

**PRAY THE PROPHET'S PRAYER:  
EARNESTLY STRIVING FOR HUMILITY &  
OBEDIENCE; WITH THE AID OF INSPIRING  
REMARKS ON SERVITUDE BY  
IBN QAYYIM (R)**

**By**

**Dr. Muhammad A Muhammad (Talha)**

**and**

**Mustafa Bulu Ibrahim**

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&

MUSTAFA BULU IBRAHIM

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## Preface

All praise is due to Allah (the Exalted), we praise Him and we seek His aid and we ask for His forgiveness. And we testify that none is worthy of worship except Allah (the Exalted) Alone, without partners and we testify that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is His slave and His Messenger.

Prayer [*Salah*] is the second most important pillar of Islam but because it also upholds the first pillar [i.e. the two testimonies], it is practically the central pillar. *Salah* is the first act of worship made obligatory upon the Muslims; the first action about which the slave will be asked on the Day of Resurrection; and the last advice given by the Prophet [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] to his *Ummah*, while on his death bed, urging them to safeguard it very well.

*Salah* is obligatory upon every sane, mature person and is the major test for our *Imam* and ability to fulfil the purpose of our creation. Unfortunately, our daily practice of *Salah*, in this generation, has been of neglect or inadequacy or inaccuracy or all. We hardly have given *Salah*, it's much deserved attention as a key to success in this world and a source of salvation in the Hereafter.

Thus, our performance of *Salah* is still at variance, to a noticeable extent, with the Prophet's manner of the prayers. Yet we have, in unfettered circulation, the most



comprehensive and excellent description of the Prophet's *Salah*: "The *Salah*: The Prophet's Prayer Described" by Imam Muhammad Nasir Al-Din Al-Albani [may Allah grant him mercy]. The book has been widely accepted and taught in almost every major learning centre. But the practical application of the lessons has not manifested sufficiently well in the society. The finer details of the characteristics of the Prophet's prayer has never received deserved attention from most of those who studied the book.

This Treatise is a succinct description of the Prophet's prayer as contained in Imam Al-Albani's book. The physical actions are precisely the same but we limited the invocations in the various pillars, the *Tashahhud*, the salutations on the Prophet [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] to one example each and referred the reader to the Main Text for further details. Thus, the description of the physical and all the verbal actions are brief but precise.

Further to that, the description of the prayer has been linked to the pillars, the obligations, and the emphatic *Sunnah* acts in the exact sequence and format of the Prophet's prayer. This additional elaboration stimulates the consciousness of the reader as to the significance of the various actions in the prayer.



The identification of the pillars and obligations are sources of guidance for the determination of the causes of prostration for forgetfulness.

This Treatise, also has additional inspiring comments of Ibn Qayyim [may Allah grant him mercy] on servitude and devotion. Ibn Qayyim's comments are based on each of the pillars and some landmark stages or matters in the prayer. The comments are so reflected to contextualise their relevance and significance for the reader as a treasurable source of *Khushu'u* (humility) in his prayers.

The concluding part of the Treatise echoed concerns over the breach of the Prophet's manner of the prayer, due to errors of negligence, by most Imams in their congregational prayers.

**Mustafa Bulu Ibrahim**  
**Safar, 1447AH [August, 2025]**

## PART I

### Introduction:

All praise is due to Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*), we praise Him and we seek His aid and we ask His forgiveness, we seek shelter from the evil of ourselves and from the wickedness of our deeds. Whomsoever Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) guides, there is none who can misguide him and whomsoever Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) sends astray, there is none who can guide him. And we testify that none is worthy of worship except Allah (*Subhanahu Wata'Alah*) Alone, without partners and we testify that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is His slave and His Messenger.

This Treatise is essentially extracted from the most famous book on the Prophet's prayer: "The *Salah*: The Prophet's Prayer Described" by Imam Al-Albani (may Allah grant him mercy). The Prophet's Prayer Described has indeed amply captured the Prophet's prayer from *Takbir* to *Salam*; as though you have seen him pray. Thus, in this Treatise, we refer to it as the "Main Text."

It is noteworthy that in this publication, while maintaining the content as in the "Main Text", we have slightly modified our approach in order to highlight the significance of the constituent parts of the prayer. We believe, this is an added benefit to the reader. Accordingly, we have identified and emphasised the pillars and the obligations for the reader to be

mindful of their consequences on the validity of his/her prayer, in case of deliberate omission or duplication and forgetfulness. We have also specified, at each point, the third constituent element of the prayer; the emphatic *Sunnah* acts. They are the actions which connect and perfect the structure of the prayer.

In this publication, we have also incorporated for our readers, Ibn Qayyim's insightful comments on the stages [or pillars] of the prayer. Reading his comments within the context of each pillar or stage of the prayer and reflecting over them, would help the reader inculcate humility in his prayer. It also helps the reader appreciate the significance of each constituent part of the prayer and the servitude and devotion expected of him at the various landmark stages.

Allah (the Exalted) commanded: "*And stand before Allah in devout (frame of mind)*" (2:238). Prayer is established in the *Sunnah* as taught and commanded by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He said: "*Pray as you have seen me praying.*" Thus, the prayer is not valid, if it is not performed in accordance with the way and manner taught by the Noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And its reward will not be complete unless it is performed with absolute presence of the mind i.e. submissiveness, humility & awe (*Khushu'u*).

The Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded his Ummah to learn his prayer and pray exactly as he taught his Companions by practical demonstration. He once prayed on the pulpit and said to his Companions that: *"I have done this so that you may follow me and learn my prayer."*

He also said: *"There are five prayers which Allah, Mighty and Sublime, has made compulsory: he who performs ablution well for them, prays them at their proper times, and is complete in their bowings, prostrations and humility, he has guarantee from Allah that He will forgive him; but he who does not do so, has no guarantee from Allah: if He wishes, He will forgive him or if He wishes, He will punish him."*

And this Booklet has adequately captured all the attributes of the Prophet's prayer. Endeavour to strictly observe the explanations and ensure sincerity; humility and awe (*Khushu'u*); and fear of Allah to benefit from the virtues of your *Salah*, in this world and the Hereafter.

Also take note that men and women are equally commanded, without any distinction, to comply and preserve the Prophet's prayer, exactly as described, from *Takbir* to *Salam*. It is also in this exact form, that we are commanded by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to teach our

children at the age of seven and beat them, if they don't pray at the age of ten.

### **The Presence of the Heart in the Prayer:**

Before going into the description of the Prophet's prayer in its physical and verbal form, it is imperative to state that the soul of the prayer is its spiritual aspect, i.e. *Khushu'u*. Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) once remarked, "*Khushū* ' is not in lowering the head, but is in the heart being truly present."

Ibn Qudama (may Allah grant him mercy) said: "The spirit of prayer is in the *Niyyah* (intention), *Ikhlas* (sincerity), *Khushuu* (awe coupled with humility and submissiveness) and the presence of the heart. When the heart is not present, the desired goal is not obtained by the remembrances and private conversations with Allah (the Exalted). Speech, when it does not express the innermost feelings or what is in the heart, is (nothing but) absent mindedness and folly."

Be mindful that the *Salah* is an invitation to stand before the Lord, to show your servitude in accordance with the instructions of the Noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in fulfilment of your Lord's command. Therefore, do not breach any of his (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instructions. And as you stand, feel that you are indeed a very weak servant, overcome by your sins and in terrible need of

Allah's mercy and forgiveness, hopeful of getting His forgiveness and reward, yet very much frightened of His punishment.

When a person stands for prayer, Allah (the Exalted) commands: *"Raise the veils from between Me and my servant!"* From the instant you proclaim *"Allahu Akbar"*, Allah (the Most High) now sets His Beautiful Glorious Face to yours, ready and engaged, with you. And He doesn't turn away from you ... unless you do – that is when either you turn away with your head/sight, or drift in heart and mind back to worldly matters. And if you turn or drift, He calls to you: *"You turn to what is better than I?"* and orders for the veils to draw back down.

Hasan al-Basari (may Allah grant him mercy) said: "When you stand in prayer, stand in obedience and humility as Allah (the Majestic) has ordered you. Beware of negligence and looking here and there. Beware of looking at something else whilst Allah is looking at you. Beware of asking Allah (the Exalted) for Paradise and seeking His protection from the Hell-fire, yet your heart is heedless, and you do not know what your tongue is saying."

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah grant him mercy) said: *"Khushū'* is 'the soul of *Salah*' and without it, the prayer becomes a mere physical exercise." Similarly, Ibn Rajab (may Allah grant him

mercy) highlighted that true reverence comes from a heart filled with awe and love for Allah, which then reflects in the body's stillness and attentiveness during prayer.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah grant him mercy) further said: The person who guards his prayers upon their proper times and within their specified limits, fulfils their essential pillars and performs his *Wudu* with care but lacks *Khushu'u* i.e. he is taken away by whisperings, thoughts and ideas will be held to account for his prayer. However, he who strives with himself to repel the whisperings, thoughts and ideas and struggles against his enemy (Shaytan) so that he does not steal from the prayer, has engaged himself in (both) prayer and *Jihad*. This person will have his sins and shortcomings expiated. Then the person who falls short of performing ablution (*Wudu'u*) properly, performing the prayer upon its time and within its specified limits, and in fulfilling its essential pillars is negligent and wrongs his soul. This person will be punished.

Finally, take note that to attain *Khushu'u*, you have to push yourself to stop sinning by protecting your organs; in particular, your **eyes, tongue, and heart**. Safeguard your eyes against looking at haram, whether online or offline. Stop your tongue from backbiting, slandering, and saying hurtful things.

## **The Obligation to Preserve the Structure and Form of the Prophet's Prayer:**

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) obligated us to copy him in his prayer, saying "*Pray as you have seen me praying.*" This means that the prayer would be valid, only to the extent that it conforms with the Prophet's prayer. Thus, it is incumbent upon every Muslim to humbly venerate the actions of the Noble Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and perform all the acts, as described in his prayer, in order to attain full reward.

The validity of the prayer is dependent upon six conditions, the absence of any of them abrogates its foundation. Additionally, Ibn Qudama (may Allah grant him mercy) said: "And know that the prayer has actions which are pillars, actions which are obligatory, and actions which are *Sunnah*." Therefore, the prayer is established with fourteen pillars and nine obligations which must be preserved to uphold its validity. The pillars and obligations are fortified by several emphatic *Sunnah* acts. These constitute the attributes of the Prophet's prayer. He who preserves them, well in his prayers, has indeed preserved the Prophet's prayer. We comment briefly on the conditions and the three components of the prayer before we proceed to describe the Prophet's prayer.

- **The conditions:** There are six conditions which must be met for the prayer to be valid. The absence of any of the



conditions abolishes the existence of the prayer, even if it is physically performed. [They are: entry of the time; purification (*Wudu*); avoidance of impurity; covering the 'Awrah; facing the *Qiblah*; and intention].

