

Knees In Salaat

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WHEN PROCEEDING to Sajdah, what should be placed on the ground first – the hands or the knees? According to the Salafis, the hands should be placed first on the ground. For this view they cite the following Hadith narrated by Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu): "When any of you prostrates, he should not kneel as a camel does (placing its knees on the ground first); instead, he should place his hands on the ground before his knees." This Hadith according to the Salafis is authentic and is narrated in a number of kitaabs.

According to the Hanafi, Shaafi' and Hambali Math-habs, the knees should be placed on the ground first, then the hands. According to the Maaliki Math-hab, the hands should touch the ground first, then the knees. The following is mentioned in Al-Fiqhul Islaamiyyu Wa Adillatuhu, Vol.1, page 663:

"The Sunnah method of Sujood according to the Jamhoor (i.e. the three Math-habs) is that the Musalli should first place his knees on the ground then his hands, then his forehead, then his nose.....in view of the Hadith of Waail Bin Hujar who said: 'I saw Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) when he made Sajdah placing his knees (on the ground) before his hands.' Al-Khataabi said: *'This (Hadith) is more authentic than the Hadith of Abu Hurairah which is cited in the Maaliki Math-hab.'*"

At the outset it should be clarified that the objective of this article is not to refute the Math-hab of Imaam Maalik (rahmatullah alayh). Although, placing the knees first has also been quoted as a view of Imam Malik (ra) according a narration of Ibn Sha'ban (Salah of the believer in the Qur'an and Sunnah, page 155, Shayk ul Hadeeth Riyadh Ul Haq)

All Four Math-habs are the Haqq and they comprise the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah. Our aim in this dissertation is to refute the drivel of the deviant Salafis sect whose members revile the followers of the Math-habs, in general, and in particular the Hanafi Math-hab.

The Salafis feast on falsehood hence they are at pains to convince the ignorant and the unwary that the rulings of the Hanafi Math-hab in particular lack Qur'aanic and Hadith basis. This particular mas'alah of the knees or hands is explained in refutation of the Salafis and to show the solid Shar'i basis for the view of the Hanafi, Shaafi and Hambali Math-habs on this issue.

In addition to the authentic Hadith of Waail Bin Hujar (radhiyallahu anhu), Alqamah and Aswad (radhiyallahu anhum) narrated: "Of the Salaat of Umar (Hadhrat Umar Ibn Khattaab) – radhiyallahu anhu – we remember that after Ruku' he **went down on his knees as a camel goes down, and he placed his knees down before his hands.**" - Narrated by Tahaawi. Its Isnaad is Saheeh (Aathaarus Sunnan, Vol.1, page 117)"

The Hadith of Waail Bin Hujar (radhiyallahu anhu) is recorded in Tirmizi, Vol. 1, page 36 as follows: "I saw that when Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), made Sajdah he would **place his knees (on the ground) before his hands, and when he rose, he raised his hands before his knees.**' He (Tirmizi) said: **'The amal (practice) is according to this Hadith by the majority of**

the Ahl-e-Ilm (Ulama) whose view it is that a man should place (on the ground) his knees before (he places) his hands."

In An-Nail he (the author) says: **"This is the view of the Jamhoor.** Al-Qaadhi Abu Tayyib narrated this (view) from the majority of the Fuqaha. Ibnul Munthir narrates it from Umar Bin Khattaab (radhiyallahu anhu), Nakh'i, Muslim Bin Yasaar, Sufyaan Thauri, Ahmad, Ishaq and the Ashaabur Raai. He added: 'And, I too say so.' (Vol. 2, page 145).....Al-Ya'maree said: 'It is of the style of Tirmizi to authenticate a Hadith of this Isnaad."

It is also mentioned in I'laaus Sunan: "The narration of Anas which is Marfoo' according to Haakim, strengthens this view, and there is no blemish in this narration. Furthermore, narrations of the Sahaabah corroborate it. Of these is the narration that "Verily, Umar Bin Khattaab (radhiyallahu anhu) **would place his knees before his hands (on the ground).**" In Zaadul Ma-aad, Ibn Qayyim states: 'It has been preserved from Umar Bin Khattaab (radhiyallahu anhu) that **he would place his knees before his hands.** Abdur Razzq, Ibnul Munthir and others besides them have narrated it.

Tahaawi has narrated with a Saheeh Isnaad from Ibraaheem An-Nakh'i that he said: 'It is recorded from Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) that **his knees would reach the ground before his hands.** Then he (Tahaawi) said: 'Mugheerah said: *'I asked Ibraaheem about a man who begins with his hands before his knees when he makes Sajdah.* He (Ibraaheem Nakh'i) said: **'It is only an ignoramus or an insane man who does so.'**

"I say: 'The narrators are authentic. Thus, the Hadith of Waail is more preferable in this issue than the Hadith of Abu Hurairah.

