Hudhayfah.”

(00:11:00)

Why? Why not take Qur’ān from ‘Umar? Why not take Qur’ān from Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq? Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq is the only one who led the Prophet ﷺ in his presence actively. We have another narration of ‘Abdu’l-Rahmān ibn ‘Awf, that was circumstantial. Abu Bakr is the one who is told to lead. Why wouldn't you take Qur’ān from him? Because the Prophet ﷺ has given Abu Bakr a different role—you would take your whole religion and your leadership from him and not from ‘Ali or not from ‘Uthmān, etc. because this is the best one. “Mu‘ādh he is the best of you in *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*,” etc.

We have to understand (that) and the more we teach people this, the more people become more tolerant—this is the big missing gap with our elders, they cannot just enjoy the prayer and enjoy the fact that we have someone who has come, etc. and they focus on the hat. The people who are focusing on the hat are the people who inadvertently do not have a single idea of what is being recited in the prayer. Therefore, you get that paradigm where you have people who are so focused on the form but nothing of the substance and that is a lot of our elders and a lot of the backward people that we know.

Ironically, there is another extreme which is very prevalent in our time right now. This, *alḥamdulillāh*, is a dying out one. It is dying with the age of the people because most of them are very, very elderly and it is dying out. We wish that they would stay and the idea would die out. But if takes the people to die out, then so be it. I do not care, change has to come one way or the other, if they have to all die then:

﴿إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ﴾

“You [Prophet] will certainly die, and so will they.” [*Sūrat al-Zumar*: 30]

So, what is the problem?

This is very important. They are genuinely the extreme, but they are going. But we have been hit with an equally dangerous extreme that are here for a while and that is the other side—all substance and no form. These are the people who are romantically so connected with the ideas of the prayer, they love the idea of a loving God and they will

cherry pick verses of the Qur'ān, they will study it so much and they will regurgitate that etc. But when it comes to the waking up for *Fajr* when it comes to coming to the *masjid* etc. they are never seen. They are not known to ever enter a *masjid*. This is the rise of liberal, secular, humanist Muslim and that is going nuts. These are your emasculated kind of men, your feminist women, your liberal kind of folks who have been brought up with Islam as a culture as opposed to an actual faith. As with everything, we are bang in the middle. The *'ibādah* aspects and practice and sacrifice of the Muslims has to be absolute paramount. You have a scholar who is wowing you etc. and you do not see him in the *masjid*, then you can take his opinion and throw it in the bin. If you do not see a person acting according to his knowledge, then his knowledge has done nothing for him.

At the same time, we cannot be the people who just spend our time day and night saying Allāh, Allāh, Allāh and nothing behind it, or just reading Qur'ān and not understanding a single phrase behind it. If you remember in *Fitnah*, when we taught *Fitnah* we had that big discussion at the beginning: What is better, *kathrat'l-Qur'ān*—just so much Qur'ān and little reflection or more reflection and less *qirā'ah*? There is a big discussion amongst the scholars, there is a big difference in opinion amongst the Companions themselves. No doubt that the correct position is less *qirā'ah*, more *tadabbur* because the Qur'ān has been sent down:

﴿كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

“This is a blessed Scripture which We sent down to you [Muhammad], for people to think about its messages, and for those with understanding to take heed.” [*Sūrat Ṣāḍ*: 30]

It has been sent down so that the people make *tadabbur* over its meanings and they take a benefit, a reminder. The people who are deep, they really realise something like that without denigrating the lots of recitation. There has to be people in the middle, that has to be us—that are in tune with the reason of the religion, they question things, they talk about things, but they never allow it to paralyse them and they do not allow it to wow them, the meanings.

The reason I can speak so freely is because it is actually our lesson content, amazingly. I have just summarised one whole page about what Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn is talking about. He is talking about something that was asked last week: Why do we raise the hands?

You will see Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn when he is asked this question, actually any of the classical scholars, all of them without exception, every single time will go into a set recorded diatribe of that Allāh ﷻ reveals this, you have to listen, we do not understand the meaning, etc. He will always do that as a reminder just to humble yourself and to

not make your question so big and important that if you do not understand the meaning you will go into a meltdown, and say, '*I do not understand this so I cannot possibly believe it and practice it.*' Sometimes when he has offered that warning he may give some tidbits and say but this would be one of the reasons, this could be one of the reasons, etc.

Often you will see that when it comes to *ṣalāh*, these questions are going to come up—not so much in the Chapter of *Ṭahārah* because *ṭahārah* is a common-sense kind of idea. Everyone understands the idea of keeping yourself clean, washing yourself. Everyone also understands that there is this kind of sacred idea behind ritual ablution. No one would have heard the word ablution in school. Ablution is some random word you only understood when you started practicing and you realise there is actually a word called *wuḍū'*, that there is a concept called a sacred ritualistic washing that is not focused on lots of water but in movements instead, in a certain manner at certain sacred times that goes back thousands of years. That then makes it clear that there is a rational and a spiritual clear to easy understand with *ṭahārah* so there are not many questions on that.

Prayer, lots of questions, not about the need to prostrate for example. Everyone understands prostration you do not get many questions about prostration. But you get many on raising the hands for example—that makes no sense. You get lots of questions on *rak'āt* because that does not make any sense either, the idea of why is that four, three. You get lots of questions about why five prayers and not ten, that does not make any sense. The prayer will start to introduce you to a lot of questions that make you think and how you think and respond is very important. *Logical Progression* is definitely a class that is meant to take that head on, not just because the name itself is indicating that everything is line with logic and rationale etc. because we define logic and rationale as that what is controlled by Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and not independent of Qur'ān and *Sunnah*. Wider society recognises logic and rationale as something completely third party and independent because they see Qur'ān and *Sunnah* to be an illogical restriction to the mind. That is because they started on the wrong premise. Our premise for the '*aql*' is that it comes from the Divine, it has to be restricted. They believe in absolute independent agency and that is something which Muslims will never, ever support. There no such thing as utterly independent agency. There is no such thing as complete freedom without Allāh ﷻ involved. That is the biggest mistake that society and humanity has made which has created the entire field of philosophy, theology, *kalām* etc.

The question here will be asked now about these things, why we raise our hands, etc. It is very important for the people here and online and those who study *sharī'ah* to always be very comfortable with these questions and know how to answer them and how to not answer them or how not to have the incorrect attitude when answering these questions. Because if you put all of your lot, all of your money, all of your intellectual investment into the answer to that question, then you did not understand the *sharī'ah* in the first place. It is a privilege that Allāh ﷻ has allowed you to even practice this religion, let alone try to understand it.

(00:22:00)

I put something on Facebook a little while ago when I was reflecting on this—just reflecting about parents and how much gratitude we have towards them that they are the ones who pulled us through to the age of intellectual understanding when we could not understand jack squat about what we were doing and why we are going it. Waking up for *Fajr* as a thirteen-year-old is the biggest pain in the backside ever. You will see that parents, when it comes to bringing children to the prayer, Shaykh Abdul Ghaffar is a witness to this, he will remember that when he joined here, the kids, I would bring them when they were six and seven, and eight—all of them—and it was the easiest thing in the world, not a single prayer they would miss. They would come every morning *Fajr* when it was at 4:00, 7:00, whatever time it was in the morning. At that time, for the kids there is not too much thinking going on and there is a huge emotional bond to the parents and they are hugely invested in keeping their parents happy because they see the return. Shaykh Abdul Ghaffar was skint in those days the amount of money he would spend on chocolates and sweets in those days was crazy. He had to keep giving sweets every single *Fajr* each time they came to him.

Ironically, it is without any exaggeration, as you will see when we open this properly you will see that when it comes to *ṣalāh* you would think that it has a lot of common sense, that it is obvious that we should offer it. It is not at all. If it were then the billions of adults would do it. The truth is, you don't have to be a Muslim either, there are millions of Muslims who are very intelligent people who don't pray. So, it's not obvious actually. It does require a major resetting and calibration. So as a kid, why are you expecting it to make sense to a kid? That's why those that have originally sat for *Protect this House*, the original version, you will remember that exercise we did about that kid who wakes up at 3:00, does things at 4:00 and prays all night at 5:00. And I give an exercise to the class (it is still in this version as well) and I say, '*What do you think? What's your immediate reaction to this page?*' You have all these people saying, '*We're inspired, this is great and amazing.*' And I'm like, '*You're all lying. All of you lot are talking nonsense. That's not reality there, someone who did tahajjud at five and six*'. Everyone is saying great. What are you talking about? Which kid actually prays *tahajjud* at six? And if they are doing it, it is an empty action.

I can tell you now that the majority of times my kids were coming, they were coming for that moment of just going up to Shaykh afterwards and getting that sweet, chocolate, bit of a laugh and joke and then going back home. And why not? That's the level and depth of *'ibādah* at that age. What I want to say is that you see a huge ease in bringing kids at 6-10 and then it gets to 11-14 and it takes a dip. Ages 15-16, Shaykh will see the ages of the kids how it went down even more, much more difficult to get out of bed, even when they are awake, the motivation is just not there. They don't care about you now so much as well. Remember that when it comes to parenting and bonding, the focus when they are very young is always upon bonding—not so much information transfer, it's about bonding. Because if you bond well, the information transfer is made easier. You've got to take advantage of that earlier age very quickly because the bonding decreases as more exposure to other adults comes along. You love your father and mother because they are superman they are superwoman, they're

everything. Suddenly they come across Mr. Hopkins and Mrs. Kelly and they think, *'Bloody hell, there are other ones of you as well.'* Then it starts to make sense that this is not some restricted thing to my house, this is the world, and then you start to like their ideas. Like I said a hundred times, you say to them this and they say, *'Mrs. Kelly says that.'* You can't do anything because they're impressed just like they're impressed with you. That bond starts to weaken and then in teen years they're all just trying to rebel anyway, and then you have other external factors. So, it becomes more difficult. Then you will see a rise again (if you've done the job properly), 15-17, you're hoping that they get it and you've maintained a bond close enough that they get it and they come.

The point is that the parental responsibility is to make sure the kids are kept in the game when they don't get it because the parents need to have patience to know that there will come a time when they will get it. But they won't get what they didn't get in the first place. What was it that they didn't get?

They didn't get the rationale for prayer. They didn't understand why do I have to get up in the morning? When I pray next to my bed, a foot away, which is a standard *Fajr* for the vast majority of people. People even control the amount of water they use so they don't wake up too much. You are a kid that is tired and going to sleep at 10:00 and has to get up at 7:00, *'Okay you want me to pray, Allah gave me my PlayStation, Allāh gave me this and that. I get that part, so I will get up and pray.'* But to get up and have to wash properly, and brush my teeth, and get in the car, and it's cold outside, and wait in the car, and a cold *masjid*, and the imām is reciting so long.

The point is that keeping people on board when they don't understand the rationale for something, that's the point I'm trying to make, because you don't when you're a kid. Afterwards they will understand something, not the rationale for the act (because they never will) but they will understand why I do this act and I'm not meant to understand the rationale of having to come to the *Fajr* in the morning, the that many *rak'āt*, etc. Meaning afterwards there will come a time when you will be grateful that you respected the fact that you didn't understand something, but you carried on anyway. Then later when you understood that you carried on anyway even though you didn't understand, that it was a blessing in itself. This is what Allāh ﷻ praises the believers for. That when Allāh makes *qadā'* of anything, decides anything for them, they do not have a say in the matter after that.

It is 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, and 'Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr.

One of the key things from a *fiqh* point of view for everyone is that when you get asked a question like that, always think deep. So, if you are asked: Who are the 'Abdullāhs? How am I going to answer that? If I said to you that it is narrated from Ṭāwūs, he's a *tābi'i*. I also said they said it is an issue of raising the hands. You have to think who of the 'Abdullāhs goes down the line of raising the hands. You also have to go down the obvious one which is the age issue. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd was far older than the other Companions. So, you're looking at a similar age. Of course, these are the three young 'Abdullāhs and they carried on the teaching of *fiqh* for a long time: 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar,

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, and ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr, narrated by Bukhāri in his chapter on *rafʿ al-yadayn* also narrated by Abdu’l-Razzāq’l-Sun‘āni and in *al-Muṣannaf* it is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

It is narrated from Ḥumayd on the authority of Anas ibn Mālīk ؓ that he would raise his hands when he entered into the prayer, when he would go for *rukūʿ*, and when he would come up and raise his head from *rukūʿ*. Also, that is authentic and narrated in the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn abi Shaybah and others.

(00:33:00)

Another narration [on the authority of] Ḥaqqān ibn ‘Abdullāh’l-Raqqāshi, he said that Ibn Mūsā al-Ash‘ari ؓ: He stood up as if he was about to pray with us and then he raised his hands to the edge of his ears, and he said, “*Allāhu akbar*.” Then he turned and said to the people, “Do it like this.” Then he said, “*Allāhu akbar*”, then he went into *rukūʿ* and he said, “Do it like this,” and he raised his head from the *rukūʿ* and he said, “*Samīʿ Allāhu liman ḥamidah*,” and he raised his hands and he said, “Do it like this.”

