

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SALAAH OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE LIGHT OF AHAADITH

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Foreword

All praises are due to Allah, Lord of the Universe, and Salutations be upon Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Allah Ta'ala has preserved this *Deen* from all discrepancies and will continue to do so throughout time by means of Scholars. Many trials will come and the 'Ulama will provide solutions for, and act against these trials. One great trial today is an ideology and effort which can remove the general masses from the following of authentic Scholarship, whereas this is a command of Allah Ta'ala and something passed down from the first generation of Muslims up until today. Allah Ta'ala says, "O you who believe obey Allah, his Messenger and those of authority amongst you." *Sura Nisaa, verse 59*. The *Mufasssireen* have mentioned that this refers to the Scholars (*Tafseer Tabari*). The *Sahaabah* followed Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam), the *Taabi'een* followed the *Sahaabah*, and the *Tab' Taabi'een* followed the *Taabi'een*. This chain of Knowledge remained unbroken till today. The 'Ulama have prescribed the complete way of following this *Deen* after studious and in-depth research of the sources of *Shariah*, namely the Qur'aan, *Hadith*, *Ijmaa'* and *Qiyas*. This is not something any layman can, is capable of, or obliged to do. The 'Ulama also understood the *Deen* better, as they were closer to the era of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam). Every layman cannot involve himself in the deep and intricate study of all the sciences of *Deen*, which is why Allah Ta'ala has mentioned in *Sura Tawba, Ayah 122* that only a group may take up this task.

We, at Darul Uloom New York, in order to keep this pristine *Deen* in its original form, under the supervision of Shaykh Arshad Madani; Teacher of *Hadith* in the great seminary of India, Darul Uloom Deoband and the President of Jamiatul Ulama, have taken up the task of translating a number of booklets. These booklets were given to us by the *Shaykh* and translated by the students of Darul Uloom New York. We hope that this will prove beneficial for the general masses and remove the confusion that has been created.

We are of the opinion that the *Ablus Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah* are on the correct path; and they comprise of those who follow Authentic Scholarship, which include the four Imams of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), namely Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i, and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (Rahimahumullah). Although they may differ in many cases, all are correct in their effort to understand, implement, and present *Deen*.

The original articles discuss in detail, proofs of specific *Masaa'il* that are generally followed by the *Hanafi* School of Thought. This work is aimed towards educating the masses of the authenticity of their position and not to create friction, strife, and debates. As we are human, we are prone to err, therefore if anyone were to point out our mistakes, we would be ever grateful. *Inshaa-Allah* in the future we plan to reprint them omitting those errors. May Allah Ta'ala accept this effort and grant us all the true understanding of *Deen*. *Aameen*.

Translation Committee
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Men and women differ greatly in many aspects in regards to injunctions and rights due to the difference in gender. Islam, being a religion of *Fitra*,¹ takes this distinction of genders into consideration accordingly. This difference is very obvious, especially in regards to the laws of *Salaah*² and *Hajj*³.

In this brief document the difference between the *Salaah* of a man and a woman will be explained in the light of the *Ahadith*⁴ (plural for *Hadith*). The Islamic mentality asserts that women, in all circumstances must be preserved and protected, this is why the men are strongly commanded to participate in the congregational prayer in the masjid, to such an extent that Rasulallah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) intended to set on fire the houses of the people who didn't attend the congregational *Salaah* in the *Masjid* after hearing the *Adhaan*⁵.

عن ابي هريرة رضى الله عنه ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: والذى نفسي بيده لقد هممت ان آمر بحطب ليحطب ثم آمر رجلا فيؤذن لها ثم آمر رجلا فيأم الناس ثم اخالف الى رجل فاحرق بيوتهم والذى نفسي بيده لو يعلم احدهم انه يجد عرقا سمينا او مرماتين حسنتين لشهد العشاء (البخارى)

It has been reported by Abu Hurairah (RA) that Rasulallah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said, 'By Him in whose hand my soul lies, that certainly I had intended to order the collecting of fire-wood (fuel) and then to order someone to pronounce the *Adhaan* for the prayer, then to order someone to lead the prayer; and I would go and burn the houses of men who did not present themselves for the (compulsory congregational) *Salaah*. By Him, in whose hands my soul lies if any of them had known that he would get a bone covered with good meat or two (small) pieces of meat present between two ribs⁶, he would have turned up for the *Salaah of Isha*'. (Bukhari)

In regards to women, the opposite has been narrated,

صلوتك في دارك خير لك من صلاتك في مسجد قومك (مسند احمد)

¹ Natural disposition. *Fitra* is the natural mind set every human is born with. Rasulallah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) has mentioned in *Sahib Hadith* that "every human is born on *Fitra*."