► **The Pillars:** The Pillars of *Salah* are fourteen and they are the mandatory aspects of the prayer, without any of which, prayer cannot be validly established. If any of them is deliberately omitted or duplicated, the *Salah* is nullified. But if a person forgetfully duplicates or omits any of them, other than the *Takbiratul-Ihram*, then, depending on the nature of the error, the prayer may be invalidated or can be salvaged according to established jurisprudential principles. And as for *Takbiratul-Ihram*, even if a person forgetfully omits it, the prayer is nullified.

► **The Obligatory Acts:** The obligations are the statements or actions that are considered compulsory because they were either commanded by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or routinely practiced by him without interruption or both. If a person left [one of them] deliberately, his prayer is rendered invalid. But if he left them forgetfully then he can compensate for them with the prostration of forgetfulness.

► **The Emphatic *Sunnah* Acts:** Other than the pillars and the obligatory acts, all the remaining actions in the prayer are Emphatic *Sunnah*. They are actions and practices of the

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that perfects the prayer but which, if a person omits deliberately does not invalidate the prayer. And it is sinful to deliberately omit any of them but there is no sin if omitted out of forgetfulness. However, if any of them is left out disobediently, the prayer is invalidated.

### **Venerate and Sanctify your Standing before the Lord:**

Once you proclaim the Opening *Takbir*, remember that you are standing before the Majestic Lord. You must conduct yourself according to the code of behaviour, commanded by the Noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And he said: “... *it is entered by Takbir and exited by Taslim.*” Accordingly, under no circumstances should you abandon the prayer and vacate the presence of your Lord, without making *Salam*. The prayer, once started, is either successfully completed and exited with *Salam* or voided by any of its invalidators and also exited with *Salam*. Scholars said, it is sinful & an act of disobedience to discard the prayer & restart because of inability to rectify correctible errors of forgetfulness.

### **The Secret of *al-Salah*:**

Ibn Qayyim (may Allah grant him mercy) said: The secret and the essence of *Salah* is to devote oneself to Allah while praying – just as the slave should not turn his face away from the direction of the *Qiblah*, he should also disallow his heart from

giving attention to anything except his Lord. Therefore the servant should let the *Ka'bah* - the House of Allah - be the direction of his body and face, and let Allah be the direction of his heart and soul. Allah shall give His attention to His servant in proportion to the level of his devotion and focus in *Salah*. Thus, if he turns away from Allah (by becoming unmindful), He too shall turn away from him - truly, as you judge, shall you yourself be judged.

Ibn Qayyim (may Allah grant him mercy) further said: The devotion to Allah in *Salah* is of three levels and are as follows:

- i. **Devotion of the Heart:** This level safeguards the heart and rectifies its affairs from the sickness of desires and the whispers of Satan, as well as all thoughts that may nullify his *Salah* or lessen its reward.
- ii. **Devotion of *Ihsan*:** This level is when the servant is mindful of Allah in his *Salah* to the degree that he becomes as if he worships Him while seeing Him.
- iii. **Devotion of Understanding:** This level is reached when the slave reflects upon and comprehends the meanings of the words of Allah (i.e. Qur'ân) that he recites. And when he contemplates the details of the worship (i.e. *Salah*) in order to pay its due right in humility and tranquility.

If the slave successfully reaches these three levels, he will have truly established and performed his *Salah* in the most perfect manner and in return, he will receive the full attention of Allah.

## PART II

### The Description of the Prophet's Prayer:

**Then, the description of the Prophet's prayer is as follows:**

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that *"When you stand for prayer perform ablution perfectly. Then face the Qiblah and say Takbir."*

And a perfect ablution is that:

- ✓ which is performed exactly in the manner taught by the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him);
- ✓ in which the parts of the ablution are painstakingly washed, with no spot left unwashed; and
- ✓ which is sincerely done for the sake of Allah (i.e. with *Ikhlas*).

O reader! Never rush into the prayer; calm down and take note that you can only establish a valid prayer with patience, tranquility and keen obedience to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Embrace these qualities and undertake to reflect them in your prayer for ever. May Allah have mercy on you, proceed on, to carefully read what follows, so that it may benefit you and us, as well.

Ibn Qayyim (may Allah grant him mercy) said: "The servant has great deal in guiding himself by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with respect to his prayer, and that he prays as he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

used to pray whilst turning away and leaving what the people have innovated both with respect to adding and taking away things from the prayer as well as the various fabrications, none of which have been narrated from the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) nor from any of the Companions."

Ibn Qayyim [may Allah grant him mercy] said: "Salah has been prescribed in such a manner, that the entire body follows the lead of the heart – so that each limb practices its individual act of worship demonstrating its servitude to Allah. All the parts must be independent of each other in Ruku'u, Sujud, and in the sitting between the two Sajdah." This means that a person must ensure that, all his limbs perform the physical acts of servitude prescribed for each one in the Sunnah, as he performs the respective pillars of the prayer. Thus, omitting to perform any Sunnah act, precisely as prescribe, means a denial of such limb from performing its act of servitude to its Creator. And remember, our limbs give account of all our worldly actions on the Day of Reckoning.

"Do not give consideration to the sayings of those who make allowances, those who stop and pause (only) at the least of that which they believe to be obligatory even though someone else would have contested with them regarding it, and would have made obligatory that which they have

abandoned and dropped. Perhaps the *Ahadith* are established and the Prophetic *Sunnah* is right next to them, but they will not turn towards that and will (instead) say, 'We are the blind-followers of the *Madhhab* of so and so'."

Part II describes the Prophet's prayer in stages, identifying and explaining the requirements of each pillar and in the sequence of their order in the prayer. The obligatory aspects are particularly mentioned as they occur in the various stages, just as the Emphatic *Sunnah* acts relative to each stage or pillar are highlighted.

## STAGE I

### STANDING FOR THE PRAYER (WITH ABILITY TO DO SO)

**Firstly: Standing (with ability to do so) for the prayer – and know that standing is a pillar.** Also note very well that ‘**Tranquility**’ is the fourteenth pillar in our listing but it must be present and firmly established, in all the pillars and indeed in the entire prayer, from the standing to *Salam*. It must be noted that a prayer without tranquility is no more than an exercise in futility.

Allah (*Subhanahu Wata’Alah*) commanded: “*And stand before Allah in devout (frame of mind)*” (2:238). The Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to stand in prayer for both obligatory and voluntary prayers.

**a)** Then, take note and stand in accordance with the following **four** emphatic *Sunnah* Acts:

- i. Positioning the feet straight with the toes pointed towards the *Qiblah*.
- ii. Standing with the feet apart, as in normal standing posture (without keeping them unreasonably apart or closely).
- iii. The entire body and mind are to be directed towards the *Qiblah*.

- iv. Fixing the sight towards the ground, at the place of prostration while in the standing position, throughout the prayer.

Then, once you stand in accordance with the above description, then be submissively calm and remember that you are a weak servant in dire need of the mercy and forgiveness of your Majestic Lord.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude and Devotion in the Standing:**

The servant (of Allah) is then ordered to stand with his face in the direction of the Qiblah all the while having his heart facing Him as well (being fully attentive to Him) so as to renounce his previous state of rebellion and to stop turning away (from his Lord). The slave (of Allah) should therefore stand up before his Master in humility and submission calling for His Compassion with his hands thrown at his sides (before making the opening Takbir) and his head low, while at the same time his heart is fully attentive to Him in a state of humility.

The devotion of standing upright before Allah in *Salah* comes into effect when the slave devotes his attention to the Greatness of Allah and His Attribute of Self-subsistence, as this will ensure that he turns neither his face nor his eyes from side to side.



## STAGE II

### THE OPENING TAKBIR (TAKBIRATUL-IHRAM)

**Then, next perform the Opening Takbir (Takbiratul-Ihram) – and know that it is a pillar and the prayer can never be established without it.**

Say: **الله أكبر**

*Allah is the Greatest.*

And while making the *Takbir*, resolve in your mind, your intention for the particular prayer. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say: “*The key to prayer is purification; it is entered by **Takbir** and exited by Taslim.*”

Remember that you are standing before the Majestic Lord, therefore, pronounce the Opening *Takbir* calmly, with awe and contemplation on the meaning. Try to feel that you are spiritually out of this world, as described by most of our *Salafu-as-Salih*. Thus, as soon as you pronounce the Opening *Takbir*, you have entered the state of prayer and all acts, other than those of the prayer, are prohibited for you.

**b)** Then, ensure that you observe the following **six** emphatic *Sunnah* acts associated with the Opening *Takbir*:

- i. Raising the hands with the fingers straight and apart (i.e. neither spaced out nor closed together).

- ii. Raising the hands to equivalent level with the shoulders and occasionally, equivalent level with the tops of the ears.
- iii. Raising the hands simultaneously with the *Takbiratul-Ihram*; or
- iv. Pronouncing the *Takbiratul-Ihram* and then raising the hands; or
- v. Raising the hands and bringing them down and then, pronouncing the *Takbiratul-Ihram*.
- vi. From time to time alternating the above three forms of raising the hands while making the *Takbiratul-Ihram*.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude & Devotion in *al-Takbir*:**

As he devotes all his senses to His service and glorification by declaring with his tongue and proclaiming in his heart that He is the Greatest, which is to express that Allah is greater than anything he may have in his heart. And he affirms this statement by dismissing everything except Allah from his heart so his heart is completely occupied with Allah and nothing else. Indeed, a person whose heart is busied with what distracts him from Allah (in Salah) is someone whose heart does not conform to the statement made by his tongue declaring Allah is the Greatest. Having the heart in harmony with the tongue when saying that Allah is the Greatest will strip the heart from the attire of arrogance as such garment does not befit the state of his enslavement to Allah. Furthermore, it would prevent the

heart from thinking of anything except Allah. This is because the rights of these two words; Allah is Greater than everything and the resolve to establish his servitude to Allah through the *Takbir* protects the heart from the aforementioned defects (i.e. being occupied with something else other than Allah and wearing a garment that does not befit the servitude to Allah).

The devotion of the statement “*Allah is the Greatest*” by which the slave commences the *Salah* is realised when the slave devotes his attention and focus to **His Pride, Glory and Exaltation**.

c) Next as you are through with the opening *Takbir*, then preserve the following **four** emphatic *Sunnah* acts before you move to perform the next pillar i.e. the recitation of *al-Fatihah*:

- i. Placing the right palm on the back of the left palm, wrist and forearm [placing the left palm with the fingers straight and closely together (without spacing) on the chest. Then placing the right palm over the back of the left palm with the finger base (markings) placed on the wrist, then the fingers straight and closely together (without spacing), stretching to the forearm].
- ii. And sometimes, he would grasp his left arm with his right i.e. after placing the left palm with the fingers straight and

closely together (without spacing) on the chest; grasping the left wrist with the right thumb and the middle finger, forming a ring across the left wrist and the other fingers clasping the middle one, without spacing.

He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say: "*We, the company of prophets, have been commanded ... and to place our right arms on our left arms during prayer.*" Nothing other than this has ever been authentically established from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). And the claim of *Sadlu* (keeping the hands dangling by the sides) associated to Imam Malik (may Allah grant him mercy) or his *Madhab* is baseless as this same Hadith was recorded by Imam Malik (may Allah grant him mercy) in his *Mwatta* (as *Ahadith* Nos. 438 & 439). Therefore, ignoring to do *Qabdu* or *Wad'u* in the prayer is an act of disobedience to the *Hadith* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) based a wicked *Bida'a* (innovation) that has been surreptitiously introduced into the Prophet's prayer.