So, in actual fact he stood up, of course he was amongst a group of *tābiʿīn* and he is teaching them how to pray, and he showed them exactly when to actually make the *takbīr* and raise the hands specifically. This *ḥadīth* is also authentic, it has been narrated by Abu Munẓir in his *Muṣannaf* and in other places, it is a *ṣaḥīḥ*.

Also, on the authority of Ibn Jurayj who said: “I was told by Nāfiʿ (who was the freed slave of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar) Ibn ‘Umar would make *takbīr* with his hands (that means he would raise his hands) when he would start the prayer, and when he would go for *rukūʿ*, when he would stand back up and say, ‘*Samīʿa Allāhu liman ḥamidah*,’ and when he would stand up from the two. And he would not make *takbīr* with his hands when he would raise his head from the *sajdah*”—that is an important addition which has been said intentionally because that became a practice which started to... not flourish but became noticed amongst the *tābiʿīn* because of some narrations of the Companions doing it. There is some discussion amongst the *fuqahāʾ* about whether a person should raise their hands even in between the *sajdah*—you may have seen that yourself from some of the scholars because they still continue it.

Then something very important—we are going forward a bit, but at least it gives us context. [He continues,] “So I said to Nāfiʿ, ‘Did when Ibn ‘Umar made these *takbīr* was there a difference in height that the hands would go to?’”

This is a very important question because in some of the *madāhib*, especially the Māliki school, and especially some of my own teachers as well, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Dadū—he is very strongly of the opinion that the *rafʿ* of the hands in the prayer is not like that *rafʿ* of the hands at the beginning of the prayer. So, the opening [of the prayer] is a very specific act and the others are linked by some other reality. Now rationally speaking I don't know if we can justify that. From *ḥadīth* we can, in this narration look at the response.



“Nafi‘ said, ‘No, at all times the raising of the hands was of the same height.’”

“Then he said, ‘Was it raising to the level of his ears?’”

“He said, ‘No, not even his face,’ then he pointed to his chest area and indicated this is where it was.”

This narration which was narrated by Abdu‘l-Razzāq‘l-Sanāni is *ṣaḥīḥ*. We learn from this narration is that the raising of the hands (which is what we are still doing) was the same in all positions of the prayer, and in this narration, it didn't go to his ears and it didn't go to his face, but it was somewhere around very shoulder. Now when I say, ‘very shoulder’, what I mean by that is that ... you're going to see a number of narrations now that are going to mention the Prophet ﷺ being observed as raising his hands to his ears and raising his hands to his shoulders. I've written an article about this and you know I teach this as well, and this is a position held by a number of scholars in fairness to me, that all of these narrations can be understood as a single meaning—that when you see ears mentioned and shoulders, then ‘the ears’ is referring to the top of the fingers and ‘the bottom of the hands’ is referring to the shoulders. It is a nice and easy get out. This is called making *jama‘ bayn’l-riwāyatayn*, reconciling between the different narrations.

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says that there is no need for us to make these decisions or make these interpretations. Why can't you just say that is authentic and that is authentic? And this is very, very important when it comes to the issue of raising hands and a number of the *ṣunan* acts of the prayer.

To carry on, al-Aswad said: “I prayed with ‘Umar ؓ and he did not raise his hands (he did not do *raf‘ al-yadayn*) at any single point in the prayer except at the *Allāhu akbar* at the beginning.”

What you are now being exposed to—you have the father who didn't raise his hands, and you have the son, who is the number one evidence, the number one narrator of the two most authentic *ḥadīth* that we have in *Bukhārī* [saying] that you do raise your hands in other parts of the prayer.

The interpretation that you have, and the way that you understand *sharī‘ah* and *ḥadīth*, in the way that you are responding to the issue of the hands and where they are with the ears and the shoulders, is going to help you in also understanding *ḥadīth* that are giving different things as well. Because if a *ḥadīth* says that you raise your hands to your ears when you say *Allāhu akbar* [with the tips of your fingers reaching the level of the bottom of our ears] even though this [the thumbs touching the earlobes] has never been mentioned—but you don't know because it says ‘ears’, so this could theoretically be it as well. And then you have ‘shoulders’—it is quite easy in this scenario to make a combination of both and say it means both.



How are you going to combine between not raising and raising? Which therefore suggests that we should take a different methodology.

‘Āsim ibn Kulayb said, “From my father that ‘I was with ‘Ali ﷺ at Şuffīn and he raised his hands at the beginning of the prayer and he did not raise his hands in the prayer after that.” That is also authentic narrated by Ibn abi Shaybah.

Also, the *ḥadīth* of ‘Umar, that was also narrated by Ibn abi Shaybah and Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī, and Ibn Mundhir, and it is *ṣaḥīḥ* and on the authority of Nāfi‘ that ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar when he would enter the prayer he would raise his hands to the level of his shoulders and when he would come up from *rukū‘* he would do it less than that—*rafa‘aha dūna dhālik*. That is narrated in the *Muwaṭṭa’* of Imām Mālik, which is why the Mālikis hold onto this narration. It is authentic—you don’t get more authentic than that, and Nāfi‘, and ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, collected by Imām Mālik himself.

That is where you get the idea, as you are going to see now (we are kind of jumping the gun) but what we are doing right now is the opening *takbīr* where it is coming to the level of the shoulders. Later on, for it to come up to here [fingertips at the shoulders] is fine—it is a significant difference in height.

Obviously, we can't have this *bakwās*, where people are doing to their waist, that Gulf Arab kind of flex—that is completely unacceptable. We would never have that nonsense. But *dūna dhālik*, just a little bit less than. So, you can see the authentic narrations. Again, how do you reconcile this?

(00:44:00)

‘Umar when he would raise his hands in *ṣalāh* he would raise it to the level of his shoulders—narrated by Ibn abi Shaybah, the *ḥadīth* is authentic. Ibn ‘Umar when he would raise his hands he would raise it *ḥadhwa mankibāyhi*, to the level of his shoulders—authentic, narrated by Ibn abi Shaybah. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (in another narration), “I saw him, he raised his hands and he raised them to the level of his shoulders,” narrated by Ibn abi Shaybah. Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn mentions that also what is narrated by Prophet ﷺ that he raised his hands *ila furu‘u udhunayhi*, to the edge of his two ears—so something higher. And that’s narrated by Imām Muslim in the Chapter of the Prayer, *ḥadīth* number 391.

So, what have you learnt? You have learnt that authentically, Prophet ﷺ has *ḥadīth* that show the hands were raised to his shoulders and to his ears (authentically both) and that the Companions themselves differed amongst themselves, in the whether to [raise the hands to a level that is] lower, higher and throughout the prayer. Some didn’t do at all, others did less. Now we have to ask ourselves if you take the approach like I always have with respect to the raising of the hands, location/height, that the *ḥadīth* are all referring to same action but different takes on it.

So, if I raise my hands here:



Then you when you go back and say, ‘Listen, I prayed in the *masjid* with AE and I saw him raise his hands...” What are you going to say? Some of you are going to say ‘to his ears’—because you are looking at my fingers. Some of you are going to be looking at my palms and say ‘to his shoulders’. Some people are going to say ‘to his face’—it depends upon interpretation. And that of course is a very important reason why there are differences of opinions in *fiqh*, we have to accept that.

But Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn he knocks this idea on the head nicely, he says that there is no need to even say that. He says it is okay to say that, that’s fine, but you know what? Why don’t we say that okay, he did raise his hands to his ears and he did raise his hands to his shoulders and it’s not a problem. Now, the reason I like this opinion, this bravery in this statement, is that that also fits in a lot nicely with the idea of raising of the hands and not raising of the hands—the bigger issue.

Now, I believe very strongly so, and there are not many people out there that believe this—like the Shāfi‘is—they believe religiously, Islamically that the Prophet ﷺ raised his hands all the time, it’s the *sunnah* of the prayer. The Ḥanafis they believe that the Prophet ﷺ did not raise his hands in the prayer, it’s a *sunnah* to not raise your hands. And therefore, for them doing one or the other is unacceptable. You have to stick to that because that’s the *sunnah*.

I believe very strongly so that Prophet alternated between all of these actions—sometimes raising sometimes not raising, sometimes going high, sometimes not. I believe that legally it fits with the evidences because that is the only possible, perfect combination of reconciliation of authentic *ḥadīth* that indicate that both actions occurred. It would explain why some Companions are seeing one thing and some of them go further, “*Wallāhi* I prayer behind the Prophet ﷺ and I never saw him raise his hands.” How can you make *qasam* like that and another one saying that I prayed with the Prophet ﷺ and he did? It makes sense that he only saw him at this moment or at this time and therefore he can say *wallāhi* because he never saw him at a different time. And so this starts to make a lot of sense that it is happening.

Then if you go even deeper—this is something that Shaykh Kehlan, *subhān Allāh*, he taught me twenty years ago. I will never forget this statement. One of the very initial statements that he made. He said to me that it is my opinion that this issue of raising the hands is not one of the integral *sunan* of the prayer.

What did he mean by that?

He meant that the *sunan* of the prayer, things which are not obligatory, which are part of it, but they are *tab‘an li’l-ṣalāh*, not from the *aṣl*—they are like of aspects of the prayer that are added to it to add some flavour to it. They are not part of the essence, meaning that you should use the raising of the hands to improve the prayer. And you should use the leaving of the raising of the hands to improve the prayer. The more you are aware of your prayer that I feel like raising my hands now, you will be more awake in the prayer, more aware of the action when you do it. You do it every single time without fail it becomes an automatic reaction. If you do not do it all the time without fail, then it becomes an automatic action to not do it. When you do it, it feels really strange, really weird. You break that mould and that situation becomes a bit raw. That itself as we mentioned last week and the week before, that interrupting the system, that creating that little moment of hesitation which brings you to life in the prayer that is an objective in the prayer itself. That is an objective in the *sharī‘ah*. That’s why Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn he makes a point in a different page, different section but I will say it now, he says that if a person has this approach he will achieve three things:

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He will follow the *Sunnah* because he will then apply all the *ḥadīth*. Can you imagine? Can you imagine never raising your hands and having all these *ḥadīth* of Prophet ﷺ saying that he did? So, what are you doing then? How are you dealing in your heart that the Prophet ﷺ did this, the Companions did this after his death? If you might say, you know, it was abrogated towards the end of his life, what do you think the Companions are doing afterwards? Okay. And you are following the *Sunnah*. And when you are not raising the hands you are also following the *Sunnah* because of what is narrated. That’s called *ittibā‘ al-Sunnah*.

*Iḥyā’ al-Sunnah*, reviving the *Sunnah*, so for example if you are in a community where they don’t raise the hands, but you know that the Prophet ﷺ did and you do it once in a while, you are reviving that *sunnah*. Because *sunnah* can then get lost, they can peter out. A *sunnah* can peter out, can disappear, so quickly that people can’t even then imagine that it was the *sunnah* in the first place and vice-versa as well. A *bid‘ah* can come in to the religion and it can become so solidified cause no one questions it that it becomes a key aspect of the prayer—like the wearing of the hat. Anyone who believes that wearing of the hat is part of the prayer has lied against Allāh and His Messenger. There is not a single *ḥadīth* or *ayah* or aspect or Imām, neither Imām Abu Ḥanīfah, or

Shāfi‘i, or Mālik, or Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal or any of their students or any of the *salaf* or the *khalaf* or the *tābi‘i*, *atbā‘ al-tābi‘i*, not a single ‘ālim in the history of the Islam that has ever said that wearing the hat is part of the prayer or an improvement of the prayer or an excellence of the prayer. If anyone says that they need to make *tawbah wa illa Allāh yahdīh*. May Allāh guide that person!

A person he says that it is nice if the imām wears it, that’s something else. I wear hat for that reason only. Muslims wearing a hat to remind themselves of their heritage or other reasons are fine. But for a person to say that a person can’t lead us without a hat, this is the extreme possible version of *jahl* that is possible. Now where does this come from? It comes when an idea is observed and seen, and no one challenges it, then over one year, then 10 years, then 100 years, then 200 years, then 500 years then it becomes like an ‘*aqīdah*. You are born into it. You are born into a family, you are born into a community, into a country, into a nation, into a culture where you believe that the hat or a certain type of clothing or a certain colour...

