

# **SOME PROOFS THAT THE SALAH (PRAYER) OF MEN AND WOMEN IS DIFFERENT IN SOME ASPECTS**

The following was a question answered by Abdal Aziz ibn Baz (d. 1999), the late Mufti of Saudi Arabia and a major figurehead of a modern sect calling itself "Salafiyya." His answer is akin to the position of Nasir al-Albani (d. 1999) in his *Sifatus Salah*. The latter book has also been responded to as it contains numerous weak positions and inauthentic narrations. In this short compilation a reply to both of the named authorities from Salafism shall be responded to below via means of two answers.

## Question:

**The Messenger sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "*Pray as you have seen me praying*" And that which is understood from this Hadeeth is that there is no difference between the prayer of the man and the prayer of the woman, not in the standing, the sitting and nor in the prostration. So I have been acting in accordance with that since reaching the age of at-Takleef (burdened/obligated to abide by the Sharee'ah). But we have women in Kenya who quarrel with me and they say that your prayer is not correct because it resembles the man's prayer. And the examples they mention where the man's prayer differs from the woman's prayer are holding the two hands upon the chest and when releasing them both and the keeping of the back level in the bowing position (Rukoo') and other than that from the issues about which I have conviction. So I would like you to clarify to me is there a difference between the performance of the prayer of the man and the woman?**

## Answer:

O questioner, my sister for the sake of Allaah, indeed that which is correct is that there is no difference between the man's prayer and the woman's prayer. As for what some of the jurists mention from the difference [in the prayer of the man and the woman] then there is no evidence for it. And the hadeeth that you mentioned in the question being the statement of the prophet may the peace and blessings be upon him:

*"Pray as you have seen me praying"*<sup>1</sup>

[This Hadeeth] is a fundamental principle which generally includes everybody and the legislations are in generality for men and women

except for when there is established proof making it specific. So the Sunnah for the woman is that she prays as the men pray in the rukoo' (bowing), the prostration (sujood), the recitation, putting the hands upon the chest and other than that. This is what is best, this is how to put them (hands) upon the knees in the rukoo', this is how to put them upon the ground in prostration either in level with shoulders or in level with the ears, this how you make your back level in the rukoo' and this what is said in the rukoo' and the prostration and after the rising from the rukoo' and rising up from the prostration and between the two prostrations. All of it is just the same as the men acting in accordance to his (sallAllaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) statement:

*"Pray as you have seen me praying"* [Reported by al-Bukhaaree in as-Saheeh.]

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<sup>1</sup> Reported by al-Bukhaaree in [the book of] al-Adhaan no.595, & ad-Daarimee in [the book of] as-Salaat no.1225.

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## **Replies from the real followers of the early Salafus-Salihin:**

### **1<sup>st</sup> answer:<sup>1</sup>**

A common criticism made by Salafis against the Hanafi madhhab is that it differentiates between the Salah of a man and woman. They claim that this is not supported by any evidence, and in fact opposes the clear and general words of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), “Pray as you have seen me praying” (صلوا كما رأيتموني أصلي), a hadith reported the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari. In the following, an attempt will be made to answer this criticism.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from - <http://reliablefatwas.com/proofs-for-the-differences-in-the-prayer-of-a-man-and-woman/>

## The Positions of the Four Madhhabs

The Hanafi madhhab considers the Salah of a man and woman equal in all respects, except that she is to adopt the postures that are most concealing for her, by bringing her limbs and parts together in all the actions of Salah, and not separating between them as a man does.

Some people are under the impression that this is an isolated Hanafi opinion. However, the truth is that the vast majority of the scholars and jurists of Islam held the view that the Salah of a woman differs from a man's in this respect. It is the favoured view of all four madhhabs which have been followed by the great majority of Muslims throughout most of Islamic history. It would, therefore, be extremely naive and farfetched to assume that a practice of Salah that received widespread acceptance and went unchallenged and uncontested by the major scholars of the ummah is totally devoid of any sound basis in the sources of Shari'ah.

In order to highlight this point, I will quote below statements from the other three madhhabs (Shafi'i, Hanbali and Maliki).

### The Shafi'i Madhhab

Imam al-Nawawi (631 – 676 H), the great Shafi'i *muhaqqiq*, said:

قال الشافعي رحمه الله في المختصر: ولا فرق بين الرجال والنساء في عمل الصلاة، إلا أن المرأة يستحب لها أن تضم بعضها إلى بعض وأن تلتصق بطنها بفخذها في السجود كأستر ما يكون، وأحب ذلك في الركوع وفي جميع الصلاة، وأن تكثف جلبابها وتجافيه راحة وساجدة لئلا يصفها ثيابها، وأن تخفض صوتها وإن نابها شيء في صلاتها صفت، هذا نصه.

