

## 13340 - Description of the Prophet's prayer

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### the question

What is Description of the Prophet's prayer ?.

### Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

1 - Facing the direction of the Ka'bah

1- When you stand up to pray, face the direction of the Ka'bah wherever you are, in both fard (obligatory) and naafil (supererogatory) prayers. This is one of the pillars of prayer, without which prayer is not valid.

2- The obligation of facing the direction of prayer does not apply to one who is engaged in warfare, when he prays the fear prayer (salaat al-khawf) or is engaged in heavy fighting. It also does not apply to those who are unable to do it, such as one who is sick, or one who is traveling on a ship, in a car or on a plane, if they fear that the time of the prayer will elapse (before they reach a place where they can find the correct direction). And it does not apply to one who is praying a naafil prayer or witr prayer whilst riding on a riding-animal etc., but it is mustahabb for him to face the qiblah if he is able to do so when pronouncing the takbeer of ihraam (at the beginning of the prayer), then he may face whatever direction he is facing.

3- Everyone who can see the Ka'bah must face it; those who cannot see it must face its direction.

Ruling on not facing the Ka'bah in prayer by mistake:

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4- If a person prays not facing the qiblah, because of clouds [preventing him from working out the direction from the position of the sun] or some other reason, after he did his best to work out the right direction, his prayer is valid and he does not have to repeat it.

5- If someone whom he trusts comes - whilst he is praying - and tells him of the right direction, then he must hasten to turn that way, and his prayer is valid.

## 2 - Qiyaam (standing in prayer)

6- It is obligatory to pray standing. This is a pillar (essential part of prayer), except for the one who is praying the fear prayer or at times of intense fighting, when it is permitted to pray whilst riding; for the one who is sick and unable to stand, who should pray sitting if he is able, otherwise lying on his side; and the one who is praying a naafil prayer, who may pray whilst riding or sitting if he wishes, and he indicates the rukoo' and sujood with his head. The one who is sick may also do this, and he should make his sujood lower than his rukoo'.

7- It is not permissible for one who is praying sitting down to put something raised up on the ground in order to prostrate on it. Rather he should make his sujood lower than his rukoo' - as we have mentioned - if he is unable to touch the ground directly with his forehead.

## Prayer on board a ship or airplane

8- It is permissible to pray fard prayers on board a ship or airplane.

9- It is permissible to pray them sitting down if one fears that one may fall.

10- It is permissible to lean on a pillar or stick when standing, if one is old or weak in body.

## Combining standing and sitting in prayer

11- It is permissible to pray qiyaam al-layl standing or sitting with no excuse, or to do both.

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So a person may pray and reciting sitting down, and just before doing rukoo' he may stand up and recite the rest of the aayahs standing up, then do rukoo' and sujood, then he can do likewise in the second rak'ah.

12- If he prays sitting down, he should pray sitting cross-legged or in whatever position he finds comfortable.

## Praying wearing shoes

13- It is permissible to pray barefoot, or to pray wearing shoes.

14- It is better to pray sometimes barefoot and sometimes wearing shoes, according to what is easy; one should not make it difficult to put shoes on or to take them off in order to pray. If a person is barefoot, he should pray barefoot and if he is wearing shoes then he should pray wearing shoes, except when there is a reason not to do so.

15- If he takes them off, then he should not place them to his right; rather he should place them to his left, if there is no one on his left, otherwise he should put them between his feet. There is a subtle hint that he should not place them in front of himself. This is the etiquette which most worshippers ignore, so you see them praying facing their shoes! This is what was narrated in the saheeh reports from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

## Praying on the minbar

16- It is permissible for the imaam to pray on an elevated place such as the minbar, in order to teach the people. So he should stand up on it to pray, then say takbeer, recite Qur'aan and do rukoo' whilst he is on that place, then he should come down backwards so that he can prostrate on the ground at the base of the minbar, then he may go back to it and do the same in the second rak'ah as he did in the first.