- iii. Then, the recitation of the opening supplication. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would commence his recitation with many kinds of supplications in which he would praise Allah, the Exalted,

and glorify and extol Him, refer to the Main Text for the different versions. One of the supplications is:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

- iv. From time to time, alternating the various forms of opening supplications. [Refer to the Main Text for the various versions].

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude & Devotion in the Opening Supplication:**

The servant, then glorifies Him and praises Him in repetition with what befits Him, he comes out of the state of heedlessness that stands as a barrier between him and Allah. Then, he greets and praises with expressions that befit His Kingship when someone enters upon Him, to glorify Him and as a prelude to his own needs and requests that he hopes the King to grant. This is why praising over and over again is considered from the good manners of expressing one's servitude to Allah and glorifying Him, and the means whereby the 'ābd receives the attention of Allah as well as His pleasure and approval to fulfill his requests.

The devotion of the opening supplication happens when the servant extols and glorifies and praises Him profusely, ascribing to Him all that befits Him and declares His transcendence above everything that does not befit Him, and praises Him for His Attributes and Perfection.

### STAGE III

#### RECITATION OF *AL-FATIHAH*

**Then next, recite *al-Fatihah* – and note that the recitation of *al-Fatihah* is a pillar:**

- d)** Make sure you observe thoroughly, the following **four** emphatic *Sunnah* acts as you recite *al-Fatihah*:
- i. Saying *Isti'adhah* and *Basmalah* (silently), before commencing the recitation of *al-Fatihah* in every *Raka'ah*.
  - ii. Adhering to the command of recitation of one verse at a time, pausing after each verse while reciting *Surah al-Fatihah* (i.e. reading at moderate pace with *Tarteel*, *Tajweed*, and beautified voice). This is the *Sunnah*, whether the recitation is audible or inaudible.
  - iii. Reciting with contemplation on the meanings and hoping for the benefits while being apprehensive of the punishments.
  - iv. Saying *Amin* on the completion of the recitation of *al-Fatihah* whether you are the Imam or praying alone or with *Imam*; loudly with prolonged voice (in the prayers with loud recitation) and silently (in the prayers with silent recitation).

► Note that it is obligatory to recite *al-Fatihah* ahead of *Surah*, in all situations where *Surah* or verses are added after *al-Fatihah*.

e) Then next, as you finish saying *Amin*, after the recitation of *al-Fatihah*, observe the following **seven** emphatic *Sunnah* acts in the **first** and **second** *Raka'ah*:

- i. Saying *Basmalah* (silently), before commencing the recitation of *Surah* or a part thereof.
- ii. The recitation of *Surah* or a part thereof, after *al-Fatihah*.
- iii. Observance of *Tartil* in the recitation of *Surah* i.e. recitation in slow, rhythmic tones and beautifying one's voice when reciting (not racing or hurrying). This is the *Sunnah*, whether the recitation is audible or inaudible.
- iv. Making the first *Raka'ah* longer than the second one by reciting longer *Surah* in the first *Raka'ah* than in the second one.
- v. Adherence to loud and inaudible recitation where applicable.
- vi. Pausing for a moment, after completing the required recitations for a *Raka'ah*, before making *Takbir* to make *Ruku'u*.

- vii. Then, for those praying behind an *Imam* in the prayers with inaudible recitation, the recitation of *al-Fatihah* and *Surah* are emphatic *Sunnah*.

As you accomplish the above, you are set to perform the next pillar. But take a look at Ibn Qayyim's remarks and then link up to the next pillar – *Ruku'u*.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on the State of the Servant in *al-Qira'ah* and *Isti'adhah*:**

As he is about to recite the Qur'an, he precedes it by seeking refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan who never spares any effort in his tireless endeavour, to bring about the downfall of the servant (of Allah) - especially when the '*abd*' (servant) is in a station of utmost honour (i.e. *Salah*) while seeking to perform the single most beneficial deed for this life and the Hereafter. Hence, he (Satan) is fervently determined to prevent the '*âbd*' (of Allah) from praying by any means; failing to do so he wants to see to it that at the very least, his heart does not benefit from the *Salah*, by casting into his heart all sorts of whispers and thoughts to distract it from fulfilling the duties of servitude to Allah. Therefore, Allah has ordered His slave to take refuge in Him from Satan (before starting his recitation in *Salah*) to assure the safety of his *Salah*, so that his heart may be revived and illuminated by the understanding he acquires from



contemplating the words of Allah as He is the Master in whose Hand is the success, grace and life of his heart. This also explains why Satan is keen to distract his heart from understanding the words of Qur'an when recited.

When a person takes refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan, He protects him and keeps away Satan's harm and evil from reaching him. This shall free his heart to explore the meanings of the Qur'an and witness its fascinating, awe-inspiring wonders, and let him collect from its treasures and gems that no eyes have ever seen, no ears have ever heard, and no mind has ever conceived. It is only his base desires and Satan that stand as a barrier between him and all these wonders, because his base desires always incline towards the whispers and temptations of Satan. However, as soon as he distances himself from Satan and manages to expel him from his heart, the King takes over charge of his heart, holding it fast to the truth and reminding it of that which will assure its safety and everlasting happiness.

As the '*abd*' (of Allah) starts to recite the Qur'an, he effectively begins addressing his Lord and invoking Him. Therefore, he should beware of invoking Him while his heart is busy with something else, as this shall make him deserving of His Contempt and Anger.

## **Devotion of Taking Refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan:**

The devotion of taking refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan is realised by having confidence and faith that Allah shall support him, protect him and aid him against Satan.

## **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on the State of the Servant in *al-Fatihah*:**

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, Allah, the Glorious and Exalted said: "I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant, into two halves: half of it is for Me and half is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for." Then the Messenger of Allah said: "Recite!

- ✓ The servant says *'All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn all that exists)'*; Allah the Exalted says *'My servant has praised Me'*.
- ✓ The servant says, *'The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful'*; Allah says, *'My servant has extolled Me'*.
- ✓ The servant says *'The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)'*; Allah the Exalted says, *'My servant has Glorified Me'*.
- ✓ The servant says, *'You (Alone)we worship, and You (Alone)we ask for help (for each and everything); [He says:], 'This is between Me and My servant, and My*

servant shall have what he has asked for'.

- ✓ The servant says, '*Guide us to the Straight Way, the Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (i.e. those who knew the Truth, but did not follow it) nor of those who went astray (i.e. those who did not follow the Truth out of ignorance and error)*'. [He says:], 'All these are for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for.'

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on the Wisdom behind *al-Isti'anah*:**

Ibn Qayyim said: The wisdom behind having the part "*You Alone we worship*" precede the part "*You Alone we ask for help*" is that the worship is intended for Allah while the help is intended for the servant. Allah is the One to be worshipped and He is the One from whom help is to be sought. To be worshipped is Allah's right upon His servant and seeking His Help includes asking His assistance in all his affairs. Every act of worship that is not facilitated by Allah and which is not intended sincerely and truthfully for His sake alone shall be rendered null and void. And any attempt of asking help from anyone other than Allah shall lead to nothing but humiliation and failure.

You should contemplate all the beneficial knowledge derived from this *Ayah* [i.e. "*You (Alone) we worship and You (Alone) we ask for help*"], which shall safeguard,

protect and maintain the pristine state of a slave's servitude to Allah from all deficiencies and harm. It is an evident demonstration of pure and true servitude to Allah.

You also need to reflect upon how the entire message of the Qur'an revolves around the meanings contained in this *Ayah*, and not only that but also the purpose behind creation, the essence of religious commandments and prohibitions, of divine reward and retribution, and of this worldly life and the Hereafter. And reflect upon how these verses mention the greatest of all objectives (i.e. worship) and the most perfect of all means (seeking His Help), and the compelling usage of the second-person narrative “*You*” instead of the third-person pronoun “*His*”.

Indeed, asking for guidance is the greatest among all his needs and the most crucial of all his requests. For this reason, Allah enacted that His slaves beseech Him for His guidance several times on a daily basis when he is in his best state, during the five obligatory prayers (i.e. *Salah*) because all this manifests the dire need of the slave to attain this guidance and how significantly important it is to him.

### **Divisions of guidance that the Servant is in need of:**

Ibn Qayyim [may Allah grant him mercy] said: The servant is in need of the following types of guidance:

- i. Guidance to repent from all his wrongdoings, from deviated knowledge and insincere intentions. Hence, as the slave is in constant need to repent, he is always in need of this type of guidance.
- ii. Guidance to be acquainted with the finer details of the beliefs and actions that he has, in a broad sense, already been guided to.
- iii. Guidance to matters he requires, in order to further perfect and increase his guidance.
- iv. To have guidance in matters that he needs in the future, just as he needed in the past.
- v. Guidance to have sound beliefs in matters in which he lacks any belief.
- vi. Guidance to have sound beliefs in matters he has based upon wrong and deviated beliefs. This form of guidance abrogates his deviated beliefs and replaces them with the right and sound ones.
- vii. Guidance to have the will and desire in matters that he possesses the capability to do and that he ought to do, but for which he does not yet have the desire to carry out.
- viii. Guidance to have the desire as well as the capability to do things that he ought to but that he neither desires nor is capable of.

- ix. Guidance to maintain and preserve the sound beliefs, knowledge and good deeds that he already possesses.

Additionally, Allah clarifies that the path of those who are truly guided is different from the path of those who earned His anger (the Jews) and those who are astray (the Christians and others).

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on the Devotion of Reciting the Qur'an:**

The devotion of reciting the Qur'an lies in the slave's endeavour to learn about Allah through His Words as if trying to see Him through His Revelation. The servant should be as heedful as possible to **His Essence, Attributes, Actions, Commandments, Laws and Names**. One of the righteous *Salaf* said: "Allah manifests Himself to His slaves through His Speech (i.e. Qur'an)." It is, however, the case that the degree of devotion while reciting and praying varies from one person to another, and the difference between them is like the difference between the one whose both eyes are sound and unimpaired, and the one-eyed individual, the blind person, the deaf person, etc. in their levels of perception.

## STAGE IV

### RUKU'U (BOWING)

**Then next, perform Ruku'u (bowing) – and note that bowing is a pillar.**

- ▶ Also note that it is obligatory to say *Takbir* while making *Ruku'u*.

**Brief description of bowing:** He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered the one who prayed badly, saying: *"When you make Ruku'u, place your palms on your knees, then space your fingers out, then remain (like that) until every limb takes its (proper) place. He also ruled that the prayer of one who does not straighten his spine fully in Ruku'u and Sujud is invalid, 'He used to spread himself (i.e. not in a compact position), and keep his elbows away from his sides'."*

- ▶ Then, when you are settled in your *Ruku'u*, it is also obligatory to make the glorification for *Ruku'u* such as:

➤ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ

*"How Perfect is my Lord, the Supreme, and Praised be He," (three times). [And three is the minimum of perfection].*

But sometimes, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would repeat it more than that.