² The obligatory prayer. The most important pillar after *Imaan*.

³ The pilgrimage to Makkah to fulfill religious ceremonies. The 5th pillar of Islam

⁴ The sayings, actions and approvals of Rasulallah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). This is the proper interpretation of the term *hadith* which has been understood from the experts in the science of *hadith*.

⁵ The call to the obligatory prayer. The first *Sabaabi* to call the *adhaan* was Bilal(RA)

⁶ Meaning anything of materialistic and worldly value

“Your *Salaah* in your house is better for you than your *Salaah* in the masjid of your community.” (Musnad Ahmad)

The Difference in the Procedure of Raising the Hands at the Time of *Takbeer Tahreema*⁷

عن وائل بن حجر قال قال لى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يا وائل اذا صليت فاجعل يديك حذاء اذنيك والمرأة تجعل يديها حذاء ثديها (المعجم الكبير)

Waa'il Bin Hujr (RA) narrates, “Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said to me: ‘Oh Waa’il, when you start your *Salaah*, raise your hands parallel to your ears, and the woman will raise her hands parallel to her chest.” (*Mu’jamal Kabeer* :396)

The Difference in the Procedure of *Sajdah* (prostration)

عن يزيد بن ابى حبيب انه صلى الله عليه وسلم مرّ على امرأتين تصليان فقال اذا سجدتما فضمّما بعض اللحم الى الارض فان المرأة ليست فى ذلك كالرجل (مراسيل ابى داؤد)

Yazeed Bin Abu Habeeb (RA) narrates that Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) passed by two women who were performing *Salaah*, so he said, “When you two prostrate, join some parts of your body to the ground because certainly the woman is not like the man regarding that.” (*Maraseel Abi Dawood*: 8)

عن ابن عمر مرفوعا اذا جلست المرأة فى الصلوة وضعت فخذها على فخذها واذا سجدت الصقت بطنها بفخذها كاستر ما يكون لها (كتر العمال)

Ibn Umar (RA) narrates in *a Marfoo’ Hadith*⁸ that Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said: “When a woman sits in *Salaah* she will join her thighs together and when she does *Sajdah*, she will join her stomach to her thighs, this way will be most concealing for her”. (*Kanzul Ummaal*: 223)

This very narration has been mentioned in *Sunnan Al Bayhaqi* with similar wordings:

اذا جلست المرأة فى الصلوة وضعت فخذها على فخذها الاخرى واذا سجدت الصقت بطنها على فخذها كاستر ما يكون لها فان الله تعالى ينظر اليها ويقول يا ملائكتى أشهدكم انى قد غفرتُ لها (سنن البيهقى)

“When a woman sits in *Salaah*, she will join one thigh to another, and when she prostrates she will join her stomach to her thighs, this way will be most concealing for

⁷ The first “Allahhu Akbar” of the prayer.

⁸ A hadith in whose *sanad* (chain of narration) every narrator is mentioned.

her. Verily, Allah the Exalted looks at her and says, ‘Oh my angels, I make you witness to the fact that I have forgiven her.’”(Sunan Al Bayhaqi 223/2)

It is very obvious from these *Abadith* that because women should be concealed, the procedure of prostration and sitting in *Salaah* for women is different from that of men.

The Sitting Positions of women and men differs in *Salaah*

عن ابن عمر انه سئل كيف كنّ النساء يصلين على عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال كنّ يتربّعن ثم أمرن ان تحتفزن (يعنى جالسات على اوراكهن) (مسند للامام الاعظم)

Ibn Umar⁹(r) was asked about the way the women used to pray at the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), So he replied, “They used to sit cross legged, then they were ordered to join them (legs) and sit on their hips.” (*Musnad Al Imaam Al A’zam* 73)

It was narrated by Ibrahim¹⁰ (R) that he said, “The women used to be ordered to join their forearms and stomach to their thighs when they prostrate and they were also ordered not to distance their forearms like the men, so that the hips wouldn’t be exposed.” (*Musanaf Ibn Abi Shaibah*)

In this *Athar*¹¹, Ibrahim(R) is relating a regular act of women, when he narrates that they will neither have their hands separated from their thighs nor will they raise their behind and hips in the state of prostration as men do.

The Women Are Also Not Permitted to Pray While Riding an Animal

It has been narrated by A’*taa*(R) that he asked Aisha¹²(RA), “Was it permissible for women to pray on an animal?” She said, “They were not given permission for that; neither in adversity nor in prosperity.” (*Kanzul U’maal* 791)

Even here, due to the nature of *Islam*, women aren’t permitted to pray while riding an animal; this is so that they are kept protected and concealed.