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It is obligatory to pray facing a sutrah and be close to it

17- It is obligatory to pray facing a sutrah (screen or cover), there is no difference whether that is in the mosque or elsewhere, whether the mosque is big or small, because of the general meaning of the hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “Do not pray except facing a sutrah, and do not let anyone pass in front of you, and if he insists then fight him, for he has a companion (qareen) with him” - meaning the Shaytaan.

18- It is obligatory to be close to the sutrah, because this is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded.

19- Between the place where the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prostrated and the wall there would be a space nearly big enough for a sheep to pass through. Whoever does that is close enough [to the sutrah] as is required. I say: from this we know that what people do in all the mosques that I have seen in Syria and elsewhere, by praying in the middle of the mosque far away from the wall or pillars is but negligence towards the command and action of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

How high should the sutrah be?

20- The sutrah should be approximately a handspan or two above the ground, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When one of you places in front of him something such as the stick on the end of a saddle, he should pray and not worry about anyone who passes in front of that.” This hadeeth indicates that a line on the ground is not sufficient, and the hadeeth narrated concerning that is da’eef (weak).

21- He should face the sutrah directly, because this is apparent meaning of the command to pray towards the sutrah. Stepping slightly to the right or left so that one is not facing it directly, is not correct.

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22- It is permissible to pray facing a stick planted in the ground and the like, or a tree, or a pillar, or one's wife lying down in bed underneath her blanket, or an animal, even if it is a camel.

Prohibition of praying towards graves

23- It is not permitted to pray facing graves at all, whether they are the grave of Prophets or of others.

Prohibition of walking in front of one who is praying even in al-Masjid al-Haraam

24- It is not permitted to walk in front of one who is praying if there is a sutrah in front of him [i.e., it is not permissible to come between him and his sutrah]. There is no difference in this regard between al-Masjid al-Haraam and other mosques, all of them are the same in that this [walking in front of one who is praying] is not permitted, because of the general meaning of the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): "If the person who passes in front of one who is praying knew how great a burden of sin resulted from that, standing for forty [years] would be better for him than passing in front of one who is praying." This refers to passing between him and the place of his prostration. The hadeeth which speaks of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) praying in Haashiyat al-Mataaf without a sutrah and with people passing in front of him is not saheeh, even though it does not say that they were passing between him and his place of prostration. It is obligatory for the one who is prostrating to prevent the one who wants to pass in front of him, even in Masjid al-Haraam.

25- It is not permissible for the one who is praying towards a sutrah to let anyone pass in front of him, because of the hadeeth quoted above, "Do not let anyone pass in front of you..." And because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When one of you is praying towards something which is a sutrah between him and the people, and someone wants to pass in front of him, then he should push him in the upper chest and repel him as much as he can." According to another report: "... he should stop him twice, but if he insists then he should

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fight him, for he is a devil.”

Stepping forward to prevent someone passing in front of him

26- It is permissible for a person to take one or two steps to the front, in order to prevent one who is not responsible from passing in front of him, such as an animal or a small child, and to make them pass behind him.

What breaks prayer

27- The sutrah is so important to prayer that it prevents a person’s prayer from being invalidated, if someone passes in front of him. This is in contrast to the one who does not use a sutrah, whose prayer is broken if an adult woman, a donkey or a black dog passes in front of him.

3 - Niyyah (intention)

28- The worshipper must have the intention of praying the prayer for which he is standing. He must have the intention in his heart of performing a specific prayer, such as the fard (obligatory prayer) of Zuhr or of ‘Asr, or the Sunnah of those prayers. This is a condition or pillar (essential part) of the prayer, but uttering the intention verbally is a bid’ah which goes against the Sunnah, which was not suggested by any of the imams who are followed.

4 - Takbeer

29- Then he should start the prayer by saying “Allaahu akbar (Allaah is Most Great).” This is an essential part of the prayer, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The key to prayer is purifying oneself (wudoo’), it is entered by takbeer (saying ‘Allaahu akbar’) and exited by tasleem (saying ‘al-salaamu ‘alaykum’)” i.e, once you say takbeer, certain things are prohibited and this prohibition ends when you say tasleem.