I will just end on this point. When I take the *Ḥajj* and ‘*Umrah* groups I say this to them and they will all have a heart attack. When they come to the green dome of the Prophet ﷺ and they all get so excited to see the green dome and I say to them, ‘*You realise that this dome was only painted a couple of hundred years ago.*’

They say, ‘*Astaghfir Allāh, this is there from Prophet’s ﷺ time, this is Prophet’s ﷺ dome.*’

I say, ‘*You realise that this was built hundreds of years after he passed away. And it was made of wood then it got burned down completely and then after that it was made again with lead and it was painted silver and then it was painted white throughout hundreds of years. Green was just one of the colours that the Turkish painter he liked so he chose it.*’

[They say,] ‘*No, the Prophet ﷺ loves green!*’

When things are left alone people start to believe that legend and this is how all things that we have in the religion develop. Anyway, may Allāh guide us and improve our knowledge. *Allāhumma amīn.*

## 34. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 8: THE DESCRIPTION OF PRAYER

يُسَنُّ الْقِيَامُ عِنْدَ "قَدْ" مِنْ إِقَامَتِهَا وَتَسْوِيَةِ الصَّفِّ، وَيَقُولُ "اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ" رَافِعًا يَدَيْهِ مَضْمُومَتَيِ الْأَصَابِعِ مَمْدُودَةً حَذْوِ مَنْكَبَيْهِ كَالسَّجُودِ، وَيُسَمِعُ الْإِمَامُ مَنْ خَلْفَهُ كَقِرَائَتِهِ فِي أَوَّلَتَيِ الْظُّهْرِ، وَغَيْرِهِ نَفْسَهُ، ثُمَّ يَقْبِضُ كَوْعَ يُسْرَاهُ تَحْتَ سُرَّتِهِ

It is *sunnah* to stand when *qad* is said from the *iqamah*, and it is also *sunnah* to straighten the prayer lines. He then says, "*Allāhu akbar*," raising his hands to the height of his shoulders with his fingers together, but outstretched, just like when in prostration.

This [translation] is off the top of my head, but it is good for your working notes for today.

The imām says it loud enough so that those behind him can hear him, such as in the recitation in the first of the two units in all of the prayers, other than in the two *Zuhr* prayers and other than the imām, he only says it to himself.

Except that the way that the Arabic is written, the author, he does not want to say that he says it to himself, because that would be our position because as we said last week or the week before, we believe that there is no condition that you must hear your recitation. As long as you say it, it is fine. You do not need to hear it. So, it wouldn't be 'and other than the imām says it himself'. It would be (according to the Ḥanbalis): 'and other than the imām he hears it himself'.

Then, he grasps his right wrist and places it under his navel.

With respect to *al-Mumti'*, it a bit is all over the place. I am just going to fill in the gaps.

So, we have said, "*Allāhu akbar*." We are talking about the very first *takbīr*. He raises his hands to the level of his shoulders. Then we then we had that discussion [about how] there are so many different narrations that talk about the ears, the ear lobes, the shoulder, the palm of the hand, hand to the shoulder. [There were] maybe twenty, maybe more, maybe less, a plethora of *aḥadīth* all of them authentic, discussing the

height of the hands which would suggest then a complex expression of the hands throughout the prayer.

What can we say?

Firstly, that the vast majority, if not consensus, believed in the *sunnah* of raising the hands at the beginning of the prayer—even the Ḥanafis and the Mālikis.

Then, the majority consider that the hands are to be raised at certain points within the prayer as well. We discussed that *ḥadīth*, and that is going to come later. We said, in going to *rukūʿ*, on returning from *rukūʿ*, and then coming up after two *rakʿah*—*ḥadīth* of *Bukhārī*, *ḥadīth* of ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar. We did that as well. That is coming later.

We then said that the other thing we can take from all of these *aḥadīth* about the raising of the hands is that there is possibly an argument from the actions of the Companions that every subsequent raising of the hands after the *takbīratʾl-iḥrām* is slightly lower than the first one—an indication. It does not seem clear from the Prophet ﷺ. But it seems that the action of ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar might take it to here.

One of things I wanted to add here, the *takbīratʾl-iḥrām*, or *taḥrīmah* both indicating quite a solemn serious moment. It is the *takbīr* that makes everything *ḥarām*.

What are the other ones called? Every other *takbīr* goes into what category? Actually, not every other *takbīr* because the ʿId ones wouldn't come under this, the *janāzah* ones wouldn't be called this. I wouldn't even know what they are called actually.

They are known as the *takbīratʾl-intiqāl*. They are known as the *takbīrs* of *intiqāl*, movement. *Intiqāl* comes from to move from one place to another. So, those are linked with that moving period. I think it might make sense for it to be far more relaxed. The nature, the height of the movement, everything, because it is happening during the move. It is happening on the way down. It is happening on the way back up. It is happening when you are standing back up. It is not like the *takbīratʾl-iḥrām*, which is a moment. Especially an imām, an imām will take that extra second to steady himself, to look around. It is a serious moment. Whereas you are already in a serious moment now, so these *takbīrs*, we could argue have a slight less function. This is *ʿaqli* by the way, nothing to be taken from a textual point of view. It might explain (1) why the Companions did do it lower, and (2) why you should have a relaxed attitude towards these ones.

More *ḥadīth* then start to mention different things, so we start to get the understanding of these different heights. There have been three classical approaches to this (the *ḥadīth* that talk about different things). The first approach [is], you choose your opinion, you stick to it and you do not move from it. That is the Ḥanafī opinion. Remember that within a *madh-hab*, there are also *madhāhib*. Within a school of thought there are positions that are taken, some are given *fatwa* by, the position of the school,



some are considered to be rejected by the earlier and then accepted by the later, some are understood to be the position of some of the imāms. The Ḥanafī school of course is one of the most studied *fiqh* schools. One of the reasons for that of course is because they are the kings of *fiqh*. Everything comes down to *fiqh*, and they established so many of the terminologies, categories, etc. They went to a whole different level. When you have gone to such a detailed level of classification, it just makes it easier for people coming up afterwards to use it.

The classic example would be *makrūh*. Everyone understood the concept of *makrūh*. Ḥanafīs said, no, [there is] *makrūh taḥrīmī*, *makrūh tanzīhī*, the issue of *wājib*, the issue of *fard*. We are going to be specific and we are going to be more accurate. The Shāfi‘ī came along and said, ‘*We’ll have some of that.*’ And they just nicked it and they have no basis for their own. I argue that some of the Shāfi‘ī scholars do not believe in the actual basis for why there are these differing categorisations, but they are very useful.

Muhammad Faqih asked this question in one of our groups. He asked: Is there a basis for why they call it *taḥrīmī* and *tanzīhī*? I said, yes and I gave the explanation based upon the *ḥadīth*. If you remember in year two [or] year three, we spoke about the *ḥadīth* having two aspects: *qatī’l-dalālah* and *qatī’l-thubūt*—something that is very clear in its indication (the *dalālah* is the indicative meaning of the text) and it has to be *qatī’l-thubūt* as well. It has to be established. You have to have these two aspects. If you have something which is *ẓanni* from a *dalālah* point of view, or *ẓanni min’l-thubūt*, meaning that it is speculative from either how it is being established i.e. being authentic, or it is speculative in terms of its indication (meaning the meaning is not clear). Then this obviously leads to a differing appreciation.

So, the Ḥanafīs wanted to put that in immediately, and when they put it in immediately, they took it even further. They said, that when it comes from a *ḥadīth* point of view *ẓanni’l-thubūt*, that which is speculative in being established, they did something which the other *fuqahā’* had not done before, and certainly *ahl’l-ḥadīth* had not done before. Actually, we reject this act as well, and that is that they said the *ḥadīth* that is called *khābar aḥad*, a *ḥadīth* which has a train of transmission which is of a minimal number, one or two, etc. So, in the chain when the Prophet ﷺ tells a Companion, the Companion tells his student, a *tābi‘ī*, and then he tells his student a *tābi‘ al-tābi‘ī*, and then he tells his student who maybe becomes an imām in *ḥadīth*. And that is now talking about how many people are in a chain? Obviously, there are five in that chain. Normally, the random ‘*ām ḥadīth*’ of Bukhārī or Muslim, that mid-era *muḥaddith*, there is going to be 5-7 narrators. When you are looking at a supremely beautiful *ḥadīth*, you are looking at the *thuluthiyyāt*, one which has only three people who are involved. As you can imagine, as we said in Chinese Whispers, when you increase the amount of people who are sitting in the chairs, then by the time you start something here, it changes when you get down to the end. If you reduce the number of people, then we are going to have more accurate [information]. That is just common sense.



So, a *ḥadīth* that you see that has only got the Prophet ﷺ ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, Nāfi’, then to Mālik—it is a dream chain. Mālik is picking up that *ḥadīth* in the *Muwaṭṭa’*, within 150-odd years of it being actually said, or less actually, and it only has three people. Not only having three people, but three of the very greatest of, the imāms of the field, the most trustworthy. A person in *ḥadīth* can have problems in different areas. A person might have the greatest memory in the world, but he is not trustworthy. Or, a person for example has the greatest memory, but he makes mistakes because he just makes mistakes. There are all kinds of different aspects.

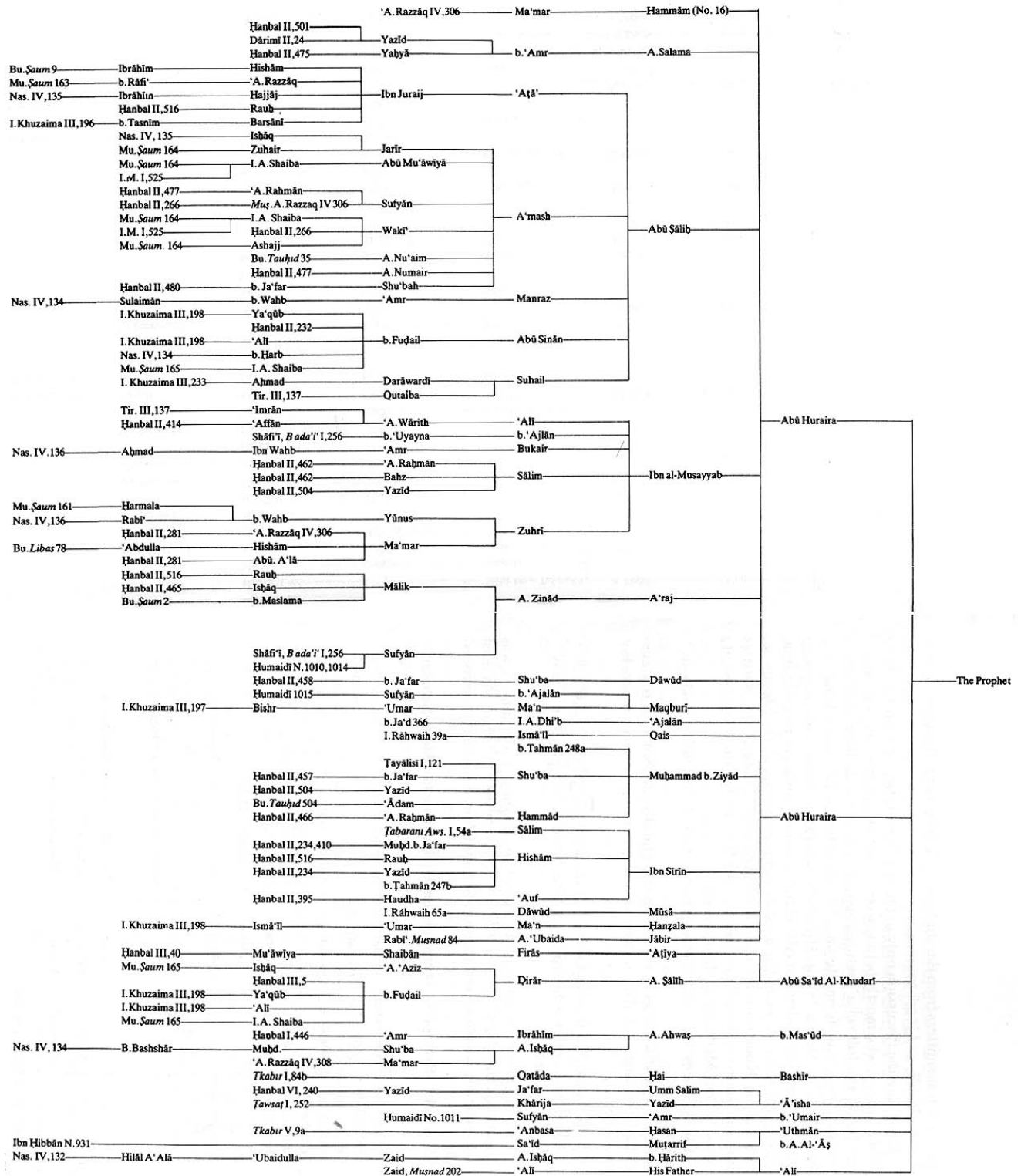
When you have an imām in *ḥadīth*, then you are talking about someone who is covering all the bases. Not just in terms of memory, and in terms of authority, and they know all different narrators, and they know the science itself meaning they are able to know immediately when someone says, ‘*I heard it from so and so,*’ and can immediately say to himself, ‘*That’s not possible because you weren’t born by then.*’ ‘*That’s not possible because he never travelled to that region.*’ ‘*That’s not possible because his students never went that way,*’ etc. That is where the *muṣṭalaḥ’l-ḥadīth* and ‘*ilm’l-rijāl*, knowing the reality of the names of these narrators, and their movements, and their dates, etc.