- f) Then, preserve the following **eleven** emphatic *Sunnah* acts for making the *Ruku'u* and accomplishing it in its proper manner.

- i. The act of starting the pronouncement of the *Takbir* for bowing simultaneously as you begin bowing. Note that it is against the *Sunnah* to say the *Takbir* while standing and then make *Ruku'u* or say it after making the *Ruku'u*.
- ii. Raising the hands with the *Takbir* for bowing, to the shoulder level and occasionally to equivalent level to the tops of the ears.
- iii. Placing the hands firmly on the knees in *Ruku'u*, grasping them, with the fingers spaced out.
- iv. Fixing the sight at the place of prostration while in *Ruku'u*.
- v. The act of not letting the head to droop or raise i.e. not higher than his back, but keeping it in-between these two positions, while in *Ruku'u*.
- vi. The act of spreading oneself while in *Ruku'u* (i.e. not to be in compact position) and making the back flat.
- vii. The act of keeping the elbows away from the sides while in *Ruku'u*.
- viii. Attaining tranquility in *Ruku'u*, before reciting any of the chosen glorification.
- ix. Making the glorification in *Ruku'u*, for instance *Subhana Rabbi al-Azdhiim*, at least three times, and you can increase any such glorification to five, seven or any upward odd numbers as one wishes.



- x. Making the glorification in *Ruku'u* slowly with contemplation i.e. without rushing through as a routine.
- xi. From time to time, alternating the various forms of glorifications in the *Ruku'u*. [Refer to the Main Text for the various versions].

Once you accomplish the above, proceed to perform the next pillar.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude in Raising the Hands before Bowing:**

As the slave is about to bow down, it has been prescribed upon him to raise his hands as a show of his respect to the Command of Allah and to manifest the servitude of his hands to Allah, in adherence to the way of the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) and as a gesture that beautifies the *Salah*. It is indeed the adornment of the *Salah* and the expression of one's glorification to its parts.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude in *Ruku'u*:**

Through this act, his heart, body and tongue submit to Allah in a most sublime manner that brings together the feeling of humility, humbleness, Allah's glorification, and His remembrance - thus uniquely distinguishing his submission to Allah from the submission of the slaves (i.e. people) to one another. This is because submission is the attribute of slaves and Glory is the attribute of the Lord.

The perfect state of servitude that manifests while bowing down is when the slave dismisses his ego, accepts his status as a slave of Allah, and empties his heart from any glorification he might have had about anyone besides Allah and replaces all that with his glorification of Allah as the only *Ilâh* worthy of worship.

When the heart is overwhelmed by his glorification of His Lord, his glorification of himself or of any other created being will be dismissed from his heart.

Notwithstanding the outward physical movement of the body when bowing down, this pillar is in reality an act of worship that is foremost prescribed to be performed by the heart; the physical movement of the body is a mere accessory to complete the pillar.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Devotion of Bowing Down:**

The devotion of bowing down is contained in being mindful to the Greatness and the Pride of Allah, Exalted be He. For that reason, it is prescribed for him to say while he is in the state of bowing down, "Glory to my Lord, the Most High."

And several versions of glorifications are established in the *Sunnah* for alternating use by the servant.

## STAGE V

### RISING FROM RUKU'U (BOWING)

**Then next, rising up from bowing – and note that the rising from bowing & standing upright is a pillar.**

Then straighten up your back out of *Ruku'u*, saying: **سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ** [Allah listens to the one who praises Him]; until you are standing and every vertebra returned to its place.

- Take note that the saying of: **سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ** [Allah listens to the one who praises Him] is an obligatory act which must be observed by the *Imam*, the followers of *Imam* as well as the person praying alone.

Then, while standing upright, say **رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ** [“Our Lord, and to You be all Praise”]

- And take note that it is also an obligatory act to say that, whether you are the *Imam* or a follower of *Imam* or praying alone.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded all worshippers, whether behind an *Imam* or not, to do the above on rising from *Ruku'u* by saying “Pray as you have seen me praying.”

- g)** Ensure that you observe the following **eight** emphatic *Sunnah* acts of rising from *Ruku'u* and standing upright before performing *Sujud*:

- i. The act of beginning the saying of the supplication for rising from the *Ruku'u* [i.e. '*Sami' Allahu Liman Hamidahu*'] while rising up and completing it as you attain the upright standing position.
- ii. Being in the upright standing position (and at ease) before making the supplication: '*Rabbana'a wa lak-al-Hamd*' & any of the additional supplications subsequent to it.
- iii. Making the supplications subsequent to '*Rabbana'a wa lak al-Hamd*' such as:

حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ, مُبَارَكًا عَلَيْهِ كَمَا يُحِبُّ رَبُّنَا وَيَرْضَى

["So much pure praise, inherently blessed, externally blessed, as our Lord loves and is pleased with."] and its likes while in this standing position.

- iv. From time to time, alternating the various forms of additional supplications. [Refer to the Main Text for the various versions].
- v. Raising the hands to the shoulder level and occasionally to equivalent level to the tops of the ears, after rising from *Ruku'u* and as you attain the standing position.
- vi. And keeping the hands back to your sides, as in normal posture, while in this standing position. And for us, this is the *Sunnah* because, Imam Al-Albani (may Allah grant him mercy) said: "I, for one, am in no doubt that to place the

hands on the chest in this standing is an innovation and a leading astray, for it is not mentioned in any of the *Ahadith* about prayer, despite their large number. ... Further, not one of the *Salaf* practiced it, nor has a single leading scholar of *Hadith* mentioned it, as far as I know."

vii. Fixing the sight at the place of prostration while in this process.

viii. Sometimes, extending the standing by reciting longer supplication after saying '*Rabbana' wa lakalhamdu*', because he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would sometimes, remain standing until one would think: He has forgotten.

Once you accomplish the rising from *Ruku'u* in the above manner while preserving the emphatic *Sunnah* acts, then proceed to perform *Sujud*.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude in *al-Qiyam*:**

Just as the Qur'an is prescribed for the servant to recite while he was in the standing posture before bowing, Allah prescribed for His slave to praise Him and glorify Him when he is standing erect after having risen from bowing. In fact, the effect of this pillar on the heart is unique; an effect that cannot be produced by anything except the act of the bowing that preceded it. It is an essential pillar similar to the other pillars of *Salâh* such as bowing down and prostration. And for this reason the

Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) used to prolong this standing (after the bowing down) just as he prolonged the pillars of bowing and prostration, and he used to praise, glorify and extol Allah much therein, and exalt Him as I have mentioned before when I explained the description of his *Salah*. He used to say in his night prayers (*Qiyam al-layl*):

لِرَبِّي الْحَمْدُ، لِرَبِّي الْحَمْدُ

“To my Lord be all praise, to my Lord be all praise” repeating it, until his standing was as long as his *Ruku’u*, which had been nearly as long as his first standing, in which he had recited *Surah al-Baqarah*.

### **On Devotion of after Rising from Bowing:**

Ibn Qayyim said: After he rises up from his bowing posture, the servant should focus his attention upon glorifying and praising Allah repeatedly, so as to manifest his servitude to Him, the One in whose Hand is the sole authority to bestow and deny.

### **Comments:**

There are two well-known *Ahadith*, reported by Anas and Al-Bara' [may Allah be pleased with them] on the standing after rising from *Ruku’u* and the sitting in between the two *Sajdah* that are very much neglected and mostly not practiced by our *Imams* while leading congregational prayers and even by those praying alone.

Anas [may Allah be pleased with him] reported that, when Allah's Apostle [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] recited: "Allah listened to one who praised Him, he got up [and he stayed for such a duration] that we began to think as if he had omitted [the completion of the *Raka'ah*] then he observed the prostration and observed the *Qu'ud* [sitting] between the two prostrations till we said: He had omitted [the completion of the *Raka'ah*]." [Muslim].

Al-Bara' [may Allah be pleased with him] reported that "The bowing and the prostration of the Holy Prophet [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] and the time spent between the prostrations and as he stood up from *Ruku'u*, excepting the *Qiyam* and *Qu'ud*, were of the same length." [Agreed upon].

The two *Ahadith* above show that the Prophet [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] spends at least, equivalent time duration as he spent in *Ruku'u* [glorifying the Lord] or even prolong the standing such that the Companions would be tempted to think that he [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] had forgotten to go down in prostration, before he actually performs the *Sujud*. Indeed, there are some uniqueness in these two pillars warranting prolongation by the Prophet [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] in his prayers; as remarked by Ibn Qayyim [may Allah grant him mercy].

The standing after erecting from *Ruku'u* is a pillar and adequate tranquility is imperative, just as tranquility is imperative in the other pillars and the entire prayers. It is noteworthy that, this standing is the second of the two standings. The first one is for the recitation of the Qur'an [a glorious opportunity & honour for the servant to engage in private conversation with Allah (the Exalted) while this one is for the praising and glorification of Allah, the Most High [a glorious opportunity for the servant to demonstrate his servitude and gratitude to his Lord].

The lack of application of the principles of the *Ahadith*, after rising from *Ruku'u* and while sitting in between the two *Sajdah*, are the most significant points of departure from the Prophet's prayer in this generation. Prolonging the standing and the sitting in between the two *Sajdah*, to the tempting point of forgetfulness are what we are yet to witness in our congregational prayers. The *Hadith* is almost totally abandoned by the *Imams*. And incidentally, this same issues were matters of concern even at the era of Imam Ahmad bin Hambal [may Allah grant him mercy].

Imam Ahmad [may Allah grant him mercy] said: "And order him [the Imam], when he raises his head from bowing and says:

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمَدَهُ to remain standing until he has said:



رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ without haste in his speech; should he wish to say

more than this, then let him say:

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ

مِلْءَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ[مِلْءَ] الْأَرْضِ وَمِلْءَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ، أَهْلَ الثَّنَاءِ  
وَالْمَجْدِ، لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا أُعْطِيتَ، وَلَا مُعْطِيَ لِمَا مَنَعْتَ، وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ  
الْجَدُّ.

He also said: "This is never seen nowadays among the people, though it is incumbent upon the *Imām* not to be in haste after raising his head from *Ruku'u*, nor should he say: *Rabbanā wa Lak al hamd* too quickly; he should say it slowly and carefully, without rushing, so that the people may say it in time."

"Then when he prostrates and then raises his head from *Sujud*, he should rest momentarily, sitting straight and he should say: *Rabb-ighfir li* without haste, so that the people may do likewise before he prostrates again. He should not move hastily, prostrating a second time immediately after raising his head, causing the people to anticipate him and resulting in the loss of their *Salah*. (Should this happen) the *Imam* will share in their sin and their punishment."

He further said: "It is of paramount importance for the *Imam* to perform *Salah* well and completely, to concentrate upon it, for

his reward will be good reward, like that of those who follow him, if he performs *Salah* well; but he will share in their sin if he performs *Salah* badly (causing them to do so)."