30- He should not raise his voice when saying takbeer in all the prayers, unless he is acting

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as an imaam.

31- It is permissible for the muezzin to convey the takbeer of the imaam to the people, if there is a need to do so, such as if the imaam is sick and his voice is weak, or because there are many worshippers praying behind him.

32- The one who is following the imaam should not say takbeer until the imaam has finished saying takbeer.

Raising the hands - how it is to be done

33- He should raise his hands when saying the takbeer, or before or after doing so. All of these are proven in the Sunnah.

34- He should raise them with the fingers stretched out.

35- He should raise them level with his shoulders, or sometimes until they are level with his earlobes. I say: with regard to touching the earlobes with the thumbs, there is no basis for this in the Sunnah, rather in my view this has to do with waswaas (insinuating whispers of the Shaytaan).

Placing the hands - how it is to be done

36- Then he should place his right hand on his left, immediately after the takbeer. This is the way of the Prophets (peace be upon them), and this is what the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) enjoined upon his companions. It is not permissible to let the arms hang at the sides.

37- The right hand should be placed on the back of the left hand, wrist and forearm.

38- Sometimes the left hand may be grasped with the right. The combination of placing and

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grasping, which was favoured by some later scholars, has no basis.

Where they should be placed

39- The hands should be placed on the chest only; there is no difference between men and women in this regard. I say: placing them anywhere other than on the chest is da'eef (weak) or has no basis.

40- It is not permissible to put the right hand on the waist.

Humility and looking at the place of prostration

41- The worshipper must be humble in his prayer, and should avoid everything that may distract him from it, such as adornments and decorations. He should not pray where there is food that he wants to eat, or when he needs to urinate or defecate.

42- Whilst he is standing, he should look towards the place where he will prostrate.

43- He should not look to the right or the left, because looking here and there is a snatching away which the Shaytaan steals from the prayer of the slave.

44- It is not permissible for him to look up at the sky.

Du'aa' al-Istiftaah (du'aa' at the start of prayer)

45- Then he should start the prayer with some of the du'aa's which are narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). There are many of these, the most famous of which is "Subhaanaka Allaahumma wa bihamdika, wa tabaaraka ismuka wa ta'aala jadduka, wa laa ilaaha ghayruka (Glory and praise be to You O Allaah, blessed be Your name and exalted be Your Majesty, and there is no god but You)." The command to do this is proven so we should adhere to it. Whoever wants to see the other du'aa's may refer to Sifat al-Salaah, p. 91-95,



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Maktabat al-Ma'aarif, Riyadh, edition. [In English, see "The Prophet's Prayer described" by Shaykh al-Albaani, al-Haneef Publications, p. 14-19]

## Recitation of Qur'aan

46- Then he should seek refuge with Allaah - this is obligatory, and he is sinning if he omits to do so.

47- The Sunnah is sometimes to say "A'oodhu Billaahi min al-Shaytaan il-rajeem, min hamzihi wa nafkihi wa nafathihi (I seek refuge with Allaah from the accursed Satan, from his madness, his arrogance and his poetry)," - poetry here refers to blameworthy kinds of poetry.

48- And sometimes he may say, "A'oodhu Billaah il-Samee' il-A'leem min al-Shaytaan... (I seek refuge with Allaah, the All-Hearing, All-Knowing, from the Shaytaan...)."

49- Then he should say silently - whether the prayer is to be recited aloud or silently - "Bismillah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem (In the Name of Allaah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful)."

## Reciting al-Faatihah

50- Then he should recite Soorat al-Faatihah (the first soorah of the Qur'aan) in full, including the Basmalah (Bismillaahi ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem). This is an essential part of the prayer, without which the prayer is not valid. Those who do not speak Arabic must memorize this soorah.

