

Rukoo' (bowing) in prayer

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

source: the original *sifah salaah in-nabee* – the Prophet's Prayer described (ﷺ)¹ – *Masjid Rahmah* class no. 39

Here are some of the benefits from the class focusing on the etiquette of the *rukoo'* (bowing):

- 'Abdullaah bin Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه)² the noble companion, taught two of the Taabi'een (the generation following that of the companions) the *rukoo'* as placing the hands between the legs with both hands intertwined. They (and ibn Mas'ood's (رضي الله عنه) sons), however, have been opposed by the majority of the *'ulamaa* and companions.

- Imaam an-Nawawee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)³ clarified that the *Sunnah* is to place the hands on the knees and that placing them between the legs is disliked. The three men (ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) and the Taabi'een) were unaware of the abrogation, hence it is best to stick to the majority of the *'ulamaa*. **The Prophet (ﷺ) left this off and prohibited it, and would place his hands on his two knees;** this is what he (ﷺ) taught the 'one who prayed badly.' It is also mentioned in two narrations, one of which is in Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and in Saheeh Muslim, that the companions (رضي الله عنهم)⁴ used to do that (place their hands between their knees), but then were prohibited from it.

- 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said that it is from the *Sunnah* that one places the hands upon the knees (Saheeh – Tirmidhee, Nisaa'ee; Saheeh – by standards of Muslim). This narration is *marfoo'* (raised/traced back to the Prophet (ﷺ)).

- Imaam al-Bukhaaree (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) narrates that the Prophet (ﷺ), when making *rukoo'*, used to firmly place his hands upon his knees. Other narrations mention that he (ﷺ) did so as if grasping them (Saheeh – Abee Daawood, Hasan us-Saheeh⁵ - Tirmidhee)

- The Prophet (ﷺ) placed the palms of his hands on his knees and spread the fingers; the narration about spreading the fingers is mentioned by *Haakim*. Shaykh ibn 'Uthaymeen (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) commented that this is from the recommended aspects of the *rukoo'*, and that if one were to keep the fingers together (not for purpose of worshipping Allaah), then there is no sin upon such an individual – **but** this is not the *Sunnah*.

¹ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

² (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him

³ (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

⁴ (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu 'anhum) May Allaah be pleased with them

⁵ When Imaam at-Tirmidhee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) calls a *hadeeth* "*Hasan us-Saheeh*", it implies that it is wavering between *Hasan* (good) and *Saheeh* (authentic).

Rukoo' (bowing) in Prayer

- In addition to his palms being upon his knees, **the Prophet's (ﷺ) fingers were at times on the shin bone.**
- **It is from the Sunnah to spread the arms apart and spread the elbows from the sides during rukoo'.** Imaam at-Tirmidhee (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ) mentioned that this is what the people of knowledge were upon. Shaykh ibn 'Uthaymeen (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ) said that this is a recommended aspect of the prayer. However, if doing so will harm⁶ or distract others praying near by, then one should refrain from this. It is also feared that one may as a result falls under Allaah's statement:

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ
فَقَدْ احْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا

**And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly
Bear on themselves the crime of slander and plain sin⁷**

- The Prophet (ﷺ) used to spread and straighten his back such that if water were placed on top, it would stay there. This is a true characteristic of performing a proper *rukoo'*. Shaykh ibn 'Uthaymeen (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ) said that this is accomplished by fulfilling two things: the actual back should be straight and the back should not tilted high or low. 'Aaishah, the Mother of The Believers (رضى الله عنها)⁸ narrated that during *rukoo'*, the Prophet's (ﷺ) head would not be lowered or raised, but it would be between that (in line with his back).
- It was said to the 'one who prayed badly' to **be at ease in the rukoo'.**
- We know from the authentic *Sunnah* that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to be able to see behind him during *Salaah*. Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ) mentioned that this miracle was specific to the *Salaah*, as there is no *daleel* (evidence) to claim it to be general.

⁶ This harming can be due to a statement or an action

⁷ Soorah al-Ahzaab [33:58]

⁸ (رضى الله عنها) (rad iyallaahu `anhaa) May Allaah be pleased with her