What I want you to know, is that when you have a *ḥadīth*, normally the Prophet ﷺ does not tell one Companion a *ḥadīth* alone, unless it is a private type of *ḥadīth*, a private type of setting. So, if a *ḥadīth* is announced amongst a group of people and only one person hears it, we are not going to have a concern, but we are going to note it. And it is not going to be a mega concern, but it is noted.

If one Companion tells only one other *tābi’i*, that is what we would say is a concern, but not a negative concern. It is something we are going to look at and think, ‘*Hmm...*’ Then, if that *tābi’ al-tābi’i* (especially if he is in an area of knowledge, an area of *ḥadīth*, etc.) only tells one another student, we are also going to think, ‘*What is happening here?*’

(00:16:00)

I want you to understand that each *ṭabaq*, each layer, is a generation of people. At every generation of people, we are expecting a *ḥadīth* to spread, to keep spreading further. At every generation, if at any of these generations it goes down to one person or two or three, i.e. a minimal number and not a large spread of eight, ten, fifteen onwards, that is how we differentiate a *ḥadīth* in terms of its establishment using the number of people at each level in the chain. It is a category of classifying the authenticity of the *ḥadīth*. What I want you to understand is that you can make *aḥadīth* authentic in a number of different ways. You can either look at purely a chain, people heavy exercise, or just how good they are in terms of memory, or how trustworthy they are, or what kind of issues of ‘*‘aqidah*’ they may have. So, in each time you are looking at a different scenario, a different situation each time. When you focus just on numbers, then what you are looking at is when each person tells the next person, how many people are there. If at each level you have a large number of people, this is what we call a *ḥadīth* which is *mutawātir*, a *ḥadīth* which is indisputable. The whole point of *mutawātir* is that there are so many people.



You look at this *ḥadīth*, the Prophet ﷺ is on the right. From a Companion point of view, you have about seven different Companions here that have narrated it from the Prophet ﷺ.

Student: Is that Abu Hurayrah twice?

Ustādh: Yes. Why? Because he is referring to different chains, different types, or maybe even different versions. Maybe one time he narrates it with certain wording and another time different wording. I don't know. I don't even know what the *ḥadīth* is here. I am just using the example, so you get an idea. At each level there is a chain.

As you can see, the next generation in this are all *tābi'īn*. Sometimes of course, just because you hear that someone heard it from a Companion, that does not mean it is a *tābi'ī*. It could be a Companion. We have famous *ḥadīth* that have three Companions narrating from one another and sometimes even more. That will obviously be from the same generation, but it's just that they were not there. So, he heard it from him, he heard it from him etc. Here from the screen, they are all *tābi'īn*, imāms of the *tābi'īn*. So, you have these folks here and they have then gone and said it to people who are *tābi'īn* and *atbā' al-tābi'īn*, meaning they are from the next generation and the same generation. The point here is that look at that second level of narrators, there are like 15-20, look at the next level, there is 20-30 there and as you can see it keeps increasing and increasing.

If you look at where it says Ma'mar ibn Rāshid, this is where we have the first actual collecting of *ḥadīth*. We are starting to now have it collected. This is the teacher of 'Abd'l-Razzāq'l-Ṣan'āni (to the left), you can see he has put a volume. He has actually started to collect it. You may have heard of Professor Ḥamīdullah, he was the don from taking on the orientalist. He studied, Arabic, *dīn*, and the European languages and he took on all the orientalist, he just wrote and wrote. This is the area of Imitiaz etc. If I remember correctly he even translated some of the early narrations from Ma'mar ibn Rāshid who is his teacher. You can see that it has not been collected as a book there, because we do not have a printed version. But what we have absolutely know is that he wrote it down. We have absolutely no doubt that he used to write *ḥadīth* down.

The orientalist want to see written records. They are not happy with our oral tradition. We say to them that our oral traditions are better than our written one, but if you want it we have that as well. If you want to really take it to the next level, we have writing from 'Uthmān ؓ, we have writing from 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd, even though the Prophet ﷺ told the Companions not to do that. He did not want them to get the Qur'ān mixed up. He did not want their own personal *du'ā'* and *adhkār* to be entered into Qur'ānic script because they would write notes of the points on the margins. And of course, if you are not on the game, then it gets mixed up, it gets taken and swallowed in. That is the general fear. But this statement of the Prophet ﷺ was never seen as a prohibition, it was seen as a warning. That is why it did continue even though the Prophet ﷺ said that.

So, Ma'mar definitely wrote things down. And then in the next one you can see that 'Abd'l-Razzāq'l-Ṣan'āni is collecting it—that's within four generations. You look at that, you can see Shāfi'i at the top, you can see Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal hundreds of times etc. Then you have some of the big Imāms that we know. We have Ibn Khuzaymah at the top, al-Nisā'i (Nas. is his shorthand for Imām al-Nisā'i). You also have Muslim on the left-hand side, Bukhāri on the left-hand side (they come quite later as you can see), Ibn Ḥibbān as well, etc.

This would be considered maybe a *mutawātir ḥadīth* this one. This is clearly a big *ḥadīth*, whatever it is. This would be well-established, from a chain point of view it is brilliant. It is still possible though, for this *ḥadīth* to be weak. Why could it be weak? It would not be weak through number of chains. But if we were to do an assessment of every single imām here and we were to realise that they were all fake, they do not exist, the names were made up, which is what? It's *tadlīs*. *Tadlīs* is an area of *ḥadīth* sciences where you are blagging the guy that is reporting from you because you know, 'You know what it is? I am about to tell you a *ḥadīth* but if I tell you who told me, because you do not like him, I am going to change his name. I am going to give him a kunya.' So, I know for example that you will never take a *ḥadīth* of Niamatullah so I am going to say, 'I heard Abu Eesa tell me so and so.' This is common practice [to change the name], sometimes they change it even more so.

Another way that this *ḥadīth* could be weak is that you do a study of all these people and all of them are legit but they all have poor memory which is very unlikely. What else that could be much more likely is if you do a study of the whole chain (of this one *ḥadīth*), you look at all names, all legit. You look at all the memories, all legit. But then you see that people who are taking it from the different people, but you know it is not possible for Zuhri to take it from Ibn Musayyab except at a certain era because that was the only time they studied together in this city at the same time. In that era Ibn al-Musayyab was too old and he started to become senile and make mistakes. This is noted in the books of *ḥadīth*. So, at the time you take the *ḥadīth* from a scholar is also important, not just name, not just the relationship, not just location, but at what point you took that *ḥadīth* from that person. It is possible that this *ḥadīth* even with all of its chains like this, can still turn out to be weak.

For us, when we talk about a *khābar aḥad*, a singular narration, what we are saying is that at some point in these generations the number comes down to a minimal number. One of the students asked: What is *ḥadīth mash-hūr*? *Mash-hūr*, 'azīz, and *gharīb* are three phrases which refer to categories of *aḥad ḥadīth*. *Aḥad ḥadīth* basically means any *ḥadīth* where its chains are a small number—less than eight or nine. If it comes all the way down to the weirdest and strangest *ḥadīth* of all, they call it *gharīb* for that reason, it means there is only one single person that narrated that *ḥadīth*.

You might say, 'One at what point?'

Look at this *ḥadīth* again. Imagine that Abu Hurayrah is the only one that narrates this *ḥadīth* and then he narrates it to Ibn al-Musayyab, who then narrates it to all those

people. Under Ibn al-Musayyab, imagine all of these people were not there and Ibn Al-Musayyab is the only person at that layer, at that *ṭabaq*, that narrates it to all those people. This *ḥadīth* would be written off and called a *gharīb ḥadīth*. It would be called a singular *ḥadīth*. That would be the same for example if Sālim is the only person who narrates it at that generation. So, everyone else is gone [all the other narrators of his generation], he hears it from all the people on the right. He hears that *ḥadīth* from twenty of the *tābiʿīn*) and he tells a hundred of the *atbāʿ al-tābiʿīn*, but he is the only link that is linking the two generations. Again, the *ḥadīth* would be written off as *khāḥ* *aḥad*, meaning a singular report. But which category of singular report? A *gharīb ḥadīth*. It would be a single *ḥadīth* which is a *gharīb ḥadīth*, meaning that it is the weakest or most limited small restricted number of narrators possible. If it was two, three or four it is called an *ʿazīz ḥadīth*. The scholars differed over what numbers. If it is six, seven, eight, nine, then it is called *mash-hūr* meaning a popular *ḥadīth*. But it is still not *mutawātir*. Scholars are creating classifications to try and give strength.

Student: Does it depend on how far to the left?

Ustādh: The distance does not matter. It is that if there is a generational issue. There is a discussion about: What if a Companion is a single one that narrates it, is that a problem? The majority of scholars said no. The real discussion is within the left. But once it is within the left then they are all the same because only the Companions are considered *ʿudūl*, trustworthy without question.

The Ḥanafis came and said listen, if the *ḥadīth* can be classified into *mutawātir* and *khāḥ* *aḥad*, are we going to treat them the same? That's their argument. Are you honestly going to treat *ḥadīth* which has 100 people on the left, 100 people on the right, hundreds, hundreds, and hundreds, but one person in the chain, the same as hundreds, hundreds, hundreds? That is their argument.

What did Ahl'l-Sunnah say?

The vast majority said that if the Imām is an Imām, if the Companion is alone, etc. and it is authentic then it is definitive knowledge. It does not matter if it is only one person, as long as it is established.

They said no, (not just the Ḥanafis a small group of people) we cannot treat them the same. This is what led to the birth of the idea now of many things you would have heard but you would not have known the reason for. This is the reason why Ḥizb'l-Taḥrīr reject punishment of the grave. If you were from the 90's, 80's, and 2000's you would have heard that all the time: Don't join Ḥizb'l-Taḥrīr because they reject the punishment of the grave. The point being this, they will say that if you base a ruling upon a *khāḥ* *aḥad* we are not going to treat that ruling in the same way as a ruling based upon a *mutawātir ḥadīth*. That is the basic fruit.

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Student: So, if something has hundred, hundred, hundred they are going bang, that's *ḥarām* (inaudible).



Ustādh: Or six, six, six, six, six, six, i.e. the minimum number for it to not be an *aḥad ḥadīth*. So, if they said at that level and there is a ruling based on that saying something is *farḍ* or *ḥarām* they will say that is *farḍ* or *ḥarām*. But anything at any point less than that (obviously I am mega, mega summarising, this is weeks of what I have done in ten minutes), then that they will say, that has an implication. If it is a *ḥadīth* in *fiqh* it has a legal implication, if it is a *ḥadīth* in *‘aqīdah* it has a theological implication.

So, for example, if there is a *ḥadīth* which they consider to be *aḥād* they will say that it being *aḥād* means that a person who denies it and says, ‘I reject this *ḥadīth*,’ he won’t be a *kāfir*. Whereas if you were to reject the *ḥadīth* which was *ḥarām* then what the Ḥanafis are basically saying (this is incredible thinking by the way), what they are basically saying is that this person is basically saying no to Allāh and His Messenger ﷺ straight out because it is established knowledge, it is certain knowledge. It’s like you are saying that to Qur’ān or something like that. So, you are rejecting it. Then they are kind of making the excuse and saying if someone was to reject something which has some potential ‘speculative’ basis in terms of its authenticity in terms of being established, then we are going to give the guy and say he is not out and out *kāfir*, he could be on his way there. That’s the point. And vice versa as well from the obligatory and not nature.

That’s from a *fiqh* point of view. If the *ḥadīth* had nothing to do with *fiqh* but *imān*, so for example, Prophet ﷺ said: “The slave will be punished in the grave by so and so,” and you look at the *ḥadīth* and it is *khbar aḥād* and not *mutawātir* or it is a form of a *gharīb ḥadīth* for example, then they will say if a person was to deny the concept of the punishment of the grave then he wouldn’t be a *kāfir* because that principle, that theological fact has not been established by certain knowledge according to them.

What is the response of Ahl’l-Sunnah?

There are a number of responses. Number one, the principle we reject. If it is authentic it doesn’t matter if one person brings it, it is authentic. That’s the refutation of the principle. That’s why you don’t see Ḥanafis turning around today saying it is not obligatory to believe in the punishment of the grave because we would say it is established in the Qur’ān, it is established here, it is established there. There are indications and indications and indications, so it builds up a complete picture anyway regardless of the idea of the principle.