51- Those who cannot remember it should say: "Subhaan Allaah, wa'l-hamdu-Lillaah, wa laa ilaaha ill-Allaah, wa Allaahu akbar, wa laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa Billaah (Glory be to Allaah, praise be to Allaah, there is no god but Allaah, Allaah is Most Great, and there is no strength and no power except with Allaah)."

52- The Sunnah is to recite it one verse at a time, and to pause at the beginning of each

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aayah. So he should say: “Bismillaah ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem (In the Name of Allaah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful),” then pause. Then say, “Al-Hamdu Lillaahi Rabb il-‘Aalameen (All the praises and thanks be to Allâh, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists), then pause. Then say: ‘al-Rahmaan ar-Raheem (The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful), then pause... and so on, until the end of the aayah.

This is how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to recite the whole soorah, pausing at the end of each aayah and not joining one aayah to the next, even if there is continuity of the meaning.

53- It is permissible to read it as Maaliki Yawn id-Deen or Maliki Yawm id-Deen.

How the one who is praying behind the imaam should recite it

54- The one who is praying behind the imam should recite it behind the imaam in prayers where Qur’aan is recited silently and in prayers where it is recited aloud, if he cannot hear the imam’s recitation, or if he pauses after completing it so that those who are praying behind him can recite it. We think that this pause was not proven in the Sunnah. I say I have mentioned the evidence of those who think that this pause is permissible and the refutation of that evidence, in *Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Da’eefah*, no. 546, 547, part 2, p. 24-26, Dar al-Ma’aarif edition.

Recitation after al-Faatihah

55- It is Sunnah to recite – after al-Faatihah – another soorah, even in Salaat al-Janaazah (funeral prayer), or some aayahs, in the first two rak’ahs.

56- The recitation may be made lengthy sometimes, and shorter sometimes, for reasons of travel, coughing, sickness or the crying of an infant.

57- The recitation varies according to the prayers. The recitation in Fajr prayer is longer

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than it is in all the other prayers. Next longest is Zuhr, then 'Asr, then 'Isha', then Maghrib, usually.

58- The recitation in the night prayers (qiyaam al-layl) is longer than all of these.

59- The Sunnah is to make the recitation longer in the first rak'ah than in the second.

60- He should make the recitation in the last two shorter than in the first two rak'ahs, half the length. If you want more details on this topic, see Sifat al-Salaah p. 102 (Arabic original).

Reciting al-Faatihah in every rak'ah

61- It is obligatory to recite al-Faatihah in every rak'ah.

62- It is Sunnah to add to it in the last two rak'ahs as well.

63- It is not permissible for the imaam to make his recitation longer than that which is described in the Sunnah, because that is difficult for those who may be praying behind him, such as the elderly and sick, or nursing mothers, or those who have other things to do.

Reciting aloud and reciting quietly

64- Qur'aan should be recited aloud in Fajr and Jumu'ah prayers, Eid prayers, prayers for rain (istisqaa'), prayers at the time of an eclipse (kusoof) and in the first two rak'ahs of Maghrib and 'Isha'.

He should recite silently in the first two rak'ahs of Zuhr and 'Asr, in the third rak'ah of Maghrib and in the last two rak'ahs of 'Ishaa'.

65- It is permissible for the imaam occasionally to make an aayah audible in the prayers where recitation is to be done silently.

66- In Witr and Qiyaam al-Layl, he should recite silently sometimes and aloud sometimes,

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and he should be moderate in raising his voice.

Tarteel – reciting at a measured pace

67- The Sunnah is to recite the Qur’aan at a measured pace, not quickly or hastily. It should be read in a manner that clearly distinguishes each letter, beautifying the Qur’aan with one’s voice. He should observe the well known rulings of the scholars of Tajweed and he should not recite it in the innovated manner of singers or according to the rules of music.

Prompting the imaam

68- It is prescribed for the one who is praying behind the imaam to prompt the imaam if he hesitates in his recitation.

6 – Rukoo’ (bowing)

69- When he has completed the recitation, he should pause briefly, to catch his breath.