⁹ Ibn Umar(R) is the son of the second *Khalifah* of Islam, Umar ibn Khattaab(R).

¹⁰We should keep in mind that Ibrahim was a great *Tabi’ee* who heard from and saw many *Sabaabah*. Therefore he is narrating the regular actions of *Sabaabah*.

¹¹ The quotes and actions of the *Sabaabah* of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). A *Sabaabi* is anyone who has met Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) in the state of *Imaan*(Faith) and passed away in the state of *Imaan*.

¹² She is the wife of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and most learned female in Islam. Her famous nickname is “Humairah”. She was approximately 18 years of age at the time of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) demise.

Based on these very *Abadith*, the four *Imaams* also have come to a consensus that there is a very clear difference between the *Salaah* of men and women.

In *Hidaayah*, the famous book of Islamic Jurisprudence based according to the *Hanafi*¹³ school of thought, it has been stated: “The woman will raise her hands parallel to her shoulders, and that is the correct verdict, because this is most concealing for her.” The author also mentions, “And she will join her stomach to her thighs, because this manner is most concealing for her.” (*Hidaayah* 1/100)

Imaam Ashaafi¹⁴(R) mentions: “Allah has preferred for the woman to cover themselves and Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) has taught them that as well. Based on this, I prefer that a woman joins her ribs together during prostration, and joins her stomach to her thighs. She will prostrate in the manner most concealing for her. And like this it is preferred for the women to be very concealing in the manner of *ruku*¹⁵, sitting, and the entire *Salaah*. In this manner it will be most concealing for her. And it is also preferred for her to be draped in her shawl from head to toe, so that none of her body parts become apparent during *ruku*’u and *sujood*. (*Kitaab ul Umm* 108)

Imaam Malik¹⁶(R) also considered the difference between the *Salaah* of men and women. It has been mentioned in the book of Imam Malik, ‘*Al-Sharhu Al-Sageer*’: “It is preferred for the men to keep a separation between their stomachs and thighs so that their stomachs will not be attached to their thighs. It is also preferred for the men to distance their elbows from their knees, and their arms from the sides of their bodies. The distance that is established between all these parts is moderate. As for the women it is preferred for them to keep close to themselves in all times of *Salaah*”. (*Asharhu Sageer* 29/1)

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal¹⁷ (R) states: “And a woman will join her limbs to herself extending her legs towards her right side”.

In the previous pages, numerous authentic statements of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and the *Sahaaba* (RA) have been mentioned, but some¹⁸, view this

¹³ Someone one who adheres to the school of thought of Abu Hanifa(r). He was one of the main teachers of Abdullah bin Mubaarak(r) who was the teacher of *Imaam* Bukhari(r). Imaam Abu Hanafi(r) passed away 150 years after *Hijrah*.

¹⁴ One of the great *Imaams* of Islam. Also one the teachers of *Imaam* Bukhari(r). Imaam Shaafi’(r) passed away 205 years after *Hijrah*

¹⁵ The act of bowing before Allah in Salat.

¹⁶ The well-known *Imaam* of Madina . Passed away 179 years after *Hijrah*.

¹⁷ One of the 4 great *Imaams* in Islamic jurisprudence . An expert in the field of *Abaadith* and a student of Imaam Shaafi’(r).

matter in such a way that there is no difference between the *Salaah* of men and women, rather both their *Salaahs* are the same.

Hakeem Sadiq from Siyaalkot, for example, states: “There is no difference in the *Salaah* of women and men, so to fix a law for women to place their hands on their chests and for men to place their hands under their navels, and for women to prostrate in a different manner different from the men is an act of *bid’ah* (innovation) in this religion. Right from the first *Takebeer* to the *Salaam* the *Salaah* of men and women is the same. The positions of standing, bowing, prostrating, sitting, pausing and all the other positions are exactly the same, including the recited supplications. Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) didn’t differentiate between males and females in regards to their *Salaah*.”

This mentioned statement is contrary to the statements of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). These horrendous remarks which have been mentioned by Siyaalkoti refer to the practices established by authentic statements of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) as “innovations”. May Allah guide us all to the correct way of life and grant us the ability to respect the *Quran* and the *Ahaadith* of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam).

¹⁸ Unfortunately today, many claim to follow only Quran and *Ahadith* but ironically don’t accept the view of Quran and ahadith held by the most skilled scholars of Islam who were from the era of either the *Tabi’een* (those who succeeded the companions of Rasulullah) or their students. They condemn the 4 *Imaams* and their supporters the most.