With regard to the Hadith of Abu Hurairah, Haafiz Ibn Qayyim said: 'Verily, Bukhaari, Tirmizi and Daaruuqutni have found defect in it.'

Al-Khataabi said: **'The Hadith of Waail Bin Hujar is stronger (more authentic) than the Hadith of Abu Hurairah.'** Ibn Qayyim said: 'Verily, the text (matan) of the Hadith of Abu Hurairah is mudhtarab (confused) because some have narrated the text (which is attributed to Abu Hurairah as follows): **"He (the musalli) should place his hands (on the ground) before his knees.'** Others have narrated the opposite (i.e. the knees before the hands).' Others again narrated: 'He should place his hands on his knees.' Others again have completely excised this sentence."

(Furthermore), even if it (the view of placing the hands first) is proven, then a group of the Ulama has claimed that it is mansookh (abrogated). Ibnul Munthir said: **"Some of our Ashaab have opined that placing the hands before the knees is mansookh.'** (I'laaus Sunan, Vol.3, pages 34 - 37)

With regard to the prohibition of kneeling like a camel, it should be noted that the forelegs of the camel are said to be its 'hands'. Explaining this aspect, the following is mentioned in I'laaus Sunan, Vol.3, page 36: "Furthermore, the first portion of this Hadith (i.e. Abu Hurairah's narration) conflicts with the last portion, for verily, when a camel kneels, it places its hands first (on the ground) whilst its legs (the two hind legs) remain erect. When it rises, then verily, it rises with its (hind) legs first whilst it keeps its hands on the ground."

"It is mentioned in the haashiyah (margins) of Tirmizi: 'It is not hidden that the first part of this Hadith (of Abu Hurairah) is in conflict with the last part because when he (the musalli) places his hands before his knees, then certainly he has knelt like the kneeling of a camel.'" And, this is precisely what the Hadith prohibits.

>From the foregoing discussion, the following facts emerge:

- 1) There are Hadith narrations for both views
- 2) The overwhelming majority of the Fuqaha and the Three Math-habs (Hanafi, Shaafi' and Hambali) are of the view that it is Sunnah to place the knees on the ground first, then the hands.
- 3) The Hadith of Waail Bin Hujar (radhiyallahu anhu) is stronger and more authentic than the Hadith of Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu).
- 4) There are conflicting versions attributed to Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu).
- 5) The evidences, namely, the aathaar of the Sahaabah are more in corroboration of the knees first view.
- 6) It is narrated that Hadhrat Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) would place his knees first on the ground.
- 7) A group of Fuqaha has claimed that the hands first practice is mansookh (abrogated).
- 8) Placing the hands first is in fact kneeling like a camel. A person going down first with his hands, then with his knees resembles the mode of a camel when it goes down to kneel.

As mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, it is not our objective to disprove the Maaliki Math-hab. There is no need for such futility. The aim of this exercise is to refute the baseless accusation of the deviant Salafis who claim that the view of the Hanafi Math-hab is a product of opinion and lacks Hadith substantiation. Alhamdulillah, this brief article dispels the slander of the Salafis.

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Allow Your Knees To First Touch The Ground Followed By The Hands

Sayyiduna Wail bin Hujr radiallahu anhu says, '**I saw Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam place his knees (on the ground) before his hands when he would prostrate, and lift up his hands before his knees when rising.**'[2]

Khattabi, [3] Tibi, Ibn al Mundhir, [4] and Ibn Sayyid al Naas al Ya'muri have all declared the above hadeeth of Sayyiduna Wail bin Hujr radiallahu anhu as more established and authentic than the hadeeth of Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah radiallahu anhu on the same subject.

This hadeeth is supported by the following narrations:

Sayyiduna Anas radiallahu anhu says, **'I saw Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam say the takbeer and place his thumbs close to his ears. He bowed down into ruku' until each of his joints became motionless, and then descended (into sujûd) with the takbeer. His knees went before his hands.'**[5]

Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah radiallahu anhu reports that Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said, **'When one of you falls down into sajdah he should begin with his knees before his hands and he should not descend in the manner of a camel.'**[6]

Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah radiallahu anhu reports that Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam said, **'When one of you falls down into sajdah does he do so in the manner of a camel?'**[7]

Sayyiduna Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas radiallahu anhu says, **'We used to place our hands before our knees, then we were instructed to place our knees before our hands.'**[8]