قال أصحابنا: المرأة كالرجل في أركان الصلاة وشروطها وأبعاضها وأما الهيئات المسنونات فهي كالرجل في معظمها... وتخالفه فيما ذكره الشافعي، ويخالف النساء الرجال في صلاة الجماعة في أشياء

“Al-Shafi'i – may Allah have mercy on him – said in *al-Mukhtasar*: ‘There is no distinction between men and women in the actions of Salah, except that it is preferable for the woman that part of her clings to a part, and her stomach clings to her thighs in prostration in a manner that is most concealing (for her), and I prefer this in bowing and in the entire Salah; and that she makes her jilbab thick and she separates it (from her body) while bowing and prostrating so that her clothing does not describe her (i.e. her shape and form); and that she lowers her voice and if something occurs to her in her Salah (while in congregation), she claps (i.e. to alert the imam to the mistake).’ This is his (i.e. al-Shafi'i's) statement.

“Our companions said: The woman is like the man in the integrals of Salah, its conditions and its parts. As for the prescribed postures, she is like the man in most of them and she differs from him in what al-Shafi'i mentioned. And women differ from men in congregational prayer in some things...” (*al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, 3:495)

### The Hanbali Madhhab

Muwaffaq al-Din Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi (541 – 620 H), the great Hanbali *muhaqqiq*, said:

مسألة: قال: والرجل والمرأة في ذلك سواء إلا أن المرأة تجمع نفسها في الركوع والسجود وتجلس متربعة أو تسدل رجليها فتجعلهما في جانب يمينها

الأصل أن يثبت في حق المرأة من أحكام الصلاة ما يثبت للرجال لأن الخطاب يشملهما، غير أنها خالفته في ترك التجافي لأنها عورة فاستحب لها جمع نفسها ليكون أستر لها، فإنه لا يؤمن أن يبدو منها شيء حال التجافي. وكذلك في الاقتراش

قال أحمد: والسدل أعجب إلي. واختاره الخلال. قال علي رضي الله عنه: إذا صلت المرأة فلتحتفز ولتضم فخذيها وعن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما أنه كان يأمر النساء أن يتربعن في الصلاة

“Ruling: He (i.e. Abu l-Qasim al-Khiraqi al-Hanbali, (d. 334 H)) said: ‘And the man and woman are equal in this (i.e. the description of Salah) except that the woman collects herself when bowing and prostrating and she sits in the *tarabbu‘* position (inserting the left foot between the thigh and shin of the right leg) or she practises *sadl* by placing them both to her right side.’

“The default is that whatever is established for men from the rules of Salah is established with respect to a woman because the address (of the Shari‘ah) encompasses both of them; except that she differs from him in not separating (her limbs) because she is *‘awrah* (as established in hadith). Hence, it is preferred for her to collect herself so that it is more concealing for her, because there is no surety that something will not appear from her in the situation of separating (her limbs), and likewise when (sitting in) the *iftirash* position (i.e. erecting the right foot so the toes point towards the qiblah and sitting on the left foot).

“Ahmad said: ‘*Sadl* is more appealing to me.’ Al-Khallal preferred this. ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘When the woman prays, she should draw (herself) together, and join her thighs,’ and (it was narrated) from Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that he would order the women to adopt the *tarabbu‘* position in Salah.” (Mughni, Dar ‘Alam al-Kutub, 2:258-9)

Imam Ahmad’s son, ‘Abd Allah, narrates:

قلت: كيف تسجد المرأة وكيف تقعد للتشهد؟ قال: كيف كان أستر

“I said (to Imam Ahmad): ‘How does a woman prostrate and how does she sit for Tashahhud?’ He said: ‘However is most concealing (for her).’” (Masa’il al-Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal Riwayat Ibnih ‘Abdillah ibn Ahmad, al-Maktab al-Islami, p. 79)

### **The Maliki Madhhab**

Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani (d. 386) – known as “little Malik” – stated in his treatise on Maliki fiqh:

وهي في هيئة الصلاة مثله غير أنها تنضم ولا تفرج فخذيها ولا عضديها في جلوسها وسجودها وأمرها كله

“And she (i.e. the woman) in the posture(s) of Salah is like him (i.e. the man), except that she draws (herself) together and she does not part her thighs, nor her upper arms during her sitting, her prostration and her entire affair.”

‘Ali ibn Khalaf al-Manufi al-Maliki’s (857 – 939 H) comments on this passage:

وما ذكره رواية ابن زياد عن مالك وهو خلاف قول ابن القاسم في المدونة لأنه ساوى بين الرجل والمرأة في الهيئة

“What he (i.e. Ibn Abi Zayd) stated is the narration of Ibn Ziyad from Malik and it is contrary to the narration of Ibn al-Qasim in *al-Mudawwanah* because he equated between the man and woman in the posture(s).”

And al-‘Adawi (d. 1189 H) said in his marginalia to this work:

الراجح كلام المصنف الذي هو رواية ابن زياد، ورواية ابن القاسم ضعيف كما هو المفهوم من خليل وشراحه

“The preferred (view) is the opinion of the author (Ibn Abi Zayd) which is the narration of Ibn Ziyad (from Malik); and the narration of Ibn al-Qasim is weak as is understood from (the *Mukhtasar* of) Khalil and its commentators.”

