

THE PRACTICES OF THE PROPHET IN SALAT

The term *Sunnah* [plural *Sunan*] literally means practice or convention. Every salat contains a number of *sunan* or practices performed by Allah's Messenger, (ﷺ) habitually and regularly. So, the Muslims consider it desirable to abide by these practices in emulation of the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and expectation of *thawaab* [spiritual reward]. They are described below:

1. Raising of hands [*raf' yadain*]: The worshipper should raise both of his hands with palms open and pointed to the direction of Ka'ba at level with the shoulders and fingers at level with the ears. Raising of hands in this style is desirable on the following occasions: On reciting the takbeer-i-tahreema; before kneeling; on rising from ruku'; and in salats of more than two cycles [rak'at] on standing for the third cycle [rak'at].
2. To place the right hand over the left Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to place the right hand over the left and put them on his chest (*Abu Dawood*).
3. To recite the prayer after chanting of the takbeer-i-tahreemah. Before reciting the Surah Fatiha the Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to recite this prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ، اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّنِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ وَالتَّلْجِ وَالْبَرْدِ.

[translation] “O my God create distance between me and my wrongdoings like you created the distance between the east and the west. O my God purify me from wrongs just as the white apparel is washed clean of dirt. O my God wash me clean with water, snow and cold” (*Al- Bukhari and Muslim*).

4. *Isteadha* [seeking refuge of Allah from the Satan]: In the Quran Allah Almighty says:

﴿ فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴾ النحل: ٩٨

“whenever you recite the Quran first seek the refuge of Allah from the damned Satan” (*al-Nahl*: 98). The Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to say this prayer:

«أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ مِنْ هَمْزِهِ وَنَفْخِهِ وَنَفْثِهِ» (ابن حبان)

“O my God I seek thy refuge from the damned Satan, his excitation, his puffing and blowing” (*Ibn Habban*).

5. **Ameen:** It was a practice of Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) to say “Ameen” when Surah Fatiha was over. If the salat is *jahri* [with loud recitations] Ameen should be said loudly and if it is *sirri* [with silent recitations] it should be said silently. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: When *Imam* has recited *غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين*, the follower should say Ameen This is because if a worshipper's Ameen synchronizes with that of the angels all sins of the former will be forgiven (*Al- Bukhari and Muslim*).
6. **Qira'at** [recitation of verses from the Quran]: After the recitation of Surah Fatiha the *imam* [leader of the prayer] as well as those praying solitarily must recite some portion from the Quran in the first two cycles of the *salat*. The Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to make a concession to the conditions of the worshippers. For instance, if any child wept during the prayers He (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to shorten his Qira'at. Similarly, in the first cycle of each salat he lengthened his Qira'at so that the maximum number of worshippers could join it. The Imam is bound to read Quran aloud in the *jahri* salats of Fajr, Friday and first two cycles of Maghrib and Isha *salat*, and the prayers of both the Eids. When the Imam reads aloud the followers are not required to join him in reading aloud. They must listen to him silently. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said that those who are led by an Imam the Qira'at of their Imam is counted as their own qira'at (*Ibn Maja*). Nevertheless, keeping in view the differences of the jurists it is desirable that all followers [muqtadis] repeat the Surah Fatiha in each cycle.
7. **Takbeerat of turnings:** Before turning from one part of the salat to another it is a Sunnah to recite Allah-o-Akbar. For instance, on turning from standing to ruku' or on going to sajdah from ruku'. However, on rising from ruku' the Imam will say *سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ* “*Samiallah liman Hamidah*” But the followers will say in response *رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْد* “*Rabbana wa lakal Hamd*”.

8. **The position in ruku' and its prayer:** when the Allah's Messenger, (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) went into ruku' he kept his back flat as if water were poured over it would not flow, he would keep his palms over his knees with fingers separated. In ruku' he recited سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ “*Subahaqna Rabbiyal Azeem*” (*Muslim*) or sometimes would recite سُُبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ، رَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ “*Subbuhun, Quddusun, Rabbul Malaika war Ruh*” (*Muslim, Abu Dawood, Nasai*).

9. After rising from ruku', he said, when the Imam says “*Samiallah liman Hamidah*” the followers should say رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ “*Rabbana wa lakal Hamd*” for if their chanting coincided with that of the angels all their past sins will be forgiven (*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*). The Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) himself used to add these words to the above:

مَلَأَ السَّمَوَاتِ، وَمَلَأَ الْأَرْضِ، وَمَلَأَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَعْدُ، أَهْلُ الثَّنَاءِ وَالْمَجْدِ، أَحَقُّ مَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ، وَكُلُّنَا لَكَ عَبْدٌ، اللَّهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا أُعْطِيتَ، وَلَا مُعْطَى لِمَا مَنَعْتَ، وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ (مسلم)

“*Mal'as Samawat wa mal'al Ardh wa mal'a ma shi'ta lima ataita min shai ba'd. Ahlathana wal-majd, wa kulluna lakal Abd. Allahumma la ma'nia Lima a'tait wa la mo'tiya Lima mana'ta. Wa la yanfa' dhal jadd minkal Jadd*” (*Muslim*).

