

‘Motions & Emotions of Rukoo, Sujood & Tashahud’

Rukoo- Bowing

We have now finished our recitation, we pause momentarily, then begin the bow as we simultaneously call out “Allahu Akbar” (Allah is greater!)- A reminder to refocus should we have drifted, a reminder that... We stand here on earth in prayer, while Allah looks upon us from above the seven heavens.

Again we raise our hands as a gesture of complete surrender before bowing down to Him, a position of humility.

The Sunnah is to raise your hands again before going to Rukoo – This is called Raf’ al-Yadayn while saying Allahu Akbar. al-Bukhaari (735) and Muslim (390) from ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both), who said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to raise his hands to shoulder level when he started to pray, when he said “*Allahu akbar*” before bowing in rukoo’, and when he raised his head from rukoo’.

al-Hasan said: “*The Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to raise their hands during prayer when they bowed and when they stood up (from bowing).*” Al-Bukhaari said, “Al-Hasan did not exclude any of the Sahaabah from that, and it was not proven that any one among the Sahaabah did not raise his hands.” (Bukhari)

This is the position of humility. Submissiveness. When you do it, you do it for Subhanahuwattalla. You do it following the Sunnah and You do it willingly. So think about what you’re doing.

- Let the palms rest on the knees, fingers apart.
- Straighten the back and keep it level with the head. Maintain a calm hold till every part and joint is relaxed and has peacefully set in place. “*Subhana Rabbiyya- Al-Atheem*” (How perfect My Lord is, The Supreme!). Focus on the pronoun that means “My” (in Rabbi). It adds that element of bonding, that ingredient for connection and love. He is My Lord (Rabbi) who has raised me in His care, clothing me, feeding me, healing me, nurturing me. A heartfelt “Subhana” meaning- far removed is He from any imperfection!
- “Subhana Rabbiyya- Al-Atheem” a second and third time as our hearts are humbled in submission before Him. Realize His Majesty, recall His sovereignty. I place all my hopes with You, My Lord.

Many of us perform this part of the prayer mechanically, devoid of any emotion or connection like that felt when reciting Quran or when down in prostration. But in reality, Rukoo’ is an intense symbol of worship and servitude to our Lord! In it lies the essence of tremendous humbleness and humility!

Every one of us was created with particular needs, like the need to feel loved, the need to be alone for a while, the need to know that someone special awaits you at home after a long hard day at work, the need to spend time with your children and kiss them to sleep, the need to hear good words, etc.. When these needs go unsatisfied, an imbalance occurs within us that can affect the quality of our entire day. We might become irritable and cranky and not know why. A need within us has not been met that day.

But we have been created with a need far greater and more critical for our complete wellbeing than any other... It is the need to worship. To satisfy this need, people through the ages have worshiped everything under the sun (and including the sun).

They worshiped idols, water, animals, snakes, the sun, the stars, money, science, and even their own desires. And they exhaust great efforts and wealth to do so. Indeed, this need to worship must be satisfied, but none of the above can satisfy it like worshiping the One True God! And Salah fulfills that satisfaction with Rukuu' being an essential, critical part of it.

The Prophet ﷺ and those before us used to feel such satisfaction and pleasure in rukuu that they would hold in that position the same length as when in the standing segment of Salah. Bear in mind that his *ruku'* was also almost as long as his standing before *ruku'*, where he would sometimes recite five sections (*ajza'*). (Muslim)

The Prophet ﷺ once saw a man rushing through his prayer, pecking up and down his rukuu and Sujood. He ﷺ said, *"If this man dies (with his prayer) in this state, then he dies belonging to a creed other than the creed of Muhammad."* Thus, our rukuu should be performed calmly, peacefully, according to the Prophet's example.

This worldly life is full of hardships and aches. We laugh one day, only to cry the next. Its demands and toils leave us thirsty and tired. What can quench this thirst better than prayer?"