70- Then he should raise his hands in the manner described for takbeerat al-ihraam (the takbeer at the beginning of prayer).

71- And he should say takbeer (“Allahu akbar”). This is obligatory.

72- Then he should do rukoo’, bowing as deeply as his joints will let him, until his joints take the new position and are relaxed in it. This is an essential part of prayer.

How to do rukoo’

73- He should put his hands on his knees, firmly, spacing the fingers out, as if he is grasping his knees.

74- He should spread his back and make it level so that if water were poured on it, it would

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stay there (not run off).

75- He should not lower or raise his head, but make it level with his back.

76- He should keep his elbows away from his sides.

77- In rukoo', he should say "Subhaana Rabbiy al-'Azeem (Glory be to my Lord, the Almighty) three times or more. There are others kinds of dhikr which may be said in rukoo', some of which are long, some of medium length and some short. See Sifat Salaat al-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), p. 132, Maktabat al-Ma'aarif edition [The Prophet's Prayer Described, p. 44].

Making the essential parts of prayer equal in length

78- It is Sunnah to make the essential parts of prayer equal in length, so the rukoo', the standing after rukoo', the prostration and the sitting between the two prostrations should be make approximately the same in length.

79- It is not permissible to recite Qur'aan in rukoo' or in sujood.

Straightening up from rukoo'

80- Then he should straighten up from rukoo'. This is an essential part of the prayer.

81- Whilst straightening up, he should say, "Sami'a Allaahu liman hamidah (Allaah listens to the one who praises Him)." This is obligatory.

82- He should raise his hands when straightening up, in the manner described above.

83- Then he should stand straight until every vertebra has returned to its place. This is an essential part of the prayer.

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84- Whilst standing thus, he should say, “Rabbanaa wa laka al-hamd (our Lord, to You be all praise).” (There are other kinds of dhikr which may be said at this point. See Sifat al-Salaah, p. 135/The Prophet’s prayer described, p. 47). This is obligatory for every person who is praying, even if he is following an imaam, because this is the dhikr of standing after rukoo’, and saying “Sami’a Allaahu liman hamidah” is the dhikr of straightening up from rukoo’. It is not prescribed to put the hands one over the other during this standing, because this was not narrated (from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)). For more details, see Sifat Salaat al-Nabi, 1 - Istiqbaal al-Qiblah (The Prophet’s Prayer Described - Facing the Ka’bah).

85- He should make this standing equal in length to the rukoo’, as stated above.

7 - Sujood (prostration)

86- Then he should say “Allaahu akbar” - this is obligatory.

87- He should raise his hands sometimes.

Going down on the hands

88- Then he should go down into sujood on his hands, putting them down before the knees. This is what was commanded by the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and it is proven that he did this, and he forbade imitating the manner in which a camel sits down, which is by kneeling with its forelegs first. [this appears to contradict the point he is trying to make]

89- When he prostrates - which is an essential part of the prayer - he should put his weight on his palms and spread them out.

90- He should keep the fingers together.

91- And point the fingers towards the qiblah.

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- 92- He should put his palms level with his shoulders.
- 93- Sometimes he should make them level with his ears.
- 94- He should keep his forearms off the ground. This is obligatory. He should not spread them along the ground like a dog.
- 95- He should place his nose and forehead firmly on the ground. This is an essential part of the prayer.
- 96- He should also place his knees firmly on the ground.
- 97- The same applies to his toes.
- 98- He should hold his feet upright with his toes touching the ground. All of this is obligatory.
- 99- He should make his toes point in the direction of the qiblah.
- 100- He should put his heels together.

## Being at ease in sujood

- 101- He should be at ease in sujood, distributing his weight equally [?] on the parts of the body which should be in contact with the ground during sujood. They are: the nose and forehead, the palms, the knees, and the toes.
- 102- Whoever is at ease in his sujood in this manner has got it right. And this being at ease is also an essential part of the prayer.
- 103- In sujood, he should say, "Subhaana Rabbiy al-'A'laa (Glory be to my Lord Most High)" three times or more. (There are other kinds of dhikr also, see Sifat Salaat al-Nabi (peace and

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blessings of Allaah be upon him), p. 145/The Prophet's Prayer described, p. 55).