(*Kifayat al-Talib al-Rabbani*, Matba‘ah al-Madani, 1:551-2)

In summary, there are two views in the Maliki madhhab both narrated from Imam Malik. One, that a woman is exactly the same as a man in the postures of Salah. And the second that a woman differs from him in that she draws herself together and does not separate her limbs in all the postures of Salah. The favoured view of the madhhab is the latter, making it equivalent to the other madhhabs.

Hence, all of the four madhhabs agree that a woman differs from a man in the postures of salah, in that she adopts the positions that are most concealing for.

## Evidences

Below I will present evidences for the view of the vast majority of the scholars and jurists of the ummah on this issue from the sayings of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and the practice and fatwas of the earliest and best generations of Muslims (Sahabah and Tabi‘in).

### Marfu‘ Hadiths

#### Hadith One

Imam Abu Dawud narrates in his *Marasil*:

حدثنا سليمان بن داود، نا ابن وهب، أنا حيوة بن شريح، عن سالم بن غيلان، عن يزيد بن أبي حبيب، أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مر على امرأتين تصليان، فقال: إذا سجدتما فضمما بعض اللحم إلى الأرض فإن المرأة ليست في ذلك كالرجل

“Sulayman ibn Dawud narrated to us: Ibn Wahb narrated to us: Haywah ibn Shurayh reported to us from Salim ibn Ghaylan from Yazid ibn Abi Habib that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) passed by two women praying, whereupon he said: ‘When you two pray, then join part of the flesh to the earth, as the woman is not like the man in that.’” (*Marasil Abi Dawud*, ed. ‘Abd Allah ibn Musa‘id ibn Khadran al-Zahrani, no. 89)

This is an authentic *mursal* hadith. A *mursal* hadith is one in which the Tabi‘i narrates directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him) without mentioning his source. Here is a brief analysis of the narrators of the chain:

1. Sulayman ibn Dawud ibn Hammad al-Mahri (178 – 253 H) was declared *thiqah* by al-Nasa‘i and al-‘Asqalani, and he is mentioned in Ibn Hibban’s *al-Thiqat*.

2. ‘Abd Allah ibn Wahb ibn Muslim (125 – 197 H) is a narrator found in all six collections of hadith and an undisputed hadith authority from the students of Imam Malik
3. Haywah ibn Shurayh (d. 157 H) is also a narrator of hadith found in all six collections of hadith and an accepted authority in hadith.
4. Salim ibn Ghaylan (d. 151 H) was a jurist from the companions of Yazid ibn Abi Habib, and he was declared *thiqah* by al-‘Ijli and Ibn Bukaryr; while Ahmad, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa’i and Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani said there is no harm in him (equivalent to *saduq*); and Ibn Hibban and Ibn Shahin included him in their *Kitab al-Thiqats*. (*Tahdhib al-Kamal*, Mu’assasat al-Risalah, 10:169; *Tahrir al-Taqrir*, Mu’assasat al-Risalah, 2:8)
5. Yazid ibn Abi Habib (51 – 128 H) is a narrator found in all six collections of hadith, and was a great mufti and scholar of Egypt, said to have introduced the science of jurisprudence in Egypt. He heard from the great Sahabi, ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Harith ibn Jaz’ al-Zubaydi (86 H) who settled and died in Egypt. He was declared *thiqah* by Ibn Sa’d, al-‘Ijli and Abu Zur‘ah. (*Tahdhib al-Kamal*, 32:102-6)

The editor of *Marasil* therefore concludes: “Its chain is *hasan* up to the one who did *irsal* of it (i.e. Yazid ibn Habib).” (*Marasil Abi Dawud*, p. 191)

*Mursal* hadiths are accepted as a proof (*hujjah*) by the majority of jurists, including Imams Abu Hanifah, Malik and Ahmad ibn Hanbal in the most famous narration from him (*Tadrib al-Rawi*, Dar al-Hadith, p. 161). Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310 H), in fact, stated that it was the consensus opinion of the Tabi‘in that *mursal* reports are accepted (ibid. p. 162) Hence, for most jurists, this hadith would function as an authentic proof differentiating between the Salah of a man and woman in very clear terms.

Furthermore, even if it is conceded that it is weak based on the view of those who regard *mursal* hadiths as weak, a weak hadith is elevated to the level of *hasan* or *sahih* if the ummah have acted upon it (see ibid. p. 49), and here this is the case as will be demonstrated later. Either way, therefore, the scholars and jurists who adhere to the evidence of this hadith are justified in doing so.

## **Hadith Two**

Hafiz ‘Ali ibn Abi Bakr al-Haythami (d. 807 H) says:

عن وائل بن حجر قال: قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يا وائل بن حجر إذا صليت فاجعل يديك حذاء أذنك،  
والمرأة تجعل يديها حذاء ثديها

“[It was narrated] from Wa’il ibn Hujr, he said: The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to me: ‘O Wa’il ibn Hujr! When you pray, position your hands in line with your ears, and the woman positions her hands in line with her chest.’”