Student: (inaudible)

Ustādh: The Ḥanafis are the ones who made this idea famous, utilising *khbar aḥād* in *fiqh* and changing the classification as a result. The concept of *wājib*... because it doesn’t make sense, right? You have *sunnah* which is recommended and then you have *farḍ* which is obligated. What does it mean to have a category in between? If I were to ask anyone here, what would you describe the category in between? Because in Arabic, is there a difference between *wājib* and *farḍ*?

Student: (inaudible): *Wājib* is something that you have to do as well but it is not like *farḍ* which feels like an establishing pillar in your life (inaudible).

Ustādh: That's your experience speaking. There is nothing in the linguistics to suggest that at all.

Student: No.

Ustādh: That's very important. Do you understand that? Everyone here would say the same. What he just said when you say the word *farḍ*, it makes your hair go up like that whereas when you say *wājib* you kind of feel relaxed. That's cultural conditioning. In the technical sense there has never been a difference in the language between *wājib* and *farḍ*. However, the Ḥanafis popularized a difference. So, I ask you, what do you understand to be the difference?

Student: Is it because of the implication that those who reject *farḍ* there is a more severe indication?

Ustādh: Absolutely.

Student: But then when you explain the other thing about *khābar aḥād* and how it is treated its underlying reason which the Ḥanafis adopt that position in order to allow more room.

Ustādh: Without a shadow of a doubt. This whole fifteen-minute conversation of tangent is because I said to Muhammad Faqih if it wasn't for the Ḥanafis we would all be lost. Because even if we accept it or not what they attempted to do is to introduce a principle, as their entire *fiqh* by the way. I have been telling people for donkeys' years. They have no idea. The Ḥanafī school is out there on a mission to make things as easy as possible for people. It turns out crazy at the end because it went to every single detail and you create robots. However, it was always with the intention of you know what, they don't read, they don't study, they don't do anything, so we will tell them to stand like this, do this, don't question, don't ask just whatever. So, it had some consequences but it's the objective. The objective is what? The objective is to categorise everything in a very, very specific way to the most unbelievable detail. The other *madhāhib* it can't be argued that they go to that level. You might say that's a bit unfair. So, I would say this: Out of all four schools which is the school which is most intolerant, at any level? Whether it is politically or socially, there is not a shadow of a doubt it is the Ḥanafī school—the most intolerant. And the people have made it, let's be fair. Not the Ḥanafī school, not Abu Ḥanīfah and maybe not even the people, maybe some of the leaders.

Student: (inaudible)

Ustādh: Let me put the other way forward. In what way is the Ḥanafī school tolerant to other people?



Then, if you were to argue which of the four schools encourages people to move on and out of the school? It is definitely not the Ḥanafis. You can argue about the rest, but it is not the Ḥanafis. So, they wanted control and I think, as I have said before, I think some people need control.

Student: But that's not the Ḥanafī school that is the generations that came (inaudible).

Ustādh: I always used to think to myself it was the Deobandis. When I was teaching *Fiqh* of *Ṣalāh* for x amount of years, I used to think it was the fault of the Indo-subcontinent, our Pak culture conservativeness, clashing with something nice and convenient. I think that is too simplistic. I think if we go back further you will find slight glimpses of that little bit of... And then you could argue something bigger, you could say it is not actually the conservative nature of Paks but the conservative nature of non-Arabs. Because it is a very non-Arab type of school—not exclusively but quite a bit.

This is all supposition, I could all be completely wrong. But what I am not wrong about is that *wājib* and *fard* as a word is the same. The Ḥanafis then introduced the idea that you know what we can differentiate this in its consequence. So, we will say that from the outside they are exactly the same. But in the details, if one was to deny one of them he would become a *kāfir* and the other one he wouldn't. Why? Because that one was established by non-*aḥād*, more certain, and this one was established by *aḥād*, so we will give the guy a little bit of leeway. Practically, it makes no difference, it is an academic discussion.

Student: It does though, doesn't it? When you are saying to someone if you don't believe this you are out of Islam or are not.

Ustādh: Which is why the slogans used to come when people started taking interest in the 90's and the 2000's. That's why like I said Ḥizb'l-Taḥrīr, for all their *khilāf* and their compete ignorance and lack of tradition, the only thing they became known for in Muslim communities, societies, in the Muslims lands, in the Western lands, these are the people who don't believe in the punishment of the grave stay well away from them. *Masākīn*, they caused their own problem. The Ḥanafis were never fussed about this issue. You will never go to a Ḥanafī mosque at any time in your life and they say to you, '*Right, from the 'aqīdah of Ahl'l-Sunnah is that you don't believe in the punishment of the grave.*'

Student: (inaudible)

Ustādh: That's the only thing we are told to believe in! It's correct. They said were saying we're going to take their principles and we are going to wow the people, the ignorant university masses, the university students that we have *fiqh* and we know *uṣūl*, and what do you think? You are a thinking person. It went all over the place.

Student: Another example, Imām Bukhāri mentions the *ḥadīth* of a *ṣaḥābi* telling the *ṣaḥābah* that the direction of the *Qiblah* has changed—*aḥad ḥadīth*.

Ustādh: Correct. Bukhāri made a major point of this in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* of using versions of *ḥadīth*... When we go for *ʿUmrah* and *Ḥajj*, we do this to the groups in the *masjid*. I say that this incident is proof of the *Sunnah*—the changing of the *Qiblah*. The changing of the *Qiblah* is the most famous proof and rejection of the concept of this *aḥad-mutawātir* differentiation. There is no differentiation. Certain knowledge is based upon a single person if they are authentic. We are not saying that every *aḥad ḥadīth* is authentic. We are saying that if the guy is authentic then it doesn't matter whether he has another person to back him up because we have established that individual's authenticity.

So, we talked about all these hands going up and down, you have three options. You are either going to do what the *fuqahā'* do mostly, especially the *Ḥanafis* which is say: choose one, ignore the rest or try to explain away the rest. So, it is to the ears, and the reason I said about the schools is because not all the *Ḥanafis* touch the ears, but the ones who are told to touch the ears they are told this is the only way that you pray, and the rest is okay, it's their opinion, blah, blah, blah, but you don't follow it. So, you stick to that opinion and nothing else matters.

The second approach is like I explained last week that in this scenario all of it is the same thing, so you do a massive reconciliation. I said that last week. I said that if you look at the ears and the shoulders they are all close, so if they are all so close then it could mean the same thing.

If I lift my hands here, one person is saying that my hands are at my ears, another person is saying my hands are at my shoulders because one person is looking at my fingers and that is representing the hand and another person is looking at my palms and that is representing [my hand].



So, it is a subjective reality. So, if all of the *ḥadīth* are all over the show then we can combine it like that as reconciliation. And I said that is what I was always comfortable with.

And Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn he came and he said (that's the third approach), which is that this issue is actually one of those unique ones or rare ones I should say which is so

flexible that all of it is game. All of it is happening. They are all authentic *ḥadīth*, all indicate a different moment, time, mood, reality.

Now, back in the day people used to get confused. They would say what the Prophet ﷺ prays in ten different ways? Well, you would have that problem if it was a significant difference between the actions. But if we are talking about the height of where your hands are, and we know that the focus of the prayer is not the physicality but internal, then absolutely you would expect some variation on the outside. And as you are going to see, unlike Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn, my **class position** when it comes to the position of the hands [when standing and reciting] is that it is as flexible as the positioning when you raise them. So, I believe that hands are prayed with at the sides like the Mālikis pray. I believe that. I believe it to be a *sunnah*. And I believe it to be under the navel and I believe it to be on the chest.

Someone says to me: What do you think the majority time? I am going with the chest, but I am very comfortable with all the other positions. I find it very difficult after many years of my life spent on this to think that all the other *ḥadīth* can just be away, that they are all weak or that they can all be reconciled. And this reconciliation for me is the best. We will come to that.

Student: I don’t understand this concept of choosing an opinion and sticking to it.

Ustādh: It is the *madh-hab* approach. There are two aspects behind it: (1) they don’t believe that Prophet ﷺ could have varied his action. So, they would say that the variation would indicate either a mistake of a Companion or they would say variation indicates that some are abrogated. So, if there are lots of *ḥadīth* like this at the shoulders and then there are five about the ears, they would say all of the shoulders are abrogated, it has to be therefore the ears only. Or if there was some other thing they would say it was a mistake. That’s what it means. The other aspect of sticking to your opinion and rest are no good is because they are worried about confusion and in fairness so are we. They are saying: Stick to this opinion and don’t consider any other opinion and you will be fine because this is a scholarly *mujtahid* opinion and that therefore, if you ignore the rest you will not be in trouble. You will not fall into any risk. So that’s the rationale for that approach.

So, let me just make it clear then, that the fingers that are being described is:

يُضْمُّ بَعْضُهَا إِلَى بَعْضٍ، يَعْنِي: يَرْصُّ بَعْضُهَا إِلَى بَعْضٍ،

So, they are not like this (outstretched). At no stage are the fingers outstretched but they are together. Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn said that some of the scholars said that you spread them out. He says:

ولكن الصحيح ما ذكره المؤلف؛ لأنه الوارد عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم.

What has been narrated from the Prophet ﷺ is that the fingers were not outstretched. That doesn't mean that you put them like this (tightly closed together), they are like this [natural distance between the fingers] they are just together. They are not stuck together.

ممدودة يعني: غير مقبوضة،

*Maqbūḍah* means like this to grasp [fists closed], so he is saying open.

والمدُّ: فتحها ضدَّ القبض

*Tamuddu'l-shay'* means you stretch it out, outstretched—the opposite of grasping or clasping. This has been established in the *Sunan* as narrated by Imām al-Tirmidhi in the Chapter of the Prayer: That Which Has Been Related to the Spreading of the Fingers in the *Takbīr* and the *ḥadīth* of Abu Hurayrah ؓ that he said:

كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا قام للصلاة رفع يده مدا.

That he would raise his hands fingers outstretched. And this has also been narrated by Imām al-Nasā'i 884 and it is a *ḥadīth* which is considered authentic.

كالسجود

Just like when in prostration.

Like a person would in their *sajdah*.

فإنه يجعل يديه حذو منكبيه

(00:48:00)

So, when a person is in their *sajdah* they place their hands on the floor like they would if you were to freeze this guy and make him stand up, if you were to lift him up in his *sajdah*, then that's what he would look like. So, that tells us immediately that when people make *sajdah* like this (fingers pressed together, hands close to the head, elbows close to the body)... This is not the section of the *sajdah*. *Sajdah* is coming but he just mentioned it. So, people who make the *sajdah* like this (fingers pressed together, hands close to the head, elbows close to the body) no one goes like this in *takbīrat'l-ihrām*, do they? But you do see people in *sajdah* like this.

## Q & A

Q: Is there any difference between raising the hands between the *madhāhib* in the *janāzah*? Keeping them down during *ṣalāt al-Janāzah* versus

A: There is, yes. But that's way before its time, bro.

Student: I'm just saying because in *ʿUmrah* they had their hands down.

Ustādh: In between? Yes, there is a difference. But that's a long question. It all goes back down to what you are doing when you're not raising your hands. Are you standing? Are you praying? Depending upon the classification then that's where your hands should be. You know you've seen people praying next to you, and when they are in *rukūʿ* and they stand up from *rukūʿ* (some raise their hands and others don't raise their hands) some put their hands on their chest and others put their hands at the sides. And the reason there's a difference there amongst the people in that act is because they're trying to say whether this person is standing or is this a new position. If he's standing, then you don't stand in the prayer except that your right is over the left. If this is a new position called 'the standing between *rukūʿ* and *sajdah*', then it would mean that your hands should go down to the sides, which is the position of the majority. We say that there is no evidence for it to be *qiyās* (analogy) on the position before. So, therefore it's a new position and if it's a new position then what's the principle? It's *ʿibādah* and any action requires evidence and so we need to have evidence to lift hands up from the side to the top. In the absence of that evidence for this new position, your default is hands at the sides. And the same argument will be extended to *janāzah* and *ʿīd* and what happens through the *takbīrs* in between.

Q: My Breastfeeding during Ramaḍān. And if it really tires a person out, is it okay for her to fast alternative days of Ramaḍān using a day off to retain health or is it better to just not fast? If the latter, what does she need to do afterwards in terms of making up the fasts and *fidya*?

A: It's difficult to say which one is better and which one is not because in principle you miss fasting due to this then you do make it up. It's a very good question because there isn't a position in the *ayah* that suggests that you're doing one on, getting energy, one off etc. Obviously, the concession in the *ayah* of fasting is for damage or harm to be caused to the mother and to the child. So, a middle position? I don't know. I need to think about that. Ask me next week.

Q: On that, if you miss a few fasts as you were menstruating, do all fasts have to be made up by next Ramaḍān?

A: It is *sunnah* to, a person should do that.

Student: But it's not sinful if they don't?

Ustādh: If they tried and they didn't then they wouldn't be sinful, no.