104- It is mustahaab to offer a lot of du'aa' during sujood, because it is a time when du'aa' is likely to be answered.

105- He should make his sujood almost as long as his rukoo', as described above.

106- It is permissible to prostrate on the bare ground, or on something covering the ground such as a garment or carpet, or a mat, etc.

107- It is not permitted to recite Qur'aan whilst prostrating.

Iftiraash and Iq'aa' between the two sajdahs

[Iftiraash means sitting on the left thigh with the right foot upwards and its toes pointed towards the qiblah; iq'aa' means resting on both heels and feet]

108- Then he should raise his head, saying takbeer. This is obligatory.

109- He should raise his hands sometimes.

110- Then he should sit at ease, until every vertebra returns to its place. This is obligatory.

111- He should spread his left leg and sit on it. This is obligatory.

112- He should put his right foot upright.

113- And make its toes point towards the qiblah.

114- It is permissible to sit in iq'aa' sometimes, which means resting on the heels and feet.

115- Whilst sitting thus, he should say, "Allaahumma ighfir li warhamni wajburni, warfa'ni, wa'aafini warzuqni (O Allaah, forgive me, have mercy on me, strengthen me, raise me in status,



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pardon me and grant me provision).”

116- If he wishes, he may say, “Rabbi ighfir li, Rabbi ighfir li (My Lord, forgive me, my Lord, forgive me).”

117- He should make this sitting almost as long as his sujood.

The second sajdah

118- Then he should say takbeer – this is obligatory,

119- He should raise his hands sometimes when saying this takbeer.

120- He should do the second prostration – this is also an essential part of the prayer.

121- He should do in the second prostration what he did in the first.

The sitting of rest

122- When he raises his head from the second prostration and he wants to get up for the second rak’ah, he should say takbeer. This is obligatory.

123- He should raise his hands sometimes.

124- He should sit up straight, sitting on his left foot, until every bone returns to its place.

The second rak’ah

125- Then he should get up for the second rak’ah, supporting himself on his hands with his fists clenched as if kneading dough. This is an essential part of the prayer.

126- He should do in the second rak’ah what he did in the first.

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127- Except that he should not recite the du'aa' for starting the prayer.

128- He should make it shorter than the first rak'ah.

## Sitting for the Tashahhud

129- When he completes the second rak'ah, he should sit for the Tashahhud. This is obligatory.

130- He should sit in ifтираash, as described above for the sitting between the two prostrations.

131- But it is not permitted to sit in iq'aa' at this point.

132- He should put his right hand on his right thigh and knee, and the end of the right elbow on the thigh, not far from it.

133- He should spread his left palm on his left thigh and knee.

134- It is not permissible to sit resting on one's arms, especially the left arm.

## Moving the finger and looking at it

135- He should clench all the fingers of his right hand, and put the thumb on the middle finger sometimes.

136- Sometimes he should make a circle with them.

137- He should point with his index finger towards the qiblah.

138- He should look towards it.

139- He should move it, making du'aa' with it, from the beginning of the Tashahhud until the end.

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140- He should not point with the finger of his left hand.

141- He should do all of this in every Tashahhud.

How to say Tashahhud and the du'aa' following it

142- The Tashahhud is obligatory, and if he forgets it, he must do the two prostrations of forgetfulness (sajdat al-sahw).

143- He should recite it silently.