Al-Haythami then said: “Al-Tabrani narrated it in a long hadith on the virtues of Wa’il through the route of Maymunah bint Hujr from her aunt Umm Yahya bint ‘Abd al-Jabbar, and I do not recognise her, and the remainder of its narrators are trustworthy.” (*Majma‘ al-Zawa’id*, no. 2594)

This hadith is therefore weak due to the unidentified narrator, but the weakness is only slight so it may be supported by the practice of the ummah, and other general indications.

### **Hadith Three**

It is reported in *Sahih Muslim* that ‘A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

وينهى أن يفترش الرجل ذراعيه اقتراش السبع

“And he (the Prophet) forbade that a man spreads out his arms like a wild animal spreads (them) out.” (*Fath al-Mulhim*, 3:488-9)

This implicitly indicates that a woman is exempt from this ruling, as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) singles out a man for this prohibition (especially since the very same hadith in its complete form mentions other general prohibitions that do not single out “a man”). Hence, there is an implicit indication that a woman spreads out her arms during prostration.

### **Hadith Four**

Imam al-Bukhari narrated in his *Sahih* that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

التسبيح للرجال والتصفيق للنساء

“*Tasbih* is for men and clapping is for women.” (*Fath al-Bari*, 3:100)

The hadith means that when in congregation the imam makes a mistake, men are to say *tasbih* (*subhanAllah*) and women are to clap their hands to alert the imam to the error. This is a clear and authentic hadith on a specific difference between the Salah of a man and woman (which Salafi scholars also accept). Hence, it should not be farfetched that there are other minor differences between them.

There are many other differences between the Salah of a man and woman recorded in authentic *marfu’* hadiths, although they are not specifically regarding the postures of Salah. For example, the hadiths that state that a woman is not obligated to attend Jumu‘ah, that her house is better for her, and that her prayer is not accepted without a scarf.

All of these hadiths suggest a basic principle, which is that although a woman’s Salah is similar to man’s, she differs slightly from him in certain aspects of Salah based on the added requirement of concealment and modesty for her. Based on this, the majority of the jurists of all madhhabs have reached consensus that there are small differences in the postures of a man and woman. This is also proven from the practice and fatwas of the Sahabah and Tabi‘in.

### **Practice and Statements of the Sahabah**

#### **Narration One**

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates in his *Musannaf*:

حدثنا أبو الأحوص عن أبي إسحاق عن الحارث عن علي قال: إذا سجدت المرأة فلتحتفز، ولتضم فخذها

“Abu l-Ahwas narrated to us from Abu Ishaq (al-Sabi‘i) from al-Harith from ‘Ali, he said: ‘When a woman prostrates, she should draw (herself) together, and join her thighs.’” (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, ed. Muhammad ‘Awwamah, 2:504, no.2793)

Abu l-Ahwas (d. 179 H) and his teacher Abu Ishaq al-Sabi‘i (33 – 127 H) are both recognised authorities of hadith found in all the six major collections.

Al-Harith ibn ‘Abd Allah al-A‘war (d. 65 H) is a narrator of hadith found in the four *Sunans*, and was a companion of ‘Ali and Ibn Mas‘ud. Ibn Ma‘in and Ahmad ibn Salih described him as *thiqah* and al-Nasa‘i said there is no harm in him. Some critics referred to him as a “liar” but the commentators have explained that this was due to his Shiite leanings, not about his integrity in transmission. Nonetheless, there is also some degree of weakness in his narration, as al-Dhahabi and Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani pointed out.

Mawlana Zafar Ahmad al-‘Uthmani said after citing this report and discussing the condition of al-Harith al-A‘war, “Hence, the hadith is *hasan*, and the statement of a Sahabi is a proof according to us, and it is also strengthened by the *marfu‘* (hadith) [i.e. hadith one above].” (*I‘la‘ al-Sunan*, Idarat al-Qur’an, 3:32)

### **Narration Two**

حدثنا أبو عبد الرحمن المقرئ، عن سعيد بن أبي أيوب، عن يزيد بن أبي حبيب، عن بكير بن عبد الله بن الأشج، عن ابن عباس أنه سئل عن صلاة المرأة فقال: تجتمع وتحتفز

“Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman (‘Abd Allah ibn Yazid) al-Muqri’ narrated to us from Sa‘id ibn Abi Ayyub from Yazid ibn Abi Habib from Bukayr ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Ashajj from Ibn ‘Abbas that he was asked about the Salah of a woman, and he said: ‘She huddles up and draws (herself) together.’” (*Musannaf*, 2:505, 2794)

This is an authentic chain up to Bukayr, but it is unlikely Bukayr met Ibn ‘Abbas.