17 times each day, we bow... Our love for Allah has to grow with that. And when you love Him, He will love you even more for He is the Most Kind, the Most Generous. And who can ever harm you... when the Creator Himself, loves you?

Let us then, find our comfort and relief in our rukuu and Sujood..

Varying the adhkaar in rukoo

Unlike commonly believed, the Prophet ﷺ recited something other than *"Subhana Rabbiyya- Al-Atheem"* we will list below a couple that can be found in the authentic book Hisnul Muslim (Fortress of Muslim – Link to download given below)

لِيْ اَعُوْزُ اللّٰهَ ، وَبِحَمْدِكَ رَبَّنَا اللّٰهُمَّ سُبْحَانَكَ .

Subhanakal-lahumma rabbana wabihamdik, allahummagh-fir lee

'How perfect You are O Allah, our Lord and I praise You. O Allah, forgive me.'

وَالرُّوحِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رَبِّ ، قُدُّوسِ سُبُّوحِ .

Subboohun quddoos, rabbul-mala-ikati warrooh.

‘Perfect and Holy (He is), Lord of the angles and the *Rooh* (i.e. Jibra-eel).’

So we should try and memorize these so that we can read on dhikr for some days then the next for the next few days and so, this keeps the heart alive and also gives us the opportunity to implement a Forgotten Sunnah!

In preparation for the greatest pillar of Salah

We just completed a beautiful station of Salah, the Rukuu’. The Rukuu’ is the prelude to Sujood from one posture of submission, to a greater, more complete posture of submission! But before the Sujood, comes another beautiful station of Salah- and that is, the standing after the Rukuu’, allowing for the bones to return to their joints, for he ﷺ also told us that *“The worst thief is the one who steals from his Salah” (by rushing through it)*. The Prophet ﷺ used to stand in this part of the prayer a length equal to that of his rukuu’.

But as we rise for this stand, this time it is not “Allahu Akbar” that we call out, but instead, *“Sami’a-Allahu liman hamidah”* (May Allah answer he who praises him).

Why?

Any duaa/request made before The King is only proper and acceptable when preceded by praise and much extolling, right? Just as the Fatiha starts out with praise before the greatest duaa is made (Ihdina-Sirat-Al-Mustaqeem), the same holds true here. For we are about to enter upon the greatest pillar of Salah, the Sujood!.. in which we will be the closest we can ever be to Allah! And during which, the duaas/supplcations, are always answered!

“Sami’a-Allahu liman hamidah” therefore, signals us to praise Allah much before we are to make our duaas when in Sujood. And so what do we say upon that signal, once we have risen? We begin our praise: “Rabbana walaka-alhamd” (Our Lord, for You is all praise!). We can add, *“hamdan katheeran tayyiban mubarakan feeh!”* (An abundant beautiful blessed praise!).

The Prophet ﷺ was once leading in prayer. When he ﷺ said *“Sami’a-Allahu-liman hamidah”*, one of the companions behind him added the above extension, *“hamdan katheeran tayyiban mubarakan feeh!”*. When the prayer was finished, the Prophet ﷺ turned to his companions and asked, *“Which one of you just said those words?”* And the man replied *“Me, ya Rasulallah.”* The Prophet ﷺ commended, *“I just saw thirty something angels racing which of them will write it first!”*

In another hadeeth it is narrated that- When he stood up he would say: *“Allahumma rabbana laka al-hamd mil’ al-samawaati wa mil’ al-ard wa mil’a ma baynahuma wa mil’a ma shi’ta min shay’in ba’d (O Allah our Lord, to You be praise filling the heavens, filling the earth, filling everything in between and filling whatever else You will besides that).*

Again more can be found in the book Hisnul Muslim or other books of Adkhaar. If we memorize them and alternate between reciting them, we can never do it without being mindful.

SUJOOD

Where True Happiness Really Lies

What is Sujood really about? Many of us have been performing the Sujood robotically over the years, out of a mechanical routine, and thus have not felt its powerful effect. We will not be able to taste the true sweetness of any part of Salah until we get our heart into it!