144- The wording of the Tashahhud is: "Al-tahiyyaatu Lillaahi wa'l-salaawaatu wa'l-tayyibaat. Al-salaamu 'alayka ayyuha'l-Nabiyyu wa rahmat-Allaahi wa barakaatuhu. Al-salaamu 'alayna wa 'ala 'ibaad-Il্লাh il-saaliheen. Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluhu (All compliments, prayers and pure words are due to Allaah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy and blessings of Allaah. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous slaves of Allaah. I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the slave and Messenger of Allaah)." [Other versions are mentioned in Sifat Salaat al-Nabi/The Prophet's Prayer Described, but what is mentioned here is the most sound].

Sending salaams upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): this is what was prescribed after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and is narrated in the Tashahhud of Ibn Mas'ood, 'Aa'ishah and Ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them). For more details see Sifat Salaat al-Nabi, p. 161, Maktabat al-Ma'arif, Riyadh, edition/ The Prophet's Prayer Described, p. 67).

145- After that, he should send prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), by saying: "Allaahumma salli 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala aali Muhammad kama salayta 'ala Ibraaheem wa 'ala aali Ibraaheem, innaka hameedun majeed. Allaahumma baarik 'ala Muhammad wa 'ala aali Muhammad kama baarakta 'ala Ibraaheem wa 'ala aali Ibraaheem, innak

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hameedun majeed (O Allaah, send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent prayers upon Ibraaheem and upon the family of Ibraaheem; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory. O Allaah, send blessings upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad as You sent blessings upon Ibraaheem and upon the family of Ibraaheem); You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory).”

146- If you wish you may shorten it and say: “Allaahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala aali Muhammad, wa baarik ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala aali Muhammad, kama salayta wa baarakta ‘ala Ibraaheem wa ‘ala aali Ibraaheem, innaka haamedun majeed (O Allaah, send prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, and send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent prayers and blessings upon Ibraaheem and the family of Ibraaheem; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory).”

147- Then in this Tashahhud he may choose any of the du’aa’s that he likes of those that have been narrated, and call upon Allaah using these words.

The third and fourth rak’ahs

148- Then he says takbeer – which is obligatory. The Sunnah is to say takbeer whilst still sitting.

149- He should raise his hands sometimes.

150- Then he should stand up for the third rak’ah, which is an essential part of prayer, as is the following rak’ah.

151- He should do likewise if he wants to get up for the fourth rak’ah.

152- But before he gets up, he should sit up straight, by adjusting his left leg, until every bone returns to its place.

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153- Then he should get up, supporting himself on his hands, as he did when getting up for the second rak'ah.

154- Then in the third and fourth rak'ahs, he should recite al-Faatihah. This is obligatory.

155- He may add an aayah or more to that occasionally.

Reciting Al-Qunoot when calamity strikes

156- It is Sunnah to recite Qunoot and pray for the Muslims when any disaster befalls them.

157- Qunoot should be recited after standing up from rukoo' and saying "Rabbunaa wa laka'l-hamd (Our Lord, to You be praise)."

158- There is no specific du'aa' to be recited regularly in Qunoot, rather one should recite whatever is appropriate when disaster strikes.

159- He should raise his hands when reciting this du'aa'

160- He should recite it aloud if he is acting an imaam.

161- Those who are praying behind him should say "Ameen" to this du'aa'.

162- When he has finished, he should say takbeer and prostrate.

Qunoot al-Witr - when it is to be recited, and what wording it should have

163- Qunoot in Witr is prescribed occasionally.

164- It should be recited before rukoo', unlike qunoot recited at times of calamity.

165- He should recite the following words:

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“Allaahumma ihdini feeman hadayta, wa ‘aafini feeman ‘aafayta, wa tawallani feeman tawallayta, wa baarik li feema a’tayta, wa qini sharra ma qadayta, fa innaka taqdi wa laa yuqdaa ‘alayk, wa innahu laa yadhillu man walayta, wa laa ya’izzu man ‘aadayta, tabaarakta rabbana wa ta’aalayta, wa laa manjaa minka illa ilayk

(O Allaah, guide me amongst those whom You have guided; pardon me amongst those whom You have pardoned; turn to me in friendship amongst those to whom You have turned in friendship; bless me in what You have bestowed; save me from the evil of what You have decreed; for indeed You decree, and none can influence You; and he is not humiliated whom You have befriended; nor is he honoured whom You take as Your enemy. Blessed are You, O Lord, and exalted. There is no place of safety from You except towards You).”