### **Narration Three**

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

حدثنا جرير عن ليث عن مجاهد أنه كان يكره أن يضع الرجل بطنه على فخذه إذا سجد كما يصنع المرأة

“Jarir (ibn ‘Abd al-Hamid) narrated to us from Layth (ibn Abi Sulaym) from Mujahid (ibn Jabr) that he would detest that a man puts his belly on his thighs when he prostrates, as a woman does.” (*Musannaf*, 2:505, 2796)

Jarir ibn ‘Abd al-Hamid al-Dabbi (110 – 188 H) is a narrator of hadith found in all six collections of hadith, an undisputed hadith authority.

The narrations of Layth ibn Abi Sulaym (d. 140 H) were used as supporting evidence in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, though not as independent proof. His narrations are found in the four *Sunan*, and many prominent authorities of hadith took hadith from him, including Shu‘bah ibn al-Hajjaj and Sufyan al-Thawri. Yahya ibn Ma‘in said “there is no harm in him” (which for him is equivalent to *thiqah*). Imam al-Tirmidhi graded some of his hadiths *hasan*, and he reported from his teacher, Imam al-Bukhari, that he said, “Layth ibn Abi Sulaym is reliable (*saduq*) and sometimes he would err in something” (*al-Jami‘ al-Kabir*, Dar al-



Ma'arif, 4:497). However, most critics said there is weakness in his hadiths as he would mix-up his narrations, sometimes making a *mawquf* hadith *marfu'* or narrating from 'Ata', Mujahid and Tawus what he only heard from one of them. In fact, al-Daraqutni (d. 385) stated that this confusion in the chain was the only reason why many scholars disapproved of him (*Fath al-Mulhim*, 1:314). Hence, his weakness is only slight. Based on this, Mawlana Zafar Ahmad al-'Uthmani concluded that his hadiths are *hasan*.

Mujahid ibn Jabr (19 – 102 H) is a senior Tabi'i and one of the foremost students of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas in *Tafsir*, and he studied under a number of Sahabah including 'A'ishah, Ibn 'Umar, Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and others.

This narration proves that it was a well-known and common practice at the time of the Sahabah and senior Tabi'in for a woman to pray differently from a man by compressing herself and drawing herself together during prostration. This is why Mujahid said "like a woman does," using this practice of a woman as the act on which he drew his comparison; and it is known in the rules of language that an example is only drawn on something commonly known and recognised.

The great early jurists like Abu Hanifah and Malik would take inherited practice – *ta'amul* – into account in reaching their juristic conclusions, as they lived close to the time of the Sahabah and senior Tabi'in, so the practice was purest at that time and best reflected the teachings of Islam as taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him). In fact, the prevalent practice was an important tool in their jurisprudence for determining the strength and weakness of narrations. (see: *Al-Imam Ibn Majah wa Kitabuh al-Sunan*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah, pp. 86-91)

## **Reports from the Tabi'in**

### **Report One**

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

حدثنا محمد بن بكر، عن ابن جريج قال: قلت لعطاء: تشير المرأة بيديها بالتكبير كالرجل؟ قال: لا ترفع بذلك يديها كالرجل، فخفض يديه جدا، وجمعهما إليه جدا، وقال: إن للمرأة هيئة ليست للرجال، وإن تركت ذلك فلا حرج: وأشار

"Muhammad ibn Bakr narrated to us from ('Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz) ibn Jurayj, he said: I said to 'Ata': 'Does a woman gesture with (i.e. raise) her hands in *takbir* like a man?' He said: 'She does not raise her hands in that like a man.' And he gestured (with his hands), lowering his hands excessively and he brought them together to himself excessively, and he said: 'A woman has a posture that men do not have, and if she leaves that there is no blame (i.e. sin on her).'" (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, 2:421, no. 2498)

This is an authentic chain. Muhammad ibn Bakr, a narrator found in all six collections of hadith, was declared *thiqah* by Ibn Ma'in, Ibn Qani', Abu Dawud, al-'Ijli, Ibn Sa'd and al-Dhahabi (*Tahrir al-Taqrif*, 3:218). Furthermore 'Abd al-Razzaq narrates this in his *Musannaf* directly from his teacher, the great hadith authority, 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Jurayj (*Musannaf 'Abd al-Razzaq*, ed. Habib al-Rahman al-A'zami, 3:137, no. 5066)

There is an indication in this narration that according to 'Ata', the woman fastens her hands near her chest as the narrator says, "he brought them together to himself excessively" which is only conceivable at the chest.

‘Abd al-Razzaq also narrated from Ibn Jurayj from ‘Ata that he said:

تجتمع المرأة إذا ركعت، ترفع يديها إلى بطنها، وتجتمع ما استطاعت، فإذا سجدت فلتضم يديها إليها، وتضم بطنها إلى فخذها، وتجتمع ما استطاعت

“The woman huddles up when she bows. She raises her hands to her stomach, and she draws (herself) together as much as she can. When she prostrates, she should bring together her hands to herself, and join her belly and her chest to her thighs, and huddle up as much as she can.” (*Musannaf*, 3:137, no. 5069)

This is also an authentic narration from ‘Ata’ just like the previous one. ‘Abd al-Razzaq also narrates with the same chain that ‘Ata’ said:

تجمع المرأة يديها في القيام ما استطاعت

“A woman gathers her hands in the standing position as much as she can.” (*Musannaf*, no. 5067)

Ibn Abi Shaybah also reports (*Musannaf*, 2:421, no. 2486) with a chain containing slight weakness from ‘Ata’ that a woman raises her hands to her chest.