Al-Uthaimeen [may Allah grant him mercy] has voiced similar observation in respect of the swiftness of movement down to prostration after rising from *Ruku'u* and the briefness of the sitting between the two *Sajdah* that have become norm in the prayers. He said, while commenting on tranquility in the prayers: "We realise the error of what we witness from many people who pray without having tranquility, especially in the standing after the bowing, and sitting in between the two prostrations. So you see, before a person is even upright in standing from the bowing, he has already gone down into prostration, and before he is sitting upright [in between the prostrations] he is already down into prostration again."

He further said: "When he [an Imam] is leading the congregation he does not have choice in that, rather it is obligatory upon him to take into consideration those behind him, such that they are able to perform the minimum of perfection in their prayer (i.e. he is not to suffice with such a minimum level when leading that those behind him find it difficult to offer the prayer, in a sufficiently accurate manner, because the Imam isn't praying for himself only, rather he is praying for himself and has the congregation behind him to

consider. Therefore, he must fear Allah regarding them and not deprive them from performing the minimum of perfection at least. If he is able to take it to a higher level [and lead in the manner] of the Prophet [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] then that is more in perfection and better."

### **Brief Analysis of the above Comments:**

It is noteworthy that a practical observation on the timing of making the [regular] *Tasbih* of *Ruku'u* and *Sujud*, seven times each, takes less than twenty seconds each. Similarly, saying *Rabbanā wa Lak al hamd* with the additional supplication as noted by Imam Ahmad [may Allah grant him mercy] above and saying *Rabb-ighfir li* up to fifteen times each takes less than twenty seconds. Give it that each of these supplications, in the various pillars, take up to thirty seconds. Indeed, is thirty seconds spent in the praising, glorification, and invocation of Allah, in prayers, a time duration worthy of complain by anyone who knows the virtues of prayers? If an Imam is ever tempted to think so, then certainly he is mistaken. Let him lead the congregation with all the tranquility and calmness as demonstrated in the *Sunnah* and make the prayer brief, if desirable, by reciting shorter *Surahs* after *al-Fatihah*. Let, even the *Imam* be briefer, as to be content with *al-Fatihah* in the all the *Raka'ah*, for that suffices; rather than compromising tranquility to risk the invalidation of the prayer. Adequacy of

tranquility in the prayer is a manifestation of its completeness and perfection.

You would understand and appreciate the gravity of the above concerns, suitably well, only if you are accustomed to making your voluntary prayers, complete and perfect, with adequate tranquility. Adequate tranquility as stated by Hasan Al-Basri [may Allah grant him mercy] is seven *Tasbih*, each in *Ruku'u* and *Sujud*. And equivalent or more prolonged glorification after erecting from *Ruku'u* and invocation between the two *Sajdah*, as quoted above from Imam Ahmad [may Allah grant him mercy]. But you would hardly appreciate the scope of these concerns, if you habitually pray with three *Tasbih* i.e. with the barest minimum of tranquility. Therefore, if you are at the boarder of tranquility, upscale your prayer to achieve completeness and perfection; the landmarks of the Prophet's prayer.

We earnestly urge our Muslim brothers, including our scholars and Imams, to reflect back on these observations and put to practice the *Ahadith* of Anas and Al-Bara'a [may Allah be pleased with both of them] and the views of the scholars quoted above. Unless we do this, our prayers will continue to be short of the Prophet's manner of the prayer.

## STAGE VI

### THE FIRST *SUJUD* (PROSTRATION)

**Then next, perform the first prostration [*Sujud*] – note that the first prostration is a pillar.**

- Take note that it is obligatory to say the *Takbir* to make the prostration.

**The Manner of the *Sujud*:** The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would say *Takbir* and go down into *Sajdah*. He used to place his hands on the ground before his knees. He would support himself on his palms (and spread them), put his fingers together, and point them towards the *Qiblah*. He used to put his knees and the inner parts of the toes down firmly, point with the front of the toes towards the *Qiblah*, put his heels together, keep his feet upright, and ordered likewise. He also used to say, “There is no prayer for the one whose nose does not feel as much of the ground as the forehead.”

He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also ruled that the prayer of the one who does not straighten his spine fully in *Ruku* and *Sujud* is invalid and ordered the one who prayed badly to be at ease in his *Sujud*.

- Then, when you are established in your *Sajdah*, it is obligatory to say the supplication of *Sajdah* such as:

## سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى وَبِحَمْدِهِ

“How Perfect is my Lord, the Most High, and Praised be He. (three times)” [And three is the minimum of perfection].

But sometimes, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would repeat it more than that.

**h)** Then, fortify and perfect your *Sajdah* with the following **twelve** emphatic *Sunnah* acts for moving to *Sujud* and correctly establishing it.

- i. The act of starting the pronouncement of the *Takbir*, to go down for *Sujud*, while at the standing position and completing it before placing your face on the ground in the *Sujud*. Note that it is against the *Sunnah* to finish saying the *Takbir* while standing & then move to *Sujud* or to say it after placing your face on the ground in *Sujud*.
- ii. Placing the hands on the ground before the knees while making *Sujud*.
- iii. Putting the fingers of the hands closely together, pointing them towards the *Qiblah*, and pressing the palms, including their innermost parts, firmly to the ground, in *Sujud*.
- iv. Putting the palms, level with the shoulders or level with the ears in *Sujud*.

- v. The act of firmly pressing the seven limbs of prostration (the forehead & nose, the palms, the knees, the inner parts of the toes) to the ground while in *Sujud*.
- vi. The act of putting the two heels together while keeping the feet upright; pressing the inner parts of the toes to the ground and pointing the front of the toes towards the *Qibla*, in *Sujud*. [This is achieved by pressing the inner part of the toes, **and not the tips**, to the ground sufficiently well (as if it could support you to sit on your heels, if you were to do so)].
- vii. The act of keeping the elbows away from the sides in *Sujud*.
- viii. Ensuring that the belly is away from the thighs and the thighs from the calves while in *Sujud*.
- ix. Attaining tranquility in the *Sujud* before making the applicable supplication.
- x. Making the supplication in *Sujud* at least three times, in cases of supplications specified as such in the *Ahadith*, and one can increase any such supplication to five, seven or any upward odd numbers as one wishes.
- xi. Making the supplication in *Sujud* slowly with contemplation i.e. without rushing through as a routine.

xii.From time to time, alternating the various forms of supplications in the prostration. [Refer to the Main Text for the various versions].

Once you accomplish the above, then proceed to perform the next pillar i.e. rising from *Sajdah*.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude in *al-Sujud*:**

The 'abd is subsequently prescribed to say "*Allah is the Most Great*" and then to fall down in prostration to the floor to let all his limbs individually demonstrate their servitude to Allah; his forehead placed on the floor before his Lord, his face - the most honourable part of his body - comes together with the dust on the floor, and all the while his heart humbles itself to Allah.

In this posture, it is prescribed for the 'âbd to not have any part of his body depend on any other part for support; that is, he should avoid placing the weight of his thighs on his legs, maintain a space between his belly and his legs, and keep a space between his arms by spreading them to the sides away from his body. This is so that each part of his physical self can individually demonstrate its slavery to Allah.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Devotion of Prostration:**

He said: When the servant falls into prostration, he ought to focus his attention on feeling his nearness to Him, overwhelmed



in humility in the hope that He forgives him, guides him, sustains him, protects him and bestows His mercy upon him.

## STAGE VII

### RISING FROM THE FIRST *SUJUD* (PROSTRATION) & SITTING IN BETWEEN THE TWO *SAJDAH*

Then next, rising up from the first *Sujud* & sitting in-between the two *Sajdah* – and note that the sitting in-between the two *Sajdah* is a pillar.

- Take note that it is obligatory to say the *Takbir* to raise your head from the first prostration.

**The Manner of rising from the first *Sujud* and sitting in-between the two *Sajdah*:** He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would raise his head from prostration while saying *Takbir* and sit straight, on his left foot, with the right foot upright (the inner parts of the toes pressed to the ground), until every bone returned to its position. Also he would, sometimes, raise his hands with this *Takbir*. Then, as you are settled, you recite the supplication for in-between the two *Sajdah*.

- And take note that it is obligatory to make the supplication between the two *Sajdah*, such as: رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي

“O my Lord! Forgive me, O my Lord! forgive me.” (3 times) [And three is the minimum of perfection]. But sometimes, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would repeat it more than that.

Also, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would

lengthen the sitting in-between the two *Sajdah* until it was about almost as long as his *Sajdah*, and sometimes, he would remain (in this position) until one would think: He has forgotten.

**i)** Then, ensure that you fortify your sitting between the two *Sajdah* by properly observing the following **nine** emphatic *Sunnah* acts:

- i. Sitting *Muftarishan* between the two *Sajdah* i.e. putting the left foot along the ground and sitting on the inner part of it and keeping the right foot upright, with the inner parts of the toes firmly pressed to the ground & the front of the toes pointed towards the *Qiblah*.
- ii. Sometimes, sitting *Iq'a* between the two *Sajdahs* i.e. resting on both the heels and (all) the toes, with the inner parts of the toes pressed to the ground.
- iii. Placing the right palm (with the fingers spaced out) on the right thigh or the knee and the left palm (with the fingers spaced out) on the left thigh or the knee.
- iv. Fixing the sight at the place of prostration while sitting after raising from the *Sujud*.
- v. Attaining tranquility in the sitting in between the two *Sujud* before making the applicable supplication.
- vi. Making the supplication in between the two *Sajda* at least three times, in cases of supplications specified as such in

- the *Ahadith*, and one can increase any such supplication to five, seven or any upward odd numbers as one wishes.
- vii. Making the supplication in between the two *Sajdah* slowly, with contemplation i.e. without rushing through as a routine.
- viii. From time to time, alternating the various forms of supplications between the two *Sajdah*. [Refer to the Main Text for the various versions].
- ix. Sometimes, extending this sitting longer than usual, because he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would sometimes, remain sitting until one would think: He has forgotten.

Once you accomplish the above in the sitting in-between the two *Sajdah*, you should proceed to make the second *Sajdah*.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on the State of the Servant between the Two Prostrations:**

He said: Then, when he raises his head and adopts the sitting posture, his inner condition takes on a different nature; given that this pillar has been placed in the middle of two prostrations earns it great significance. The experience and effect of this pillar is unique and different from the pillar of prostration: In this posture the slave kneels down before his Lord apologising for all the sins he committed and hoping for His Forgiveness and Mercy, and asking Him to help him against his own self that incites him to commit acts of wrongdoing.

It is therefore prescribed for the 'abd to sit down in the presence of Allah with humility, admitting his mistakes and repenting from sins, hoping for His Mercy and asking for His Forgiveness, Guidance, Provision and Protection. These five things that the 'abd beseeches His Lord for include the good of this life as well as the good of the Hereafter.

### **Comments:**

There are two popular *Ahadith* regarding the length of stay as a person sits between the two *Sajdah*. Unfortunately, these *Ahadith* are abandoned or neglected by our *Imams* and individuals alike. In practice, the sitting in between the two *Sajdah* is too brief for any meaningful description. To make the least comparison, it is the opposite of the teachings of the above *Ahadith*.