Sujood, as we have mentioned before, is the ultimate symbol of complete submission to our Creator...it is as if we are saying: "O Allah, what do You ask of me? I give You the most precious thing I own!... The most dignified and honoured part of me... My face... And onto the lowest, most degraded spot around me, I place it... The ground. For You alone, My Lord... I give You all that I am."

Where does happiness lie? It lies high above with Allah. So the secret formula goes like this: the closer you become to Allah (The King!), the higher your spirits will rise, and thus the happier you will be! But how do we reach the levels of this great happiness? We must rise closer to that elevation. How do we do that? By lowering ourselves down! Recall the hadeeth... *"He who humbles himself to Allah, Allah raises him."* - raises him in honour, raises him to the place of true happiness! And recall this hadeeth, *"The closest a servant ever is to His Lord, is when he is prostrating (in Sujood)"* And what does Allah say at the end of Surat Al Alaq? *"..Prostrate and draw near (to Allah)"*

Do you realize now what you have been doing all these years? You were trying to draw nearer to Your Lord with every prostration. Your body is down firm to the ground, but your spirits are rising, trying to draw nearer to the Creator of the heavens and the earth!

Rabi'a Ibn Ka'eb was once helping out the Prophet ﷺ with water for his wudu' (ablution) when the Prophet ﷺ said to him, *"Ask me."* Rabi'a replied, "I ask to be with you in Paradise." *"Anything else?"* The Prophet ﷺ asked. *"Only that", Rabi'a said.* To that the Prophet ﷺ replied, *"Then help me to help you (get there), by performing much Sujood."* (Sahih Muslim)

So you see now... In order for your spirits to be lifted up higher and higher, you must bring your body down, lower. And just as your body does its Sujood, make sure your heart is in Sujood as well... in Sujood to The One, Who above the Throne is established, every day, directing new affairs... To Him rise the needs and deeds of everyone. Everyone needs Him and He needs no one.

Bring yourself down to the ground, to bring yourself closer to The Lord. Prostrate with body, heart and soul and taste the sweetest feeling in the world... Taste the real happiness of this world!

Ensure that there is no barrier (as that of a head covering) that might prevent direct contact of your forehead with the place of prostration. With palms firmly down, keep fingers close together. Point fingers, knees and toes towards the Qibla. Palms can either be parallel with the head, or parallel with the shoulders. Keep the elbows elevated off the ground. Extend elbows as far away from your sides as possible. Keep abdomen away from the thighs.

The Sujood is done on a total of 7 body parts: The forehead (including the nose), the two palms, the two knees, and the two feet (toes)... All firm upon the ground till every bone and joint is fixed in place with peace and calm.

The Prophet ﷺ never recited Quran in this position, but instead, he made much dua. He ﷺ said, *"The closest a servant ever is to His Lord, is when he is prostrating (in Sujood), so make in it much dua."*

And what have we been taught to say, when we are down so low? *"Subhana Rabbiyal-A'ala"* (How perfect My Lord is, The Most High!) ... 3 times or more.

We can add, *"Subhanak-Allahumma Rabbana wa bi-hamdik. Allahumma ighfirli."* (How perfect You are O Allah, Our Lord, and I praise You. O Allah, forgive me.)

And we can add, *"Subboohun Quddoosun, Rabbul-mala'ikati wa-rruuh."* (Perfect and Holy (is He), Lord of the angels and Ruuh (i.e. Angel Jibrael).) The Prophet ﷺ taught us many supplications, each with a different meaning, each with a unique flavor. Each serves to renew our focus and keep our hearts alive.

When you love someone, you love to talk to him more. You love to stay engaged longer! We have one Rukuu in each unit of Salah, but two prostrations, why? Because the Sujood is the Salah's greatest pillar, it is performed twice! Once is just not enough. The Prophet ﷺ used to lengthen his prostrations, savoring in these precious moments with Allah.