Q: Despite agreeing with you that all the actions we mentioned, the *raf' al-yadayn*; the raising of the two hands, sitting with *tawarruk* etc. I find it a bit *ajīb* thinking that a person can pray one *rak'ah* with his hands on his chest, his second *rak'ah* with his hands towards his side, one *rak'ah* sitting with *tawarruk*. I'm sure you get the gist. And if this refers to a person deliberately changing these acts as apposed to someone praying with his hands towards his side of him being very tired.

A: So, let me just make it clear that I do not believe that this is the approach to every single different narration that exists in Islam. So, I didn't say that a person sits *tawarruk* then he sits *nasab* and then *tawarruk*. No. I believe that the *sunnah* is *tawarruk*, big time. *Tawarruk* is when you sit in *tashahhud* then your left foot comes out [and] your left buttock is on the floor as apposed to when you're sitting on your left foot. And in the third or fourth *rak'ah* of the *farḍ* prayer, your left buttock sits on the floor itself directly and your left foot comes up and it comes out of your right.

Anyway, my example is the hands. Definitely I believe that with the hands, because there are a number of *ḥadīth* that describe different positions and that for me are authentic. Not enough of them are weak. So, if they are all established then you have to explain to me what is the solution? What are your arguments going to be? You are either going to argue that some of the Companions made a mistake [or] you're either going to argue that all of one type of *ḥadīth* are abrogated. What's another argument? You're going to have to argue that some of the *ḥadīth* are *ḍa'īf*—that's the first place where you start. I don't buy any of these arguments. So, if the only option that I have left is that the majority of the differing forms of *ḥadīth* of placing hands are established, then what's your solution? I am absolutely comfortable with the idea of changing hands.

And you make a point of differentiating between a person doing it intentionally and a person being tired. I say to you, what's the difference between a person when they don't really care where their hands are? If you're not focusing on where the hands are and you're in a *qirā'ah* or you're enjoying the meaning or you're focusing on your *ṣalāh*, the hands are following the *qirā'ah*. It's not the other way around where you're thinking, '*I cannot move my hands from this position. My hands are so important. Don't move my hands.*' You don't think that. When you're standing in front of Allāh ﷻ you know that the *sunnah* is the right hand to go on the left hand and you know from the *ḥadīth* that there are some here (hands a little higher than the naval), some there (hands a little higher up to the chest). My argument is that sometimes a person might drop his hands in the middle whilst they're in the prayer then put them back again or move down slowly. Or maybe itch and then go back, meaning the point is that if you were to itch something and then you say right okay, there again. I don't think that's the *sunnah*. I believe that when it goes back on again it's *tābi'* to the *ibādah*, not the *aṣl* of the *ibādah*. The *ibādah* is *ṣalāh* and *qirā'ah*. That's my opinion. I told you the week before that it's not a popular one. I haven't read it in the books, but that's what I fully believe.

Student: I remember Shaykh Kehlan... (inaudible).

Ustādh: You mean you heard it himself?

Student: Yeah in year one in one of our lessons.

Ustādh: You mean you heard him say it himself?

Student: (inaudible)

Ustādh: Yeah Shaykh Kehlan follows this opinion. He's also a big believer in this opinion. People say (I'm just giving you an example), people say that Mālikis pray with their hands at the side. *Akhi*, 'Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr is the one who prayed with his hands at his sides. He's a Companion—*ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ*. We don't try to blame it on the Mālikis. Blame it on the Companion. We have to work out why he prayed with his hands on his sides. So, I think this issue is flexible. No need to cause a problem. *Wa Allāhu a'lam*. It's a good question, though.

Q: My daughter is turning ten soon, Should I be asking her to pray all five *ṣalāh* and waking her for *Fajr*?

A: Absolutely, but if it hasn't happened until now then it's not going to happen just over night. *Fajr* is 4:00 in the morning. Mission, bro! Could've chosen winter to tell her, rather than slapping her in the summer time. But yes, we need to start it, serious.

Q: Can *du'ā'* be said from the Qur'ān in *sujūd*?



A: *Du‘ā’* in *sujūd* should not be from the Qur‘ān. If you can vary it because you understand Arabic then fine, but in principle, no. There's a *ḥadīth* which prohibits it.

Q: If I want to hold a second *walimah* of sorts back home and the couple remain in the U.K., is it *sunnah* to do that? Or is it okay to do that?

A: It's obviously not the *sunnah*. But I think it's permissible. Because I think the ‘illah here is to make people happy and if you're saying, ‘*I want to keep my people happy because they want to taste from my happiness,*’ which is the whole point of the *walimah*, ‘*but I also want other people to benefit,*’ then I think that's okay. It's a very good question because the idea would be, is it a *bid‘ah* or not? Well I think as long as you don't believe it to be established from the *Sunnah* but it's something you want to express your happiness by charity and don't make it a regular thing, then I think that's okay.

Q: If it is from the *Sunnah* to make *du‘ā’* for others (which if course it is), but not from the *Sunnah* to ask others to make *du‘ā’* for you and if a person is dealing with this, can we ask others to let us know what *du‘ā’* they would like us to make for them, for example, when going on *Ḥajj*?

Ustādh: I personally believe that that's correct, meaning that you should not ask other people to make *du‘ā’* for you. I do not believe that it is *sunnah* to go up to another person and say, ‘*Hey, can you make du‘ā’ for me?*’

So, I want to make something clear. It is permissible to tell another person, ‘*Can you make du‘ā’ for me?*’ But I'm just saying it's not the *sunnah*. I don't think it is the way of the Prophet ﷺ. I don't think this is the way of Muslims. I don't think it is the way of the ‘*aqīdah*’ of the Ahl'l-Sunnah. So yes, it is completely allowed for you to do that.

Q: Also, if people habitually ask you randomly to keep them in your *du‘ā’*, is it reasonable to ignore? Or are you obliged to make *du‘ā’* for them?

A: Obligated or not obliged, I don't know. If someone says, ‘*Make du‘ā’...*’ Everyone says make *du‘ā’*. That's why people have to stop saying it, because it's silly. It's like how the goras say, ‘*I love you honey. I love you. I love you,*’ every five seconds, ‘*I love you,*’ which basically means they don't love anyone. And it's like the Pakistanis’ *in shā’ Allāh*, it's all the same. ‘*In shā’ Allāh, in shā’ Allāh,*’ which means nothing, like nothing.

Student: Is there a reward in saying it?

Ustādh: I don't think there's any reward in that. When the Pakistanis say *in shā’ Allāh* it means nothing, when the goras say I love you, it means nothing... it means nothing. When the Arabs say, ‘*Kayfal-ḥāl?*’ it means nothing. They just keep asking again and

again. So, there are certain phrases at certain cultures that are said for conversational purposes. *Allāhu ta‘āla a‘lam.*

# 35. CHAPTER 16. LESSON 9: THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PRAYER

We are at:

رافعا يديه مضمومتين الأصابع ممدودة حذو منكبيه كالسجود، ويسمع الإمام من خلفه كقراءته في أولتي  
غير الظهريين، وغيره نفسه، ثم يقبض كوع يسراه تحت سرته

He raises his hands, stretching out his fingers but keeping them together.

So, not like that [spread out] and not like that [clasped together].

The two adjectives:

مضمومتين الأصابع ممدودة حذو منكبيه كالسجود

They are together, and they are outstretched at the level of his shoulders such as when he is in *sujūd*.

This is on page 32 of *al-Mumti*‘ Shaykh is saying that according to the situation the imām has to make sure that the people behind him hear him. He says that if it is only one person praying behind you then you can recite quietly but if there is a large body of people then you must raise your voice. Of course, if you have a microphone that covers the situation there as well. If a person cannot do that, i.e. cannot make himself heard, then he is allowed to seek help for that to happen such as what the Prophet ﷺ did:

استعان بمبلغ يبلغ عنه

The *muballigh* is the one that does *tabligh*. *Tabligh* means to pass on. *Bulūgh* of course is when you pass from pre-pubescent to puberty. The *tabligh* is when you go out, and you know we call the *Tablighis* the go out and they do the *da‘wah*, passing on the word.

The *muballigh* is the one who carries it on. The *muballigh* here, is the one who passes on the sound. We also know this person as the *mukabbir*. The *mukabbir* is the one, when the speaker goes out says, 'Allāhu akbar,' and when the imām says, 'Sami'a Allāhu liman ḥamidah,' the *mukabbir* says, 'Rabbana wa laka'l-ḥamd.' This is a person that can be used such as for example, when the Prophet ﷺ did that when Abu Bakr ؓ came, and they prayed together.

وكان صلوات الله وسلامه عليه مريضاً لا يُسمعُ صوته المأمومين

This was the end of his life ﷺ he was very weak at that time, he was dying, and he could not raise his voice to make sure the people could see him:

فصلَّى أبو بكر رضي الله عنه عن يمينه؛ وجعل يبلغُ الناسَ تكبيرَ رسولِ الله صَلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم، إذا كَبَّرَ  
الرَّسُولُ عليه الصَّلَاةُ والسَّلَامُ بصوتٍ منخفضٍ كَبَّرَ أبو بكر بصوتٍ مرتفعٍ فسمعه الناسُ

At that time, it was even narrated that he sat down ﷺ and Abu Bakr stood and he was reciting very quietly and Abu Bakr ؓ was the louder, visual version of the Prophet ﷺ. In that last penultimate prayer, or few prayers before his death, he ﷺ lead the prayer sat at the front, Abu Bakr ؓ standing next to him, and actually that was really all you could see—Abu Bakr. He was effectively the pseudo imām and the people were following Abu Bakr's voice and movements even though the Prophet ﷺ was moving and making *takbīr*. This is the concept of the *muballigh*.

And if there is no need, then one should not do it. That is the irritating thing that we said about going to the *Haram*, and you see this guy doing special effects and making it a feature of going to the *Haram*. I get it that when people hear that guy's voice on a recording they get nostalgic, but we are about *Sunnah* not nostalgia. We should not be having that kind of thing.

If there is an argument (and there is) that it is not the issue that we cannot hear him because he has a microphone but the issue that even one missed *takbīr* would throw the whole 1-2 million *jamā'ah* into chaos therefore we need a backup system where the guy is standing at a separate place and he can physically see the imām and he is not dependent on the [speaker system]. Then there is an argument there. But then I want to make sure that the guy is seeing the imām (and I think he does via camera system) because he is in a room, he is not a platform anymore. In Masjid'l-Nabawi it is different, he is on a platform. But in Makkah he is in a random security room and he is watching the screen. But then if that is the case, then we want him to make *takbīr* not his own musical show. He creates his own performance. We do not want that.

The author says that imām must make the people behind him hear. Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn says: Does that mean that is recommended to do or is it obligatory?

That is an important question. Is it obligatory for the imām to be heard? The reason this question is important is because if you are leading the prayer (and this has happened, certainly to me, hundreds of times) that you completely forget that you are a leading people, so you just jump into your normal individual prayer. So, you are not saying *takbīr* for anyone, you are just chilling praying by yourself and then you have all the Paks behind you they don’t know what is going on. What happens in that scenario?

### المشهور من المذهب

The established position from the Ḥanbali school is that this is a recommended action only and not obligatory:

وَأَنَّ الْإِمَامَ لَهُ أَنْ يَكْبِّرَ تَكْبِيرًا خَفِيًّا لَا يُسْمَعُ، كَمَا أَنَّ الْمُنْفَرِدَ وَالْمَأْمُومَ لَا يَرْفَعَانِ الصَّوْتَ

He says that imām should be raising his voice only minimally just like a person who is praying by himself, there is no difference. He is not obligated to make his voice raised but they recommend him to do it so that it makes it easier for the people. You can see what’s going on there. Why? Because the *aṣl* of the prayer is that it is *dhikr*. The *aṣl* of the prayer is that it is a moment of reflection and meditation and as Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿لَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافُ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ۝١١٠﴾

“[Prophet], do not be too loud in your prayer, or too quiet, but seek a middle way.” [*Sūrat al-Isrāʾ*: 110]

So not very loud, not shouting, and not very quiet. And Allāh ﷻ says:

﴿وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ۝١٩﴾

“Go at a moderate pace and lower your voice, for the ugliest of all voices is the braying of asses.” [*Sūrat Luqmān*: 19]

You have to keep your sound quiet. That is the *aṣl* of *ʿibādah*, the *aṣl* of *dhikr*. I want you to know that our *dīn* is not one of chanting. That's important by the way.

I need to say a few words about this. I use this phrase a lot and it is very important that you are comfortable with it—the *aṣl*. The *aṣl* means the status quo, the basic position, the mainstream basic reality—the *aṣl*, the foundation. The *aṣl* in our faith is that it is a quiet one, a private one, unlike other faiths. Is there a loud faith?

Student: Christians?