[“All praise to Thee in fullness of the skies, fullness of the earth and fullness of whatever Thou may bestow afterwards. Thou are worthy of all praise and grandeur. All of us are Thy salves. O our God nobody can stop that which Thou may bestow and nobody can bestow that which Thou have withheld. No great person or his greatness has any standing before Thee.”]

10. **How to prostrate:** before prostrating the worshipper should first lay both of his knees on the ground, then put his hands. In all seven body parts are involved in the act of prostration: Both palms, both knees, both feet, and the face. During prostration one should not place his elbow on the ground but keep it raised above the ground and separated from his sides. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: Exercise moderation in prostration. Don't spread your elbows on the ground like a dog (*Al-Bukhari and Muslim*). The women should set their elbows with their sides

and prostrate with their bodies folded up. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) recited *سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى* “*Subhana Rabbiyal A'la*” during prostration.

11. Sitting between the two sajdahs: When the Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) rose from the sajdah he sat on the ground placing his left foot under him and keeping his right foot straight with the toe pointing towards qiblah. Then he recited: *ربي اغفرلي ربي اغفرلي*: “*Rabbighfirli, Rabbighfirli*” [O my God forgive me, O my god forgive me] (*Ibn Maja*).

12. Pause for relaxation: One should pause a little for relaxation before rising for the second or fourth rak'at.

13. The first Qa'dah: This is the first sitting after two cycles in salats of three or four cycles. During this sitting the worshipper recites tashahhud. On word “*Ashhad an la ilah illallah*” he closes his fist and raises the index finger pointedly in affirmation of the oneness of Allah.

14. The last qa'dah: In this sitting the worshipper after reciting tashahhud one should recite *Tasliyah* [Prayer for Allah's blessings for the Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and his descendants]. The wording is:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

“*Allahumma Salle ala Muhammad wa ala A'li Muhammad kama Sallaita ala Ibrahima wa ala A'li Ibrahima wa Ba'rik ala Muhammad wa ala A'li Muhammad kama barakta ala Ibrahima wa ala A'li Ibrahima Innaka Hameedum Majeed*” (*Muslim*).

[“O my God bestow your salat upon Muhammad and the descendants of Muhammad like you bestowed your salat upon Abraham and the descendants of Abraham and bless Muhammad and his descendants like you blessed Abraham and the descendants of Abraham. Verily, thou are praiseworthy and grand.”]

After that he should pray as Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: "After you have completed *Tasliyah* [Prayer for Allah's

blessings for the Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and his descendants], seek refuge in Allah from four things. Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to pray in these words:

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

(Translation) O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the punishment of the grave, and from the punishment of Hell-fire, and from the trials of life and death, and from the evil of the trial of the False Messiah. (Muslim). In the last sitting one should sit on the earth and take the left foot out from beneath the right foot and keep the right foot straight. Sitting in this position is called "Tawarruk".

Post-Salat Chants and Prayers

Having concluded his *salat* Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) used to recite this prayer:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ، اللَّهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا أَعْطَيْتَ وَلَا مُعْطَى لِمَا مَنَعْتَ، وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ

“*La ilaha illallah wahdahu la shareeka lah lahul mulk wa lalahul hamd wa hua ala kulli shai'in qadeer. Allahumma la Ma'ni'a lima a'taita wa la mo'tia lima mana'ta wa la yanfa dhal jadd minkal jadd* (Al- Bukhari and Muslim). Then he chanted three times “*Astaghfirullah*” [I seek the forgiveness of Allah] (Muslim). Then he would recite:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

“*Allahumma antassalaam wa minkassalaam tabarakta Ya dhul Jalaali wal Ikraam*” (Muslim) [“O my God you are peace and peace is from you, you are the highest O owner of all magnificence and honour]. The Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) also taught Hazrat Ma'adh RadhiAllahu Anhu this prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنَّا عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

“*Allahumma A'inna ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni ibadatika*” (Dawood, Tirmizi, Ibn Habban) [O my God help me at remembrance of you, at gratitude towards you, and at devotional worship of you]. The Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) also recited the Surah Ikhlas and the Mu'awwadhatain after salat (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Likewise, he also recited Ayatul Kursi and observed that if one recited

Ayatul Kursi after the *fardh* salats nobody can prevent him from entering the Paradise (*Nasai*). He also recommended that the worshippers should chant “*subhanallah*” 33 times, “*alhamdlillah*” 33 times, and “*Allah-o-Akbar*” 33 times and to make up the figure of 100 should recite

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“*La ilaha illallah wahdahu la shareeka lah lahulmulk wa lahul hamd wa hua ala kulli shai'in qadeer*” (*Muslim*) One who chants this, his sins will be forgiven even if they were equal to the surf of the oceans. It is also narrated that the Allah's Messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), in the salat of *fajr* and *maghrib* kept on sitting after salam and recited this prayer for ten times;

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“*La ilaha illallah wahdahu la shareeka lah lahul mulk wa lahul Hamd wa hua ala kulli sha'in qadeer*” (*Tirmizi*). He also recited this prayer seven times:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ ، اللَّهُمَّ أَجِرْنِي مِنَ النَّارِ

“*Allahumma inni as'alokal Jannah. Allahumma ajirni minan Naar*”

(*Ahmad*) [“O my God I beg from you the Paradise. O my God save me from the Hell Fire”].

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