‘Ata’ ibn Abi Rabah (27 – 115 H) was one of the greatest scholars and muftis from the senior Tabi‘in who lived and taught in Makkah. He was one of the many teachers of Imam Abu Hanifah, and was by Abu Hanifah’s own testimony, his greatest teacher. He has many narrations found in all six of the famous collections of hadith. One of the scholars said: “‘Ata’ was black, blind in one eye, snub-nosed, lame and limp and then he became blind after this. Yet he was trustworthy, a jurist and scholar possessing many hadiths!” (*Tahdhib al-Kamal*, 20:76). He met over 200 Sahabah and he would issue fatwa in the presence of the Sahabah, at which he became so adept that even the great jurist of the Sahabah, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas, would say to questioners: “O people of Makkah! Do you collect your questions to me, when Ibn Abi Rabah is amongst you?!” (ibid. 20:77)

Mawlana Zafar Ahmad al-‘Uthmani writes that although the opinion and fatwa of a Tabi‘i is not an authoratative proof (*hujjah*) according to the majority of the scholars, it is a proof according to the most correct position of the Hanafi madhhab when he is a senior Tabi‘i whose fatwas became widespread and well-known in the time of the Sahabah (*I‘la al-Sunan*, 2:192). ‘Ata’ certainly fits this description. Hence, his verdicts will be regarded as proof according to the Hanafis. And for non-Hanafis, they will count as important fatwas by a major early jurist that support the hadiths and narrations documented earlier.

## **Report Two**

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated:

حدثنا ابن المبارك عن هشام عن الحسن قال: المرأة تضطم في السجود

“Ibn al-Mubarak narrated to us from Hisham (al-Dastawa’i) from al-Hasan (al-Basri), he said: ‘The woman huddles up in prostration.’” (*Musannaf*, 2:505, 2797)

This is an authentic chain. Al-Hasan al-Basri (22 – 110 H) is one of the most famous scholars, imams, jurists and ascetics amongst the senior Tabi‘in.

### Report Three

‘Abd al-Razzaq narrates from his teacher, the great imam in hadith Ma‘mar ibn Rashid (95 – 153 H), from his teachers, al-Hasan and Qatadah, that they said:

إذا سجدت المرأة فإنها تنضم ما استطاعت ولا تتجافى لكيلا ترفع عجزتها

“When a woman prostrates, she huddles up as much as she can and she does not separate (her limbs) so that she does not lift her posterior.” (*Musannaf ‘Abd al-Razzaq*, 3:137)

Qatadah is Qatadah ibn Di‘amah (d. 110 H), a narrator found in all six collections in hadith, described by al-Dhahabi as the “exemplar of the *mufasssirin* and *muhaddithin*.” He was known for his excellent memory. And it is also known about him that he would not issue a verdict or ruling based on his personal opinion. (*Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala’*, Mu’assasat al-Risalah, 5:269 – 83) Hence, he must have received this ruling from the Sahabah and senior Tabi‘in.

### Report Four

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

حدثنا وكيع عن سفيان عن منصور عن إبراهيم قال: إذا سجدت المرأة فلتلتزق بطنها بفخذها ولا ترفع عجزتها ولا تجافى كما يجافى الرجل

“Waki‘ (ibn al-Jarrah) narrated to us from Sufyan (al-Thawri) from Mansur (ibn al-Mu‘tamir) from Ibrahim (al-Nakha‘i), he said: ‘When a woman prostrates, her belly should cling to her thighs, and she is not to raise her posterior, nor spread out (her arms) as a man spreads (them) out.’” (*Musannaf*, 2:505, 2798)

This is an authentic narration (and in fact, was regarded by some *muhaddithin* as the most authentic chain of transmission).

Ibrahim (ca. 45 – 96 H) was the foremost jurist of Iraq in his time. His narrations are found in all six of the famous collections of hadith, and he was the most learned of the jurisprudential school of ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ud. Hence, the rulings issued by him are given great weight in the Hanafi madhhab. He heard from the great Sahabi, Anas ibn Malik (d. 93 H), as stated by Ibn Hibban in his *Thiqat* (4:10).

However, this was not merely a personal opinion of Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i, but something he received from his teachers as made clear in another version of this narration. ‘Abd al-Razzaq narrates it in his *Musannaf* as follows:

كانت تؤمر المرأة أن تضع ذرايعها وبطنها على فخذها إذا: عبد الرزاق عن معمر والثوري عن منصور عن إبراهيم قال سجدت، ولا تتجافى كما يتجافى الرجل لكيلا ترفع عجزتها

“Abdur Razzaq from Ma‘mar and al-Thawri from Mansur from Ibrahim, he said: ‘The woman used to be ordered to place her arms and her belly on her thigh when she prostrates and not spread out as a man spreads out, so that she does not raise her posterior.’” (*Musannaf*, 3:138, no. 5071)

Here, Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i clearly says that this was the instruction given to women by the scholars of his time, that is the Sahabah and the senior Tabi‘in.