Kulaib narrates that **when Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam would prostrate his knees would fall to the ground before his hands.**[9]

Sayyiduna Hakeem bin Hizam radiallahu anhu says, **'I pledged to Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam that I would not descend except whilst being upright.'**[10]

Sayyiduna Ubayy bin Ka'b radiallahu anhu narrates that **Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam would fall down upon his knees and not lean.**[11]

Aswad reports that **Sayyiduna Umar radiallahu anhu would fall down on his knees.**[12]

The same has been reported about **Sayyiduna Umar radiallahu anhu by Alqamah (rahmatullahi alaih)[13] and Ibrahim al Nakhai (rahmatullahi alaih)[14]**

Ibrahim al Nakhai (rahmatullahi alaih) says, **'It has been remembered of Ibn Mas'ood radiallahu anhu that his knees would fall to the ground before his hands.'**[15]

Abdullah relates that when his father (Muslim bin asaar) **would prostrate his knees would fall to the ground followed by his hands and then his head.**[16]

Nafi' (rahmatullahi alaih) reports that **when Ibn Umar radiallahu anhu would prostrate he would place his knees before his hands and when rising from the prostration he would raise his hands before his knees.**[17]

Abu Ishaq (rahmatullahi alaih) relates that **when the companions of Abdullah (ibn Mas'ood) radiallahu anhu would descend for sujûd their knees would fall to the ground before their hands.**[18]

Mahdi bin Maimoon (rahmatullahi alaih) says, **'I saw Ibn Seereen (rahmatullahi alaih) place his knees before his hands.'**[19]

Mugheerah (rahmatullahi alaih) says, **'I asked Ibraheem (al Nakhai - rahmatullahi alaih) about a man who places his hands before his knees when falling down into sujûd. He replied, "Only a fool or mad man would do it."'**[20]

Imam Tirmidhi (rahmatullahi alaih) says after narrating the above hadeeth of Sayyiduna Wail bin Hujr radiallahu anhu, **'This is the practice of most of the people of learning. They are of the view that a man should place his knees before his hands, and when rising he should lift his hands before his knees.'**

(Salaah of a believer, in the Qur'an and Sunnah, Shaykh Riyadh Ul Haq)

Notes:

[2] Darimi 1320, Ibn Majah 882, Abu Dawood 838, Tirmidhi 268, Nasai 1089, Ibn Khuzaimah 626, and Tahawi 1/255. Also reported by Ibn al Sakan in his Saheeh as quoted by Hafidh bin Hajar in al Talkhees al Habeer 1/254 no. 379. Narrated also by Ibn Hibban 1909, Hakim 822, Baihaqi 2628 and Baghawi 3/133 no 642. Imam Tirmidhi says that the hadeeth is hasan ghareeb and Hakim has declared it saheeh and Dhahabi agreed. This hadeeth has also been narrated with other chains.

[3] As mentioned by Hafidh in Fath al Bari 2/370, and Baghawi in Sharh al Sunnah 3/135.

[4] In al Awsat 3/166

[5] Hakim 822 and Baihaqi 2632. Hakim classified it saheeh and Dhahabi agreed with him. Hafidh Ibn al Humam quotes Ibn al Jawzi in Fath al Qadeer 1/287 as saying that all of its narrators are authentic

[6] Ibn Abi Shaibah 2702, Abu Ya'laa 11/414 no 6540, Tahawi 1/255 and Baihaqi 2635.

[7] Abu Dawood 841, Nasai 1090 and Baihaqi 2636.

[8] Ibn Khuzaimah 828 and Baihaqi 2637. Hafidh Ibn Hajar says in Fath al Bari that two of its narrators are weak.

[9] Baihaqi 2630. This hadeeth is mursal.

[10] Ahmad 14888 and Nasai 1084.

[11] Ibn Hibban as quoted by Hafidh Haithami in Mawarid al Dhamaan 497.

[12] Ibn Abi Shaibah 2704.

[13] Tahawi 1/256. Imam Nimawi says 432 that its isnad is saheeh.

[14] Abdul Razzaq 2955.

[15] Tahawi 1/256. Muhaddith Dhafar Ahmad Uthmani says 3/35 that its isnad is saheeh.

[16] Abdul Razzaq 2958 and Ibn Abi Shaibah 2706.

[17] Ibn Abi Shaibah 2705.

[18] Ibn Abi Shaibah 2711.

[19] Ibn Abi Shaibah 2709.

[20] Abdul Razzaq 2956 & 2957, Ibn Abi Shaibah 2707, and Tahawi 1/256. Muhaddith Dhafar Ahmad Uthmani says that its narrators are authentic (3/35).