Anas [may Allah be pleased with him] reported that, when Allah's Apostle [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] recited: "Allah listened to one who praised Him, he got up [and he stayed for such a duration] that we began to think as if he had omitted [the completion of the *Raka'ah*] then he observed the prostration and observed the *Qu'ud* [sitting] between the two prostrations till we said: He had omitted [the completion of the *Raka'ah*]." [Muslim].

Al-Bara' [may Allah be pleased with him] reported that "The bowing and the prostration of the Holy Prophet [peace &

blessings of Allah be upon him] and the time spent between the prostrations and as he stood up from *Ruku'u*, excepting the *Qiyam* and *Qu'ud*, were of the same length." [Agreed upon].

It is noteworthy that the sitting in between the two *Sajdah* is a station, dedicated for seeking the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Most Merciful. This is amply demonstrated by the supplications established for the position. The sitting posture is specific, with display of humbleness and humility, typical of a weak and needy servant, fervently looking forward to the mercy of his Lord, who created him for His worship. Thus, this position deserves adequate tranquility and occasional prolongation as in the *Sunnah*. It is most suitable to supplicate for forgiveness with awe and contemplation; fear and hope just as the entire prayer is a manifestation of Allah's mercy on His servants. Our Imams must, in keeping with the above two *Ahadith*, stop rushing the congregation out of this position with the barest minimum of tranquility.

We have given elaborate comments regarding the neglect of the lessons of the above two *Ahadith*, under our discussion of "after rising from *Ruku'u*." You must have read it before getting to this level. But it may still not be out of place for you to go back and read it a second time, in order to contextualise the lessons. This is more so because the sitting in between the two *Sajdah* with some Imams is too brief for description.

We earnestly urge our Muslim brothers, including our scholars and Imams, to reflect back on *Sunnah* of the Prophet [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] in the sitting between the two *Sajdah* and put to practice the Ahadith of Anas and Al-Bara'a [may Allah be pleased with both of them] quoted above. Unless we do this, our prayers will continue to be short of the Prophet's manner of the prayer.

## STAGE VIII

### THE SECOND *SUJUD* (PROSTRATION)

**Then next, perform the second prostration (*Sajdah*) – and note that it is a pillar.**

Then make *Takbir* to perform the second prostration.

► Remember that it is obligatory to say the *Takbir* to make the second prostration.

The second prostration is done in exactly the same manner as the first prostration. Therefore, repeat all the actions and emphatic *Sunnah* acts described under the first prostration with tranquility.

Also note that it is his (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) *Sunnah* to make the *Ruku'u*, the standing after *Ruku'u*, the *Sujud*, and the sitting in between the two *Sajdah*, nearly equal in length (i.e. time duration).

#### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on the Wisdom Behind the Second Prostration:**

He said: The wisdom behind prescribing the actions and the statements of *Salah* to be performed several times in succession during *Salah* is because they are the sustenance of the heart and the soul without which they cannot survive.

Then it is prescribed for the servant to fall in prostration once more, because one prostration is not enough, unlike the case



with bowing down. This is due to the virtue and honour of prostration, not to mention it being the position in which the servant is closest to his Lord. It also takes into account that prostration is more prominently recognized as a mark of servitude compared to the other actions of *Salah*. Thus it is the culmination of the *Raka'ah* in relation to which the preceding actions serve as a preamble that lead up to it.

Performing each pillar and reciting each statement multiple times intensifies the perception of servitude and nearness to Allah, as performing them a second time is an expression of one's gratitude to Allah for guiding him to do these acts the first time round. Furthermore, it leads to a cumulative increase in the Iman, goodness, knowledge and attentiveness of the heart and the feeling of ease in the breast, not to mention aiding the servant in getting rid of the traces of dirt from the heart just like a garment is washed over and over until it becomes clean. It is fascinating wisdom that astounds the mind and points to His Perfection, Mercy and Compassion.

## STAGE IX

### RISING FROM THE SECOND PROSTRATION FOR THE SECOND RAKA'AH

**Then next, rising from the second prostration to perform the second *Raka'ah*.**

► Take note that it is obligatory to say the *Takbir* to raise your head from the second prostration.

He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would raise his head from prostration while saying *Takbir* and **sit straight [i.e. make *Jalsatu al-Istirahah*]** on his left foot, with the right foot upright & the inner parts of the toes pressed to the ground, until every bone returned to its position.

Also he would raise his hands with this *Takbir* sometimes.

***Jalsatu al-Istirahah* (sitting of rest):** It is an emphatic *Sunnah* act to observe while rising for the second or fourth *Raka'ah*.

**j) There are four emphatic *Sunnah* acts that describe and facilitates the correct accomplishment of the *Jalsatu al-Istirahah*:**

- i. Sitting *Muftarishan* (as described under “the emphatic *Sunnah* acts of sitting in between the two *Sajdah*”), before getting up for the second or the fourth *Raka'ah* as the case may be.
- ii. Placing the right palm (with the fingers spaced out) on the right thigh or the knee and the left palm (with the fingers

spaced out) on the left thigh or the knee, while at *Jalsatu al-Istirahah*.

iii. Fixing the sight at the place of prostration while sitting after rising from the *Sujud*.

iv. Supporting yourself with the hands, with clenched fists to stand up.

Then, after performing the sitting of rest, as explained above, you are set to get up for the second *Raka'ah*.

### **Then next, getting up for the second *Raka'ah*:**

Next with the support of clenched fists, get up for the second *Raka'ah*. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would clench his fists and support himself with his hands when getting up. And indeed this is the manner of getting up to the standing position for the third and fourth *Raka'ah*, as well.

### **The Second *Raka'ah*:**

When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) got up for the second *Raka'ah*, then while standing upright, he would say *Isti'adhah* and *Basmalah*, inaudibly and commence the recitation of *al-Fatihah*. And it is his *Sunnah* to say the *Isti'adhah* and *Basmalah*, before he commences recitation, in every *Raka'ah*. He also starts the recitation of a *Surah* or verses, after *al-Fatihah* with *Basmalah*.

He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would perform this *Raka'ah*, exactly as he performed the first, except that he

would make it shorter than the first. Once you perform the second *Raka'ah* appropriately, then as you rise from the second prostration, you sit straight for the **First Tashahhud**.

► Note that, it is obligatory to sit for & recite the first *Tashahhud*, at the end of the second *Raka'ah*.

### **Then, the First Tashahhud & Sitting for it:**

He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would raise his head from prostration while saying *Takbir* and sit straight, *Muf tarishan* i.e. putting the left foot along the ground and sitting on the inner part of it and keeping the right foot upright with the inner parts of the toes firmly pressed to the ground & the front of the toes pointed towards the *Qiblah*, until every bone returned to its position. He then recites the *Tashahhud*. Note that you should be settled before you start the recitation of the *Tashahhud*.

**The Manner of Tashahhud:** He taught several ways of *Tashahhud*. One of them is the *Tashahhud* of Ibn Mas'ud (May Allah be pleased with him) who said: While he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was among us we used to say "Peace be on you, O Prophet, but after he was taken, we would say: "Peace be on the Prophet." This modification for "Peace be on the Prophet" reported and practiced by the Companions, after the Prophet was taken, is reflected in the *Tashahhud* below and is to be recited in this pattern in our

prayers. Indeed, this modification is applicable to all the four forms of Tashahhud reported from the other four Companions as in the Main Text.

التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ، وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ  
الصَّالِحِينَ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

**k)** Take note that the sitting for the first *Tashahhud* and its recitation are accomplished by observing the following **five** emphatic *Sunnah* acts.

- i. Sitting *Muftarishan* for the first *Tashahhud* (of three or four *Raka'ah* prayer) or the *Tashahhud* of a two-*Raka'ah* prayer.
- ii. Placing the left palm (with the fingers spaced out) on the left thigh or the knee while making the *Tashahhud*. And clenching all the fingers of the right hand, putting the thumb on the middle finger or making circle with these two, pointing with the index finger (the finger next to the thumb) towards the *Qiblah* in the *Tashahhud*.
- iii. Putting the end of the right elbow on the right thigh in *Tashahhud*.
- iv. Moving the index finger in *Tashahhud* until you get up for the next *Raka'ah*.
- v. Fixing the sight on the index finger while making *Tashahhud*.

**Then next, after the *Tashahhud*, go on, to send salutations upon the Prophet [Al-Salat ‘Ala al-Nabiyy] (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him):**

And take note that it is an emphatic *Sunnah* act of the prayer to send salutations upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the first *Tashahhud*.

He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to send prayers (*Salat*) on himself in the first *Tashahhud* as well as the other. He also established it for his *Ummah* **ordering** to send prayers on him after sending peace (*Salam*) on him, and he taught them several ways of doing so. One form of it is:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

It is also an emphatic *Sunnah* to make *Du'a* (supplication) after the prayer upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the first *Tashahhud*.

### **An Important Clarification Regarding the first *Tashahhud*:**

There are two scenarios in relation to the first *Tashahhud* i.e. the *Tashahhud* at the end of the second *Raka'ah*. It is called the first, if the prayer is more than two *Raka'ah*. Yet it is the final in a two-*Raka'ah* terminal prayer. In essence, the *Tashahhud* for exiting the *Fajr* prayer (and *Nawafil* prayers) or any of the other four obligatory prayers is a pillar. But in other than that, it is obligatory. The two scenarios in which the *Tashahhud* can either be an obligatory act or pillar are given below:

Firstly: The first *Tashahhud* is the *Tashahhud* at the end of the first two *Raka'ah* of the obligatory prayers other than the *Fajr*. And in this scenario:

- The *Tashahhud* & sitting for it are obligatory acts i.e. in the *Zuhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib*, and *Ishah* prayers.

Secondly: it is the final *Tashahhud* in the *Fajr* and *Nawafil* prayers. And in this scenario:

- The *Tashahhud* & sitting for it are pillars i.e. in the *Fajr* and *Nawafil* prayers.
- The sending of prayer upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is also a pillar.

**Manner of the Sitting for the Tashahhud:** In the case of the *Fajr* or *Nawafil* prayers, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will sit *Muftarishan*, as he used to sit between the two *Sajdahs*. Then, make the *Tashahhud*, the salutations, seek refuge from the four matters and make *Du'a* and make *Taslim*. The text for seeking refuge and one version of *Du'a* subsequent to it are given under the final *Tashahhud*. In this instance, lift them here and recite them, after the salutations on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and then make the *Salam*.

But in the case of the obligatory prayers other than the *Fajr*, after sending the salutations on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), if you wish, you may add any

established *Du'a* in the *Sunnah* and then, proceed to make the third *Raka'ah*. Therefore, proceed as follows:



## STAGE X

### THE THIRD & FOURTH RAKA'AHs AND THE FINAL TASHAHHUD

**Then next, the Third & Fourth Raka'ah:**

- Take note that it is obligatory to say the *Takbir* to get up for the third *Raka'ah*.