Download Hisnul Muslim from <https://abdurrahman.org/hisn-al-muslim/>

Between the two prostrations

The station we arrive at now is one which should inspire immense humility and fear. In our present world, it is that mortifying position of one about to hear out his death sentence... A position of someone in utmost desperation for a pardon, a savior... It is the sitting between the 2 prostrations.. down on your knees!

What is it that we are to say when in this position? No words can we possibly need more, than: "Rabbi ighfirli" (My Lord forgive me!)- three times or more. It is a time to ask for much forgiveness as we sit this position of full servitude and helplessness.

Another dua that was recited by the Prophet ﷺ in this position was *"Allahumma ighfir li warhamni wajburni wahdini warzuqni (O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, enrich me, guide me and grant me provision)."* (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 284; Ibn Maajah, 898; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani).

Every act of worship has a special beauty to it, a unique flavor. The more we learn the more we can taste that flavor and feel that beauty.

Tashahud

After the two Sujood we are back to the humble position we spoke about between Sujood, here we recite Attahiyyatu, in it we will recite “Assalamu alaika ayyuha-nnabiyyu warahmatullahi wabarakatuh”, now think that this Salam that you are reciting will be presented to the Prophet ﷺ, how would you want it to be? Rushed through? Words not properly pronounced? Or a heartfelt Salam? The Prophet ﷺ said, *“There is not one who sends upon me his peace and blessings but Allah returns my soul to me, so that I can return upon him, my peace and blessings.”*

After that we send blessings Allah’s righteous servants: *“Assalamu alaina wa ala ibadillahi-saaliheen”* while reciting this we should hope and strive to be one of them, these people for whom the whole Ummah has been sending blessings since the Prophet ﷺ

Next- those powerful words of Tawheed- those words that affirm and renew our faith and sincerity: *“Ashhadu anna la ilaha illa-Allah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh”*- I bear witness that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. When death comes upon us, not one of us but will die sometime between any two given times of Salah- either between Fajr and Dhuhr, or Dhuhr and Asr, or Asr and Maghreb, etc.

The Prophet ﷺ tells us, *“The one whose last words (in this life) are “La ilaha illallah”, enters Paradise.”* This is no time to drift! These words of affirmation above are the key to paradise! Finally, as this beautiful meeting nears its end, Allah has guaranteed that in these last precious moments you have with Him, your duas made here- are answered! So first, ask for Allah’s prayers and blessings upon our beloved prophet ﷺ and his family (Durood Ibrahim), then seek much forgiveness for yourself and for your parents.

One of the Duas the Prophet ﷺ used to recite, *“Allahumma inni azubika mina ‘azabijahannam wa min ‘azabilqabri wa min fitnatilmahyaa walmaamati wa min sharifitnatil masihiddajjal”*. O Allah! I seek refuge in You from four things, from the punishment of Hellfire and the punishment of the grave and the fitnah of life and death, the trial of life and death, and I seek refuge in You from the trial of the Masihiddajjal.

Again try to learn the prayers (duas) that the Prophet ﷺ used to say, as they cover every possible need we could ever have. Say the Salam and say Astaghfirullah for the mistakes you have made in prayer.

Let us turn ourselves to this prayer, let us rejoice to the extent to which it has been made easy for us and let us be grieved to the extent that the prayer has passed us by, and let us strive to find the cure for that.

May Allah make us amongst the khaashieen, those who are humble and submissive in their prayers, the ones who guard their prayers, the ones who are constant in offering them, the ones who converse with Allah to the extent that they are able to become enslaved to Him.

TIPS FOR THE TEST

1. Do not have to memorize the Ayahs or Hadeeths word for word, get a good understanding of the message in it.
2. This class is more about the feeling, so try to feel the emotions.
3. Remember the duas that can be recited in Rukoo & Sujood.