Ustādh: I do not about that. I was about to say that, but they are not really. That would be the same as saying the Muslims are loud because they make *talbiyah*. *Talbiyah* is *sunnah* to make very loud and proud and in your face and *takbīrāt'l-ʿīd* as well are meant to be loud. In the month of *Dhu'l-Hijjah*, the Companions would walk through the markets and say it very loudly. But would we then judge the *dīn* based on those moments of *dhikr*? It would be unfair to say that, we would say that is the exception.

Student: What if they are doing it every week though, gospel?

Ustādh: I do not think gospel is Christian Orthodoxy. I do not know. I think the black choir gospel scene, I do not think is Orthodox Christianity.

Student: They are just chilling.

Ustādh: They are just chilling, yeah. It just culture coming in, let us have a sing-song, it comes naturally to those folks, they love it.

Student: I was thinking hymns.

Ustādh: In the Old Testament and New Testament they go in with hymns of, the songs of, and they are called the Songs of David, the Songs of David, even though we know it was *qirā'ah* and *tasbīḥ*. We know that when the Prophet ﷺ told us about the *qirā'ah* of Abu Mūsa'l-Ash'ari ؓ, he ﷺ said that he had *mizmār min mazāmīr Dāwūd*, that your *qirā'ah* is so beautiful that you have a flute from the flutes Dawūd. And we know that Allāh ﷻ is praising his *tasbīḥ* all the time. The Jews translated it, then the Christians took it to the next level, they translated it as the Songs of David. Maybe that is the basis for gospel singing? Is it a loud faith? I do not know.

The reason it is important to say this is because nearly ever deviant type of sect within Islam certainly, is characterised by a bit of loudness—chanting etc. I want people to recognise that our *dīn* in principle, is a quiet, private, respectful, meditative type of *dīn* until the exception occurs.

Student: What about Jews chanting out loud?

Ustādh: Are they meant to chant out loud? I do not think they do. When I think of Orthodox Jews, I do not feel loudness. In fact, I feel very much the opposite. In actual fact, it could be one of those examples of Muslims being in the middle. Jews, I see as super hushed, super dark, quiet, black, everything is dark, hidden and covered. And I think Christians is very much out there, loud, etc. and we are something in the middle, we have a lot this a bit of that.

But that is the *aṣl*. If there is a need, we need to portray sound. That is why Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn says that even though the *madh-hab* says that the imām is only recommended, actually the author, Imām al-Ḥajjāwī, his statement indicates obligation.

لا على سبيل الاستحباب

That is at the top of page 33. Because, he says:

وغيره نفسه

Because in the next line he is going to say that other than the imām, only needs to recite to himself, so that he can hear it.

(00:22:30)

I have been thinking with respect to the question [asked last week]. So, the question is about pregnant women and breastfeeding women. I posted something about that on Facebook today. This is a controversial issue. Allāh ﷻ says in the Qurʾān:

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ﴾

“Fast for a specific number of days, but if one of you is ill, or on a journey, on other days later.” [Sūrat al-Baqarah:184]

Whoever from you is sick or on journey then make up those days from other days. This *ayah* led to a big discussion concerning the various groups of people who are exempt from fasting. So, those people who are permanently ill or they are on medication that doesn't allow that they miss the medication their situation would worsen. This person never needs to fast ever again in their life. And for this person they pay a *fidyah*, an expiation. And that expiation is about... we say fiver a day, a fiver a day worth of staple food.



The question is that that's easy for a person who is never going to recover. As for the people who are going to recover, who are temporarily ill then they take the day off and they make it up afterwards. So, the pregnant woman and the breastfeeding woman which category do they go in? Should they go into the category of people who can make it up afterwards or not? And the scholars differed over this. Abu Ḥanīfah his position was that you fast only and that's it nothing more to be done. You have to make up those fasts. Across the board, the vast majority of scholars, all four Imāms, insist that the fasts need to be made up—this is pregnancy and breastfeeding. The idea being that the pregnant woman she fasts she becomes weak it affects the embryo, etc. and the breastfeeding woman she doesn't eat, breast milk suffers, baby suffers, etc. Increased tightness that leads to potential increase in infection, problems, immune system down, etc.

This is of course not an obligation, but this is a reality and some women get more affected and for others it is not even an issue at all and many of our women fasting day and night in these scenarios—never an issue. However, it is clear that they have a concession to not fast. The real question is do they have to make up the fasts or not. Abu Ḥanīfah says fast only. Aḥmad and Shāfi'i they added more *tafṣīl*. They said that it depends upon whether she fears for herself or fears for her child. If she fears for herself only then just making up [the fasts] and... They had details and they all mentioned different things. And then there is the controversial opinion which is the opinion which was famously held by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and a number of other scholars as well including 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar. What is that position? [Their position is] that there is no fast to make up.

The minority position was that no, she just pays like the person who is permanently ill and that's it. So, these are the mainstream positions. For me the position which is completely unacceptable is the one which is held by, you could almost argue the majority, which is that you fast and pay a *fidyah*. For me it either has to be what Abu Ḥanīfah said, which is that you have to fast and make it up. That's the safest position, there is no doubt about that. That's also the position of Shaykh Kehlan for example, and always has been, that a woman makes up those fasts by themselves that's it, no penalty, no expiation, nothing needed. You see the idea that you fast and expiate is almost like you are paying for the concession. I don't like that. There is no basis for that from the *shar'* point of view. I mean not no basis but anyway. As for me personally I feel very comfortable and I am convinced by the position that a woman does not need to make up that fast because I believe that in *aṣl* she is harmed, and the baby does suffer in a normative scenario and I don't believe that in that kind of situation therefore a woman is obliged to fast.

Therefore, unlike what Shaykh Kehlan, Abu Ḥanīfah, and that school would say, that the *qiyās* (the analogy) of the breastfeeding and the pregnant woman is with the sick person, I say that it is with the permanently sick person. Take gender away and just look at what's happening. I think what's happening is that this person is so ill that if they were to attempt to fast they would end up doing the odd one and the majority they

wouldn't, and they would pack up so much that it would be a ridiculous number and you would have hundreds of days to make up. So Allāh ﷻ allowed that person to pay off. I think what's the difference between that and the pregnant or breastfeeding woman? Any normal, I mean normal, non-liberal, safe environment woman, in her child bearing age is going to want to follow the *sunnah* of child reproduction, not going to stick to this one child, two children, 2.4 children of the West but whatever she and her body can handle. Let's assume three or four children and that would be over a period of every couple of years a child, based upon the idea that breastfeeding is a natural contraceptive—a natural contraceptive which is not 100% but it causes a little bit of difficulty for conception. So, the increased prolactin is like an indication. It's the body's way of trying to stave off the second kid coming. So, a person over ten years you would expect easily with 3-4 kids to not fast—pregnancy, breastfeeding, breastfeeding, pregnancy, breastfeeding, breastfeeding, pregnancy. So, we could end up just over a ten-year period with a year's worth of fasts to make up—mission. And women are sitting there planning, right we are going to knock it out in the winter, etc. Women's lives are madness they are.

(00:27:30)

For me, like I said I find this position to be most convincing that they don't need to make up the fasts. I accept that the safer position is to fast. And I think it is sufficient for a woman to pay for every single day a sum of money that will purchase food for a poor person and that's it. That's what my position is. And Allāh ﷻ knows best. With respect to a woman who feels that she can give it a go and do one day on, two days off, etc. to see how it goes, I think that's permissible. I think it's allowed for her to do that. And when she doesn't fast, I don't think she needs to make it up. That is my opinion.

Student: Is that a position you teach? Because I think it is a reality for a lot of our women.

Ustādh: It is a position that I reluctantly teach. The reason I teach it reluctantly isn't because I don't believe in it, but because I get so much headache for it. I definitely believe and with my local people I am telling them all the time. But that's a small group of people. The rest of the people want to know. There is a huge level of immaturity out there in dealing with an opinion that's outside the opinions of the four Imāms. On one side, that's a good thing. On the other side, it's an ignorant thing. I'm very happy that people would say to me, '*Jazāk Allāh khayr*, I prefer to sit with the four Imāms.' I want people to say things like that because I want people to increase in their respect for sticking to a position that the four Imāms agree on, because that's no joke. But I don't like the ignorance of the other side that kind of say that if a person was to go outside the four Imāms this is *kufṛ* or you're a *mubtadi'*, etc., and that's actually a really loud voice at the moment. So, it's a headache.

Student: You said the *fidyah*, when she is not fasting, right?

Ustādh: Yes. What do you mean she is not fasting?

Student: When you said she can make up the fasts or give the *fidyah*—when you said £5 per day.

Ustādh: I'm saying that a woman who didn't fast as a breastfeeding or pregnant woman, I'm giving her the option of paying away those fasts through *fidyah* instead of fasting. If she decides to make up the fasts, it's even better.

Student: Can the *fidyah* be paid... So, meaning for the next Ramadan the woman cannot fast...

Ustādh: That should not happen by the way. I do believe that there has to be a real *ḍarar'l-khawf'l-mutawaqqi'*, a real actual belief that there's going to be a harm. The idea that next Ramadan I'm going to be in this situation—you don't know. There could be a miscarriage, or a baby could stop feeding, or whatever. We shouldn't ever be thinking in advance. So, you don't pay in advance that I'm going to be pregnant or breastfeeding next year, because I've just started breastfeeding I am definitely going to be breastfeeding, etc. That's what everyone thinks, then *Hajj* comes in, or the milk runs out, or work starts, everything changes, so we don't do it like that.

I even have to tell you that when a woman is breastfeeding or pregnant, I'm also not fully comfortable with a person saying, I just read the *fatwa* and I'm not going too fast. I actually want them to have a go, and that causes a big headache when I started teaching this position as well. People were like, '*Astaghfir Allāh, how you can you tell a woman to throw herself into harm's way?*' Which is stupidity. It's not going to kill you! It's only fasting. A person should test themselves and see how problematic it is for them or how problematic it isn't. They have that different kind of approach.

Student: You said that some say you that have to pay and fast. Is there any other example of that, anyone that has to pay and fast?

Ustādh: A person who didn't make it up? They are very strong on the one who is menstruating, because more imāms are a lot more comfortable in saying, '*Why is it that you delayed this for over a year,*' especially if it goes over a year into the next Ramadan. They'll say, '*Why didn't you make it up in the year?*' That's the immediate response, '*Why are you allowing her but not the one who is menstruating?*' Because menstruating is 5-8 days a month, it's never the whole month and in consecutive years. Sometimes it is not going to come, etc. I think my argument is sound, but Allāh knows best.

So, back with the actual text then, page 33 of *al-Mumti'*:

وظاهر كلام المؤلف وهو القول الصحيح أن يكبر تكبيرا مسموعا يسمعه من خلفه

Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn’s position is that it is obligatory for the imām to say the *takbīr* for the following two reasons:

1. Because of the action of the Prophet ﷺ. If this was not obligatory, then there would be no need for him to tell Abu Bakr ؓ to make the *takbīr*.

Does anyone have a response to that? I’m not convinced by that argument. I just don’t think it’s the strongest argument to obligate something. I think that it makes common sense if you’re leading a *jamā‘ah* and it’s nice if they can hear what’s going on and see what’s going on and if you have Abu Bakr ؓ available, then why would you not use him? To say that his action obligated it is very difficult. Also, I want you to know that just an action of the Prophet ﷺ obligating something is not very common. Normally we want a statement from the Prophet ﷺ that obligates something. That’s not exclusive, but usually the case.

Student: Abu Bakr ؓ just carried on in the way that he was leading anyway. The Prophet ﷺ approached them.

Ustādh: Yes, it’s not a big change. I agree.

He says the second evidence is:

ثانياً: لأنه لا يتم اقتداء المأمومين بالإمام إلا بسماع التكبير

This is really questionable—two things that Shaykh al-‘Uthaymīn is going to say that with my greatest respects to him of course, I actually disagree with. He says:

2. It’s not possible for the people to follow the imām properly except by the *takbīr* being made properly, loudly, so everyone can hear it. And *ṣalāh* is a *wājib* (so we bring out the old *qā‘idah*) whatever leads to the *wājib* then it itself is *wājib*, whatever *wājib* can’t be fulfilled by except with it, then it becomes *wājib* itself.

This *aṣl*, this *qā‘idah*, maxim, this rule in *fiqh*, that some scholars use is questionable in and of itself.

A lot of people argue that *wuḍū’* is *wājib* because you can’t do the *wājib* prayer without it (*wājib* means obligatory). We say no, *wuḍū’* is obligatory by itself, *wuḍū’* is obligatory by direct text, *wuḍū’* is obligatory by direct revelation. It’s not obligatory because the prayer needs it. That’s one of the things that it needs, and it is one of the conditions of prayer, but it’s obligated in and of itself. So, we can actually argue about that.