## **Report Five**

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

حدثنا وكيع عن سفيان عن منصور عن إبراهيم قال: تجلس المرأة من جانب الصلاة

“Waki‘ narrated to us from Sufyan from Mansur from Ibrahim, he said: ‘The woman sits to the side in Salah.’” (*Musannaf*, 2:508, no. 2808)

‘Abd al-Razzaq also narrates it with the same chain, that Ibrahim said:

تؤمر المرأة في الصلاة في مثلئ أن تضم فخذيها من جانب

“A woman is ordered in Salah in (the sitting of) two (*rak‘ahs*) to join her thighs to one side.” (*Musannaf*, 3:131)

This is what was described as “*sadl*” in the report from Ahmad cited in the passage from *al-Mughni* quoted earlier.

## **Report Six**

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

حدثنا أبو خالد عن محمد بن عجلان عن نافع أن صفيية كانت تصلي وهي متربعة

“Abu Khalid (al-Ahmar) narrated to us from Muhammad ibn ‘Ajlan from Nafi‘ that Safiyyah would pray while in the *tarabbu‘* position.” (*Musannaf*, 2:506, no. 2800)

This is an authentic chain: all the narrators are unquestionably trustworthy, and each heard from the other.

Safiyyah is Safiyyah bint Abi ‘Ubayd, the wife of ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar. She was a learned Tabi‘i.

Ibn Abi Shaybah also narrates:

حدثنا وكيع عن العمري عن نافع قال: كن نساء ابن عمر يتربعن في الصلاة

“Waki‘ narrated to us from (‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar) al-‘Umari from Nafi‘, he said: ‘The wives of Ibn ‘Umar would adopt the *tarabbu‘* position in Salah.’” (2805 2:507)

‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar al-‘Umari (d. 171 H) is a narrator found in *Sahih Muslim* and the four *Sunans*. He was declared *thiqah* by Ya‘qub ibn Shaybah, Ahmad ibn Yunus and al-Khalili. Ahmad ibn Hanbal said, “there is no harm in him.” Yahya ibn Ma‘in said, “there is no harm in him” (which for him is equivalent to *thiqah*). Ibn ‘Adi said, “There is no harm in his narrations, reliable.” However, many critics regarded him as weak due to his memory. (*Tahdhib al-Kamal*, 15:327 – 32) Al-Dhahabi concluded he is reliable and *hasan* in hadith. (*Siyar A‘lam al-Nubala*, pp. 339 – 41) Furthermore, al-‘Umari was specialised in the narrations of Nafi‘, so he had better recollection of them than he did the hadiths he narrated from his other teachers. This narration, therefore, ought to be graded *hasan*.

These reports are particularly interesting and worthy of note because it is established from ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar that he said the sunnah in Salah is *iftirash* as reported in *Sahih al-Bukhari (Fath al-Mulhim, 3:486)*, which means he must have observed the Prophet (peace be upon him) praying in this way. Since his wives would sit in the *tarabbu’* position despite Ibn ‘Umar’s established view, this is an indication that Ibn ‘Umar must have learned from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that a woman’s posture while sitting is different from a man’s, as he would have, otherwise, corrected his wives.

### **The Hadith, “Pray as you have seen me praying.”**

As for the hadith “pray as you have seen me praying,” it should be noted firstly that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said this to a group of young men who came to learn their religion, as reported by the Sahabi, Malik ibn al-Huwayrith, in *Sahih al-Bukhari (Fath al-Bari, 3:291)*. Secondly, this is a general statement about the basic components and requirements of Salah, in which everyone is equal. Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari wrote in his commentary of *Mishkat al-Masabih*, “‘Pray as you have seen me praying,’ meaning in observing the conditions and integrals.” It is not about every aspect and detail of Salah. Otherwise, the imam and *muqtadi* should also be equal in every aspect of Salah. Yet the *muqtadi* differs from the imam in that he does not say the *takbir* out loud, nor does he say *sami’ Allahu liman hamidah*, and according to the majority, he does not recite when the imam recites aloud in Salah. Hence, this is proof that this general statement does not negate specific exceptions that are established from other evidences.

Furthermore, the general evidence of imitating the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in his Salah is countered by the general evidence of the need for a woman to be modest and keep herself concealed in all affairs. Hence, it is in this respect that there is a distinction between the Salah of a man and woman. Imam al-Bayhaqi (d. 458 H), the great Shafi‘i hadith-scholar, said:

وجماع ما يفارق المرأة فيه الرجل من أحكام الصلاة راجع إلى الستر، وهو أنها مأمورة بكل ما كان أستر لها

“All of that in which the woman parts from the man in the rulings of Salah goes back to [the obligation of] concealment, which is that she is commanded to (do) all that is most concealing for her.” (*al-Sunan al-Kubra, 2:314*)

Hence, when there is a clash between the two general evidences, we must make an attempt at harmonising between them, which may be done in the manner described above. And in terms of specific evidences, and the views and practices of the Sahabah and early jurists, there are many proofs that there exist small differences in the postures of a man and woman as documented above.