166- This du’aa’ was taught by the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), so it is permissible, because it was narrated from the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them).

167- Then he should do rukoo’, and the two prostrations, as before.

The final Tashahhud and placing the left foot under the right leg

168- Then he should sit for the final Tashahhud. This is obligatory.

169- He should do the same as in the first Tashahhud.

170- But he should sit mutawarikan, which means placing the left foot under his right leg.

171- He should put his right foot upright.

172- It is also permissible to lay the right foot along the ground sometimes.

173- He should cover his left knee with his left palm, leaning heavily on it.

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The obligation of sending prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and of seeking refuge with Allaah from four things

174- It is obligatory for him in this Tashahhud to send prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), some versions of which we have quoted above when discussing the first Tashahhud.

175- He should also seek refuge with Allaah from four things and say: “Allaahumma inni a’oodhu bika min ‘adhaab Jahannam wa min ‘adhaab al-qabri wa min fitnat il-mahyaa wa’l-mamaat, wa min sharri fitnat il-maseeh al-dajjaal (O Allaah, I seek refuge with You from the torment of Hell, from the torment of the grave, from the trials of life and death and from the evil of the tribulation of the Dajjaal).”

The trials of life means the temptations of this world and its desires which a person faces in his life. The trials of death means the torment of the grave and the questioning of the two angels. The tribulation of the Dajjaal means the extraordinary feats that will be done at his hands, by which means people will be led astray, and they will follow him and believe his claim to be divine.

Du’aa’ before the salaam

176- Then he may pray for himself as he sees fit, as narrated in the Qur’aan and Sunnah. There are many such good du’aa’s. If he does not know any such du’aa’s then he can say whatever is easy for him, for things that will benefit him in his religion and in his worldly affairs.

Various kinds of tasleem (saying salaams)

177- Then he should say salaams to his right, which is an essential part of the prayer, turning his face so that the whiteness of his right cheek may be seen (from behind).

178- Then he should say salaams to his left, turning his face so that the whiteness of his left

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cheek may be seen, even in the funeral prayer

- 179- The imaam should raise his voice when saying salaam, except in the funeral prayer.
- 180- The salaam takes various forms:
- “Al-Salaamu ‘alaykum wa rahmat-Allaahu wa barakaatuhu” to the right, and “Al-salaamu ‘alaaykum wa rahmat-Allaah” to the left.
  - The same, but without saying “wa barakaatuhu”.
  - “Al-Salaamu ‘alaykum wa rahmat-Allaahu” to the right, and “Al-salaamu ‘alaaykum” to the left.
  - Saying one salaam, tilting the head slightly to the right.

O my Muslim brother, this is what I was able to summarize from Sifat Salaat al-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) [The Prophet’s Prayer Described], in an attempt to make it more accessible to you, so that it would be clear to you, as if you could see it with your own eyes. If you pray in the manner described to you of how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), prayed, then I hope that Allaah will accept that from you, because by doing that you will have truly put into practice the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “Pray as you have seen me pray.”

Moreover you must not forget the importance of presence of mind and humility in prayer, for this is the ultimate purpose of standing before Allaah in prayer. The more you can develop the attitude of humility and submission in prayer as described to you in the prayer of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), the more benefits you will reap, as indicated by our Lord when He said (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, As-Salaat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahshaa’ (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed)”



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[al-'Ankaboot 29:45]

Finally, I ask Allaah to accept our prayer and all our good deeds, and to store up their reward until the Day when we meet Him:

“The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail,

Except him who brings to Allaah a clean heart [clean from Shirk (polytheism) and Nifaaq (hypocrisy)]”

[al-Shu'araa' 26:88 - interpretation of the meaning]

, the Lord of the Worlds