**Then next**, make *Takbir* and get up for the third *Raka'ah*, supporting yourself with the hands, with clenched fists. And perform the third and fourth *Raka'ah* in exactly the same manner in which you performed the first *Raka'ah*, without necessarily adding *Surah* after *al-Fatihah*. However, note that it is from the *Sunnah* to, sometimes, add *Surah* in the last two *Raka'ah* of *Zhuhr* and *Asr* prayers.

Then, observe the emphatic *Sunnah* acts of the recitation of *al-Fatihah* as in the first two *Raka'ah* while adhering to the emphatic *Sunnah* of inaudible recitation.

Then, if it is *Maghrib* prayer, you should sit for the final *Tashahhud* at the end of the third *Raka'ah*, otherwise sit for it at the end of the fourth.

**Then next, perform the Final *Tashahhud* – and note that the final *Tashahhud* and sitting for it are pillars.**

It is a pillar to recite the final *Tashahhud*. The text of the final *Tashahhud* is the same as given under the first. Other versions of the *Tashahhud* established in the *Sunnah* are contained in

“The Main Text” by Imam Al-Albani (may Allah grant him mercy).

I) Then, take note that the following **six** emphatic *Sunnah* acts are associated with the sitting for the final *Tashahhud* and its recitation.

- i. Either, sitting *Mutawarrikan*, with the left upper thigh on the ground with both feet protruding to the right side.
- ii. Or, sitting *Mutawarrikan*, with the left foot under the (right) thigh and shin, the right foot upright (with the inner parts of the toes pressed to the ground) or laid along the ground.
- iii. Placing the left palm (with the fingers spaced out) on the left thigh or the knee while making the *Tashahhud*. And clenching all the fingers of the right hand, putting the thumb on the middle finger or making circle with these two, pointing with the index finger (the finger next to the thumb) towards the *Qiblah* in the *Tashahhud*.
- iv. Putting the end of the right elbow on the right thigh in *Tashahhud*.
- v. Moving the index finger in *Tashahhud* until you make the *Taslim*.
- vi. Fixing the sight on the index finger while making *Tashahhud*.

As you finish the recitation of the final *Tashahhud*, you proceed to send salutations on the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him).

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude in *al-Tashahhud* & the Meaning of *al-Tahiyyat*:**

He said: As the slave is about to conclude his *Salah*, it is prescribed for him to sit down before his Lord, to glorify Him and praise Him with all that befits Him; hence it is dictated for him to proclaim greetings (*al-Tahiyyat*) which befit Allah alone.

As Allah is the true King whose Face is the only everlasting while everything else shall come to an end, it befits Him alone to receive the Supreme and Perfect Greetings embodied by *al-Tahiyyât*. And it is for this reason that some scholars interpreted *al-Tahiyyât* to refer to His reign while other scholars interpreted it to affirm His Everlasting Kingship. The reality is as I have mentioned, it is an all-encompassing greeting that embraces all these aspects: His Reign, Ownership and Sovereignty.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on the Wisdom Behind Interlinking *al-Tahiyyat* and *al-Salawat*:**

He said: Next in these supreme greetings comes the word *al-Salawât*, which affirms the exclusivity of *Salah* to Allah alone. It is for this reason, the word is used in a plural format and

structured with the definite article (*al*) to assert that anything that can be called *Salah*, be it exclusive or general, is for Allah alone and befits none except Him.

The wisdom behind interlinking these two words *al-Tahiyyat* and *al-Salawat* is that *al-Tahiyyat* belong to Allah alone as He has ownership of us and *al-Salawat* belong to Him as we are His slaves, and both of these are entitlements exclusive to Him; greetings are given to Him alone and prayers are intended for Him alone. Then the adjective word *al-Tayyibât* (the good and pure) is used to qualify His Attributes and His Kingship. It conveys the meaning that He is Good, and so is His Speech, Actions and everything that comes from Him and attributed to Him or associated with His Names. That is to say, His Essence, His actions, His words, and all that He attributed or associated to Himself such as: His house, His servant, His spirit, His camel etc. are all good.

## STAGE XI

### PRAYERS ON THE PROPHET (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him)

**Then next, send salutations upon the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) – and take note that it is a pillar.**

The sending of salutation on the Prophet, after the final *Tashahhud* is a pillar and is recited directly after it: The text of the salutations on the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) is the same as given under the first *Tashahhud*. However, there are other versions of the salutations on the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) established in the *Sunnah*, contained in the “Main Text”

### **Ibn Qayyim’s Remarks on Sending *al-Salat* upon the Prophet (peace & blessings be upon him):**

He said: It is prescribed for the servant to plead by sending *Salah* upon the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) before he starts beseeching Allah for his needs, because sending *Salah* upon the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) is one of the most important intercessory means to be utilised before invoking Allah. It is reported in the *Sunan* books of Hadith that Fudâlah ibn ‘Ubayd (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If any one of you prays, he should commence by glorifying his Lord and praising Him; he should invoke peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace

& blessings of Allah be upon him) and thereafter he should supplicate to Allah for anything he wishes."

This supplication comes at the end of the *Salah* after the greetings and the *Salah* upon the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him); thereafter the 'abd has the choice and freedom to ask Allah for what he wants.

**m) Then next, observe the following two emphatic *Sunnah* acts before making *Salam*:**

- i. He (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say: When one of you has finished the (last) *Tashahhud* he should seek refuge with Allah from four things; saying:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ، وَمِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ،  
وَمِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَالِ

- ii. After seeking refuge from the four things, then he [peace & blessings of Allah be upon him] used to use different supplications in his prayer, alternating at different times; he also endorsed other supplications, and ordered the worshipper to select of them what he wishes, before making *Salam*. Various versions are available in the Main Text. Take maximum advantage of making invocations before exiting your *Salah*. One form of such supplication is:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ظُلْمًا كَثِيرًا، وَلَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ،  
فَاغْفِرْ لِي مَغْفِرَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِكَ، وَارْحَمْنِي، إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

## STAGE XII

### MAKING SALAM (TASLIM)

**Then finally, make *Salam (Taslim)* – and note that it is a pillar and the prayer is exited with its pronouncement:**

He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say,  
“... it (the prayer) is exited by *Taslim*

► There are four versions on how to pronounce the *Salam* as described below:

- i. Next, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would salute to his right, saying: **السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ**  
[so that the whiteness of his right cheek was visible], and to his left:

**السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ**

[so that the whiteness of his left cheek was visible].

- ii. Sometimes, he would salute to his right, saying:

**السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ**

And then, he would shorten the greeting on his left to:

**السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ**

- iii. And when he said to his right:

**السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ**

He would sometimes shorten the greeting on his left to:

**السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ**

- iv. Sometimes, he would salute once only, saying:

**السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ**

in front of his face, turning to his right side a bit, or a little.

**n)** And in making *Salam*, ensure that you preserve the following **four** emphatic *Sunnah* acts:

- i. While making *Taslim (Salam)* twice, turning to the right, such that the whiteness of the right cheek is visible and likewise while turning to the left.
- ii. While making *Salam* once: looking towards in front of your face, turning to the right side a bit or a little.
- iii. Making the *Taslim* in audible voice by the *Imam* and the person praying alone.
- iv. Alternating the four different forms of making *Taslim*.

### **Ibn Qayyim's Remarks on Servitude in *al-Taslim*:**

He said: After greeting Allah, it is then prescribed for the servant to send greetings upon all the righteous slaves of Allah - the persons whom Allah has favoured and chosen. Not to mention that since it is a greeting intended for the created, (therefore as a matter of etiquette) it should not precede the greetings addressed to the Creator.

Within the greeting intended for His righteous slaves, Allah has prescribed that they be addressed in order of the ranks of the recipients, so that the first to be greeted is the one who deserves it the most: The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him), whose nation received every form of good only through him. The second person to be greeted is the slave himself, followed by the rest of the pious slaves of Allah, the best



among whom are the Prophets and Angels followed by the Companions of the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) and then the followers of all Prophets, and all the righteous slaves occupying the heavens and the earth. At the end, it is prescribed for him to send salutations of peace upon all those who deserve to be greeted, in particular and in general.

**Then next**, verify your prayer against the next two pillars i.e. pillars thirteen and fourteen. Ensure that you have complied with the sequence of the pillars and also performed your prayer with sufficient tranquility in every respect.

Always remember that the prayer is an obligation which must be discharged with certainty i.e. certainty of compliance with the precise manner prescribed by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Thus, if after the *Salam*, you are not certain of the extent of compliance of your prayer to the Prophet's own, then its validity is equally not certain.

## STAGE XIII

### THE PILLARS GOVERNING THE FORMAT & PERFECTION OF THE PRAYER

#### **The Thirteenth Pillar – Adherence to the Sequence:**

The pillars of the prayer are fourteen. Preserving the sequence of the order of the Prophet's prayer from Standing to *Salam* is a pillar, without which prayer is invalid. This pillar protects the format and sequence of the Prophet's prayer. Our description complies with this pillar and therefore, preserve it.

#### **The Fourteenth Pillar – Tranquility:**

Tranquility is another pillar. Take note that tranquility is a pillar that essentially validates all the other pillars; the connection between the pillars; and the entire *Salah*, from *Takbir* to *Salam*. Don't forget that the prayer can never be valid without tranquility. Scholars explain tranquility to include the following matters:

- i. Tranquility is that a person is at ease in the position of each particular pillar until every bone returns into its natural position. This is further fortified by the observance of the least number of glorifications and supplications designated for the various positions.
- ii. That whosoever does not have tranquility in his prayer, then there is no prayer for him even if he prayed a thousand times.

## STAGE XIV

### SOME SIGNIFICANT MATTERS FACILITAING THE PERFECTION OF THE PRAYER

#### **The Obligation to Avoid Hastiness and Ensure Tranquility in the Prayer:**

The last advice of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with which he entrusted his community before departing this world was: "That you fear Allah (the Exalted) in your prayers ..." This Hadith is a call to duty to every Muslim. Some of the lessons from this Hadith and others related to it, imply that you should fear Allah, as He is the most worthy to be feared, and:

- ▶ safeguard your prayer as taught by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him);
- ▶ always have *Taqwa* & *Ikhlas* (sincerity) in your prayers;
- ▶ appreciate the significance of the status of *Salah* in Islam and its special benefits of according you the honour to stand before your Lord, five times daily;
- ▶ display reverence in your *Salah* by aligning your heart and body in submission to Allah;
- ▶ show humility, concentration, and devotion, as you stand before Allah, in prayers;
- ▶ guard your prayer because it will ease the tribulations of death and what comes after death;
- ▶ always remember that the prayer is the first of your deeds to be asked on the day of Resurrection; and

- ▶ guard your prayer well, because on that Day, if it is all right, your other deeds will not be examined.

Thus, there is no excuse for anyone to perform prayers, in other than the manner commanded by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

If you have read this booklet from the beginning to this point, then it must be clear to you that the Prophet's prayer absolutely requires:

- ▶ prior preparation and resolute mindset to stand before the Lord for defined conversation and specific physical actions of servitude;
- ▶ thorough knowledge & understanding of its constituent parts; and
- ▶ a great deal of patience to perform it, in its exact form and pattern.