ولو أن الإمام إذا قام من السجود لم يرفع صوته بالتكبير فميت يقوم الناس؟

This is why I feel confident to argue this, to give you an idea as a student of knowledge, of when you should argue and when you shouldn't argue. Why am I getting the confidence to argue with a giant like Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn? Because immediately he started to try and rationalise his position. So, he said: When an imām is rising from the *sajdah* and he does not raise his voice in *takbīr*, when are the people going to stand up?

لا يقومون إلا إذا شرع في الفاتحة وجهر بها، مع أن جهره بالفاتحة على سبيل الاستحباب، وليس في كل صلاة، ولا في كل ركعة؛ ما عدا الفجر.

He says that the only time they're going to stand up is when they start hearing the *Fātiḥah*. So, I say, what's wrong with that? If that's when they stand up when they hear the *Fātiḥah*... I'm not saying you shouldn't say the *takbīr*, but to obligate saying the *takbīr* so they stand before *Fātiḥah*. I just can't see the direct evidence.

Then he makes a more interesting point. He says that to recite *Fātiḥah* loudly is only recommended and not obligatory.

Now if that's the case, I want to know what the difference is. I think he's going to argue that the difference between *takbīr* (me obligating it being said loudly) and *Fātiḥah* not obligatory, is because *Fātiḥah* is for your own pleasure, and *takbīr* is allowing you to move from essential position to position in the prayer.

Student: Is the point not that if it's not obligatory to recite *Fātiḥah* out loud and you didn't make the *takbīr* as well, and they are still chilling in *sajdah*?

Ustādh: That's Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn's point. He's saying that if you leave the *takbīr* being said loud as not obligatory and reciting of *Fātiḥah* not obligatory, then you've left the people as they are. I say, and a number of scholars say, that both of them remain recommended. Why? Because what's obligatory is for the *jamā'ah* to follow, and if it means they follow in a different way, then so be it.

Student: How would they?

Ustādh: So, for example, we're not debating that it's at least recommended for the imām to do it to help the *muṣalli*. So, a person that intentionally doesn't make *takbīr* loudly to say, 'I'm going to punish these Paks behind me and leave them there,' that guy has lost his head and shouldn't be the imām.

But now we're asking a different question: Is it obligatory for him to do so? If he forgot and he stands up, what does he have to do? Does he have to do *sajdat'l-sahw*? That's the question—it's a legal question. And I say, no he doesn't. If the people stand up by one way or the other, then he did his job.

What about like I've done? Which is when you actually realise—you're leading the prayer and you forget that you're leading, it's always the *takbīr* to the *rukū'* that you forget. You remember the rest because suddenly you hear everyone freaking out. But you always forget that one. I've never led a prayer and gone for *rukū'* and everyone's standing there. If you didn't hear the *takbīr*, you'd go for *rukū'*, which goes back to the original question which is: What do people follow? Do people follow a sound or a movement? And I say the movement. That's the *aṣl*, that's the principle of continuing lines.

Let's look at some hypothetical scenario. Let's say that suddenly there was a flash mob prayer announcement—everyone is going to turn up at Cheadle, 10,000 people. 10,000 people come up to Cheadle to pray, the only way that's going to happen is that the car park is going to fill up and it's going to keep going backwards. At that moment, there's no way we can legislate for all the sound. We can maybe delegate a few people to be the *mukabbir*, but we're not covering for that. But we won't need to worry because you'll know that whatever happens, the people behind will be following the people in front of them.

So, I'm comfortable with the idea that I don't believe it is obligatory, and I'm happy with the Ḥanbali school position on this. So, Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn's position, just to make a note, it's obligatory to make the *takbīr* out loud for the people praying behind, but the school position, it's not obligatory, and my class position, not obligatory, and Allāh knows best.

كقراءته في أولتي غير الظهرين

Just like he does with the recitation in the first two units of every prayer other than *Zuhr* and 'Aṣr.

So, the sentence continues: The imām needs to make the people behind him hear him just like he does in the beginning two *rak'ah* of every prayer other than the two *Zuhrs*. And the two *Zuhrs* is a naming system for when things are very obvious, and I've mentioned this before—the Arabic language is one that uses metaphors of course, but it also uses phrases that are very apparent for something. Like the *wajh*, the face, is often used to refer to a person because it's the most obvious and apparent part of a person. When the Prophet ﷺ says, "*Ḥajj* is 'Arafah," it's because it's the dominant reality of *Ḥajj*. So, using the part to describe the full is a basic principle in Arabic. Likewise, *Zuhr* is obviously one of the *Zuhrs*, but 'Aṣr is the other *Zuhr* because it's in that rough

time, and it's dominant by that rough time. Therefore, he's referring to *Fajr*, *Maghrib* and '*Ishā*'. So likewise, this imām is saying, that it's recommended to recite out loud in these two prayers.

(00:41:00)

You should also know that *Maghrib* and '*Ishā*' are also called *al-'Ishā'ayn*—the two '*Ishā*'. The two *Zuhrs* are known as *Zuhr* and '*Aṣr*' and the two '*Ishā*'s are *Maghrib* and '*Ishā*'. Actually, you will find in *ḥadīth*, many times, '*Ishā*' *al-awwal* or the word '*Ishā*' referring to *Maghrib* and not '*Ishā*'. So, you have to be on the ball when you see that.

What does the Shaykh say it refers to?

فَيَجْهَرُ فِي كُلِّ رَكْعَتَيْنِ أُولَيَيْنِ فِي غَيْرِ الظُّهْرَيْنِ، وَيَشْمَلُ الْمَغْرِبَ وَالْعِشَاءَ وَالْفَجَرَ، لَكِنْ الْفَجْرَ لَيْسَ إِلَّا  
رَكْعَتَيْنِ، وَيَشْمَلُ الْجُمُعَةَ، وَالْعِيدَيْنِ، وَالْإِسْتِسْقَاءَ، وَالتَّرَاوِيحَ، وَالْوِتْرَ، وَالْكَسُوفَ، وَكُلُّ مَا تُشْرَعُ فِيهِ  
الْجَمَاعَةُ

So, this therefore includes *Maghrib*, '*Ishā*', *Fajr* (even though *Fajr* only has two). It includes *Jumu'ah* prayer, it includes the two '*Īd* prayers, it includes *ṣalāt al-Istisqā'*, the *ṣalāh* for rain, *tarāwīḥ*, the optional night prayer that is coming up. It includes *Witr* prayer (singular or congregational) and *ṣalāt al-Kusūf*, which is the moon eclipse prayer, and any single prayer in which there is a congregational prayer which is legislated.

I think that is a mistake from Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn because *janāzah* is a congregational prayer that you don't recite out loudly. I don't know whether he forgot that when he said that statement or whether he is following the position of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās. Because one of the opinions that exists within the *janāzah* prayer is that it is recited out loud and this used to be the position of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās—like we do in Mekki *Masājid*. You often hear that Jamā'at Ahl'l-Ḥadīth they follow this position. When you pray behind them in a *Janāzah* prayer, they follow the opinion of Ibn 'Abbās. Whether this is an opinion that Ibn 'Abbās believed in or what I think is that Ibn 'Abbās only did it to teach the people behind him what to say (which I think is far more likely). I don't know, maybe Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn is thinking of that. But actually, not every *jamā'ah* prayer is said out loud.

Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn says:

فَإِنَّهُ يُسَنُّ أَنْ يَجْهَرَ بِالْقِرَاءَةِ



It is *sunnah* to be loud in your recitation. You see, he is very comfortable saying that for the *ṣalāh*, but he wants the *takbīr* to be said out loud. I find that interesting. It is not a ridiculous argument because he will say that Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ؓ, he stood up and he made the *takbīr* loudly, but he didn't recite. That's what Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn would say. He will say that he didn't make the recitation louder, but the *Allāhu akbar* [he did]. And that's why when you have a *makabbir* you do not hear him recite the whole prayer again, you don't hear him recite anything else other than the *takbīr* and whatever is necessary.

Shaykh then asks a question which I have been asked a few times as well. I've never really been convinced of the right answer but let's see what Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn says. He said: Why is the night prayers recited out loud (i.e. *salat al-Maghrib*, 'Ishā', *Fajr*, *tahajjud*, *tarāwīḥ*, are loud prayers), and the prayer of the day are *siriyyah*? This is what we call *ṣalawāt jahriyyah* and *ṣalawāt siriyyah*. The *siriyyah* are *Ḍuhr* and 'Aṣr—the prayer of the main day. Why is that? I've told you before that we don't know the actual reason, that is something from Allāh. But maybe one of the wisdoms is that in the night time, Shaykh al-'Uthaymīn says:

أن الليل تَقِلُّ فيه الوسوسُ

The distractions are minimal, and:

ويجتمع فيه القلبُ واللسانُ على القراءة، فيكون اجتماعُ النَّاسِ على صوتِ الإمامِ وقراءته أبلغَ من تفرقهم

This is where he loses me a little bit. If I have understood what he says, he says that because it is quieter, and everything is calm, people aren't working, there's not so much traffic, sound, everything is quiet. When someone is to recite out loud you are more connected to that person and if you are more connected to that person then you have a better chance of following him. I like what he says: You have a better chance of following him. And you know that when you are praying *Maghrib* or 'Ishā', *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* does not become obligatory for you to recite when you are praying behind the imām. This is according to the three imams except for Shāfi'ī who says you need to recite *Fātiḥah* all the time. With Abu Ḥanīfah there is no reciting of *Fātiḥah* at any time. The other two Imāms [say] if you can hear it being recited then you don't have to recite it. In the *Ḍuhr* and 'Aṣr, the day is so noisy, you can't hear it, so you might as well recite it yourself. That's basically his argument for why he thinks that nighttime is loud, for people to come together on that *qirā'ah*. How does that help the individual person though? I do not know how that helps the individual person if he is praying by himself what is the argument? I don't know.

## وغيره نفسه

Anyone else should recite so that it is audible to him alone.

Anyone who is not an imām, it is required for them to be able to hear themselves. We know that the Ḥanbali school insists on a person having to recite in a way where it is not just that the words are articulated but they can hear the word themselves. They do have a caveat, which is good. There sometimes when you can't hear yourself and it's not your fault. So, if you are reciting and you have a pneumatic drill going off because you are working in a building yard, there is no way you are hearing anything you are saying. So, do the Ḥanbalis say this person is doing *ḥarām* that he has not recited? No. This was a *māni'*, something that was prohibiting them from hearing, but he did everything he could.

Even the schools themselves allow for some kind of leeway to this issue. But as we said our **class position** is that there is no evidence to obligate a person having to hear themselves. Our **class position** is that as long as a person recites, and they know they have said the word—I know I just said *Allāhu akbar*, I didn't hear myself say it, but I said it, I articulated it and nothing else came as a result then we are okay with that.

Shaykh then mentions something very interesting, he said: *Subḥān Allāh* this is amazing. He's playing around now.

والغريب أنهم قالوا هنا رحمهم الله: يُشترط إسماعُ النَّفْسِ في التكبيرِ والقراءة، وقالوا فيما إذا قال الإنسان  
لزوجته: أنت طالق، تَطْلُقْ، وإن لم يُسمع نفسه

He said what is really strange that these scholars here say it is an absolute obligation that a person must hear himself when he makes a *takbīr* and *qirā'ah* but if a man were to say to his wife (in the Chapter of Divorce) that you are divorced then she is divorced even if he doesn't hear himself say it:

وإن لم يُسمع نفسه

According to the Ḥanbalis (this is the weirdest of weird ones), if he says to his wife, '*You are divorced...*' The issue of divorce when it gets to the whole *ṭalāq* thing, is a mega focus point. Can you send it by text message? Can you do this? Can you do that? Can someone else pass the message on? It goes into a lot of detail even when a guy is directly

saying to his wife, 'You are divorced,' but he said it in a way where he knows he has said or believes he knows he said it, but he can't hear it himself that he said it, let alone her hearing it. According to the Ḥanābilah it is done. It is not a condition basically that he has to hear it. It's calling them out on a point, which is fair. He says it's crazy.

وكان مقتضى الأدلة أن تكون المعاملة بالأسهل في حق الله، فكيف نعامله بحق الله بالأشد ونقول: لا بُدَّ أن  
تسمع نفسك. وفي حقّ الآدمي — ولا سيما الطلاق الذي أصله مكروه — نقول: يقع الطلاق وإن لم  
تُسمع نفسك!؟

He makes a really beautiful point. He said the *ḥaqq* of Allāh is not the same as the *ḥaqq* of the people. The *ḥaqq* of the people is far more serious. In the *ḥaqq* of Allāh you are obligating that you must say, and you must hear yourself. In the *ḥaqq* of the people you don't obligate it and, in an area which is the most, most serious which is a *ṭalāq* which is you destroy someone's life by and you don't need to hear what is being said? This is a nice point that he makes here pointing out an anomaly in the *fiqh* and may Allāh have mercy upon all of our scholars. We all get things right and we all make mistakes.