Therefore, hastiness or negligence or laziness in upholding the Prophet's prayer; or feeling of impulsiveness to discharge the prayer, as if it were a burden, off your shoulders, are all diversionary tricks of Shatan to prevent you from earning the benefits of the prayer. Keep away from any such behaviour.

Also, at this stage, you must have realised that the prayer is neither an event nor a routine activity, hastily executed and exited, as misconstrued by some people, including some of the Imams. Rather, it is indeed an act of worship, perhaps the most venerated, which elevates and distinguishes man from other

creatures. It accords man the singular honour and privilege to stand before his Lord, five times a day, to humbly show his servitude to Him, expressing gratitude to Him, glorifying and praising Him, seeking His mercy, compassion, forgiveness, support, provisions, blessing, guidance, protection from evils and against committing evils and many more; and above all seeking nearness to Him; affirming His Lordship, His Names and all His Attributes; and ultimately seeking His protection from the Hell-Fire and humbly requesting Him to admit him to the Paradise. Is this privileged opportunity worthy of hasty exit or complain? Is there any Imam, around us, whose tranquility and calmness in his prayer is worthy of complain? Let every servant be realistic to himself! What else do you really look out for elsewhere, better than what is placed before you in the prayer??

It is noteworthy that the minimum perfection for tranquility in each of the pillars is marked by the easing of the bones to normal posture, affirmed by making the designated supplication. The glorifications and supplications are obligatory for the *Imam* and the followers, alike. There are various versions, some of which must be repeated at least three times; and each one must be recited slowly, with contemplation. To safeguard tranquility, scholars said you can limit the number of times to repeat the supplications, to three, out of necessity rather than regular practice.

But what we are witnessing in this generation of ours is that, the recitation of the shortest form of supplication, repeated three times, is the most regular practice by almost everyone, including our *Imams*. And as, in most cases, the *Imams* are content with three times repetition, the congregation are hardly chanced to repeat such supplications more than once, thus denying them from upholding the *Sunnah* of three times repetition. Certainly, this is not a positive attitude towards the *Sunnah* of our Noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Let us reflect the *Sunnah* more comprehensively and accurately, in our actions and conducts in the prayer, as taught and practiced by our pious predecessors.

There are several longer versions of glorifications and supplications established in the *Sunnah*. They are established because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) practiced them. The *Ahadith* do not indicate that such supplications are not to be used in congregational prayers. Unfortunately, almost all the longer forms of glorifications and supplications are not only ignored by the *Imams* in our congregational prayers but worst still, even the negligible few *Imams*, who tried to observe reasonable level of tranquility in their prayers are often accused of unnecessarily prolonging the prayer. Those scholars who always use the ignorance level of the society to ignore practicing some of the *Ahadith* of the

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) have no excuse to abandon the application of any Hadith, on such lame pretexts. The *Sunnah* is established to provide pathway and not to be perpetually suppressed to the ignorance level of the society.

If, after fully adjusting to the Prophet's prayer, as explained above, in its correct form and pattern, you fail to feel the inadequacies of the prayers of most of our Imams, then reconfirm the efficacy of your compliance level with the Prophet's prayer. And in this connection, we present below three instances given by some of our pious predecessors relating to tranquility in the prayer.

Ibn Jubair reported: I heard Anas bin Malik as saying: "Never did I observe prayer behind anyone after Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) whose prayer had more resemblance with the prayer of Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) than that of this young man, Umar bin Abdul 'Aziz. He narrated that he said: We estimated that his bowing extended to the duration of ten *Tasbih* and that of his prostration, it was ten *Tasbih*." [Abu Dawud & al-Nasa'i – Mishkat-ul-Masabih Hadith No. 883.]

The above Hadith indicates how rapidly the Prophet's prayer had become rare, even at that early generation. Incidentally, we are now in a generation in which it is impossible to estimate

the Imam's proper and accurate recitation of *al-Fatihah* and *Surah* in the prayers with inaudible recitations. The *Tasbeih* of most Imams are certainly not more than three, and the followers would be lucky, if they are able to make two. And the worst situation with the Imams, in most cases, are their swiftness in getting down to *Sujud*, after rising from *Ruku'u*; and the brevity of the sitting in between the two *Sajdah*.

Their actions, in these regards, are direct opposite of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in which he was noted to be, occasionally, prolonging his stay in these two positions, exceptionally, such that, one would be tempted 'to think that he had forgotten'.

Al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allah grant him mercy) said: "The most perfect *Tasbeeh* (in *Ruku'u*, *Sujud*, and in-between the two *sujud*) is repeated seven times, the midmost *Tasbeeh* is repeated five times and the least *Tasbeeh* is repeated three times."

Similarly, Ibn al-Mubarak (may Allah grant him mercy) said: "It is preferred for the *Imam* to make five glorifications. Therefore, all the people behind him would be able to make (at least) three."

### **The Excellence of *al-Fatihah* in the Prayer:**

The Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Allah did not reveal in the Torah or the Gospel anything like the 'Mother of the Qur'an'. It is the 'Seven Oft-Repeated' [and the Grand Recitation which has been bestowed upon me]".



Never belittle the greatness of *al-Fatihah* by making hasty recitation in your prayers whether you are Imam or a follower or praying alone. Because recitation in the prayer is direct conversation with the Lord right before Him.

The status and excellence of *al-Fatihah* in the prayer is aptly articulated by the Hadith of Abu Hurairah reported by Muslim, quoted under the Heading “Ibn Qayyim’s Remarks on the State of the Servant in *al-Fatihah*”. *Al-Fatihah* is the heart of a servant’s conversation with Allah in the prayer because the very essence of the prayer is contained therein.

And the best position for a servant to recite *al-Fatihah* (and indeed the Qur’an) in the best manner, and to derive the utmost benefit out of it, whether audibly or inaudibly, is when the servant stands before the Lord of Creation, in prayer. Indeed, the recitation of *al-Fatihah* is a pillar, without which the prayer is invalid.

Thus, whether you are an *Imam* (leading a congregational prayer) or a follower, sanctify the recitation of *al-Fatihah* and uphold the command of the Messenger (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) and recite it, verse by verse, pausing after every verse in the prayer, whether audibly or inaudibly. We therefore, call upon our *Imams*, especially of this generation of ours, to fear Allah, the Most High, and obey His Messenger (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) by applying this

Hadith in their inaudible recitations. They should avoid rushing the congregation through hasty recitation of *al-Fatihah*, making it impossible for anyone to reflect on the verses.

It goes without saying, that habitual recitation *al-Fatihah* has become a commonplace, in our congregational prayers with inaudible recitations. In most cases the congregations are rushed through the prayers by their *Imams*, with hasty recitation of *al-Fatihah*, as if the goal of the prayer is to quickly exit the presence of the Lord of Mercy, to the dreariness of the world. And by this undesirable action, neither the *Imam* nor the congregation even understands the rationale for the hasty exit.

It is incredible for anyone or indeed any *Imam* to recite, such a great *Surah*, so hastily or habitually and deprive himself and the congregation members of its immense benefits?

### **The Obligation to Preserve the *Sunnah* in Inaudible Recitations:**

It is noteworthy that the recitation of *al-Fatihah* is the heart of the conversation with the Lord in the prayer. And since it is a pillar, the sanctity of its manners of recitation must be preserved, in every respect and situation. The only difference between loud and inaudible recitations is the sound i.e. one is to the hearing of people around and the other one is to your hearing and nothing more. You must recite to your hearing with reflection on its correctness as regards all the rules of recitation,

with contemplation on its meanings just as the loud recitation is subject to the listening judgment of the congregation.

But the speedy manner with which most of our *Imams*, complete the recitation of *al-Fatihah* (in some cases with *Surah*) in the prayers with inaudible recitation has been a source of great concern to the keen devotees of the Prophet's prayer. In view of the growing concern about the extent of departure from the Prophet's manner of the prayer, especially those relating to inaudible recitations, it is perhaps imperative to highlight some of the likely practices, that are against the *Sunnah*. Accordingly, the following manners of recitation of *al-Fatihah* and *Surah* (by Imam or a person praying alone), in the prayers with inaudible recitation, are in breach of the *Sunnah*:

- ▶ Recitation in the mind, without uttering the verses, to your hearing.
- ▶ Recitation without observing the *Tajweed* rules or in breach of the rules.
- ▶ Recitation without pausing, for breath, at the end of each verse.
- ▶ Breathing in the course of the recitation, in infringement of the sanctity of the verses.
- ▶ Habitual or routine recitation, without the least reflection on the verses (i.e. absent minded recitation).

- Speedy recitation of *al-Fatihah*, which is not only against the *Sunnah* but according to most scholars, it invalidates the *Salah*.

**Preserve the *Sunnah* of Recitation of *Ayahs* (or *Surah*) after *al-Fatihah* in the last two *Raka'ahs* of *Zhuhr* and *Asr* Prayers:**

He (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) used to make the last two *Raka'ahs* about half as long as the first two, in both cases of *Zhuhr* and *Asr* prayers respectively. Thus, if he recites thirty *Ayahs*, after *al-Fatihah*, in the first two *Raka'ahs* of *Zhuhr*, then he would recite about fifteen *Ayahs* each, after *al-Fatihah*, in the last two *Raka'ahs* of it. If he recites fifteen *Ayahs* in the first two *Raka'ahs* of *Asr*, then he recites about half of that, after *al-Fatihah*, in each of the last two *Raka'ahs*.

Imam Al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The above Hadith reported by Imam Ahmad and Muslim, contains evidence that reciting more than *al-Fatihah* in the last two *Raka'ahs* is a *Sunnah*, and many Companions did so, among them Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). It is also the view of Imam al-Shafie', whether in *Zhuhr* or others, and of our later scholars. Unfortunately, this *Sunnah* is habitually neglected by the greater majority of the Muslims, including our Imams. Let's revive this Hadith by reflecting its teachings in our prayers more frequently.

Note that it is also his *Sunnah* to, sometimes, recite only *al-Fatihah* in them.

### **Preserve the use of *Sutrah* (Barrier) in Observing Prayers:**

Take note and preserve it that it is the *Sunnah* to always pray against *Sutrah*. He [peace and blessings of Allah be upon him] used to say: “*Do not pray except towards a Sutrah, and do not allow anyone to pass in front of you, but if someone continues (to try to pass) then fight him, for he has a companion (i.e. Shaytan) with him.*”

Finally, by Allah's Grace, what has preceded represent the Prophet's manner of the prayer as described by *Imam Muhammad Nasir Al-Din Al-Albani* (may Allah grant him mercy and admit him to *al-Jannatu Firdaus*) in his famous book “*The Salah: The Prophets Prayer Described*” ‘from *Takbir* to *Taslim* as though you have seen him pray’. He who is able to preserve this manner of prayer with humbleness and humility (*Khushuu*) will *insha* Allah succeed in this world and the Hereafter.

May Allah (the Majestic) grant us the ability to preserve our prayers in this manner with *Khushuu* until our death. May Allah (the Exalted) forgive us our shortcomings in this compilation and always. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon our beloved Prophet, his family and Companions and those who follow his path till the Last Hour.

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