### **Did Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i say, “A woman does in Salah as a man does?” – A Refutation of Nasir al-Din al-Albani**

The late Salafi scholar and preacher, Nasir al-Din al-Albani, wrote in his popular book *Sifatu Salat al-Nabi* when arguing that the Salah of a woman does not differ in any way from the Salah of a man:

كل ما تقدم من صفة صلاته صلى الله عليه وسلم يستوي فيه الرجال والنساء ولم يرد في السنة ما يقتضي استثناء النساء من بعض ذلك، بل إن عموم قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم صلوا كما رأيتموني أصلي يشملهن، وهو قول إبراهيم النخعي قال: تفعل المرأة في الصلاة كما يفعل الرجل. أخرجه ابن أبي شيبة بسند صحيح عنه.

“All that has come earlier of the description of his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) prayer, men and women are equal therein, and nothing has come in the Sunnah that demands the exemption of women in any of this. Rather, the generality of his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) saying: ‘Pray as you have seen me praying’ includes them. And this is the view of Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i. He said: ‘A woman does in Salah as a man does.’ Ibn Abi Shaybah transmitted it with a *sahih* chain from him.” (*Sifatu Salat al-Nabi*, Maktabat al-Ma‘arif, p. 189)

It has already been demonstrated above that it is proven from the Sunnah and the practice of the early generations that a woman’s Salah differs slightly from a man’s in the areas that were discussed. Hence, the claim that there is no proof from the Sunnah differentiating between the Salah of a man and woman is incorrect. Moreover, a brief analysis of the hadith “pray as you have seen me praying,” has also been discussed above in light of the background to the hadith and the interpretation of it offered by one of the commentators.

As for the view of Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i, al-Albani’s quotation from him is incorrect on two counts.

Firstly, even supposing this narration was authentic, it contradicts the other authentic narrations from him. See reports four and five above under the section, “Reports from the Tabi‘in.” These reports are found in the very same section of *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah* from which al-Albani quoted it. Yet, overlooking those narrations, he asserted that this report from him is his established “view” (*qawl*)!

Secondly, this is a baseless narration, as it is not found in any reliable manuscript of Ibn Abi Shaybah’s *Musannaf*. In fact, what is found in the *Musannaf* is the following narration:

حدثنا غندر عن شعبة عن منصور عن إبراهيم قال: تقعد المرأة في الصلاة كما يقعد الرجل

“Ghundar narrated to us from Shu‘bah from Mansur from Ibrahim, he said: ‘A woman sits in Salah as a man sits.’” (*Musannaf*, 2:506)

(Note: Al-Nakha‘i is probably asserting the permissibility of this, not that it is preferred. See report five above where it clearly states with an equally authentic chain that al-Nakha‘i said a woman is ordered to sit to one side – that is, unlike a man. Hence, the added emphasis in that narration ought to give it preference.)

Shaykh Muhammad ‘Awwamah, whose critical edition of *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah* is the best to date, writes in a footnote to this narration:

“This is how the word, ‘she sits’ appears, twice, in all manuscripts. There is a textual corruption in the Zahiriyah manuscript which is a redaction of the *Musannaf*, in which is, ‘the woman does.’ This is in opposition to all the manuscripts, and does not accord with the chapter heading (‘on how the woman sits in Salah’), and is contrary to what has passed under number 2798 (from Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i) that a woman has a particular posture in some parts of her Salah in which she differs from a man.

“The author of *Sifat Salat al-Nabi* has fallen into this textual corruption in the conclusion he wrote to this book of his – p. 207 of the second edition – and he erred in ascribing this statement to the *Musannaf*. It appears that he believed the manuscript of the redaction is the original?!” (ibid.)

This should serve as a lesson to those who unquestioningly accept al-Albani's documentation and his conclusions based on them, as he and his book are far from error-free.

## **2nd Answer:<sup>2</sup>**

Some people are of the view that all the laws of salah are common to both men and women, and that there is no difference between them. They also claim that the hadeeth 'Pray as you have seen me praying' is general and, therefore, should be applied equally to both men and women. It should be realised, however, that our own interpretation and logical inference of this hadeeth cannot compare with the other ahadeeth of the Messenger of Allah ( ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﺎﻳﻪ ﻭﺳﺎﻟﻢ ) and the verdicts and practice of the Sahabah and Tabi'un ( ﺭﺿﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻨﻬﻢ ) quoted below.

The Shariah has ordained distinct rules for men and women in many important questions of salah. For example,

**Jumuah is fardh upon men but not on women, and the Eid prayer is wajib for men but again not for women.**

Sayyiduna Tariq bin Shihab ( ﺭﺿﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻨﻪ ) reports that the Prophet ( ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﺎﻳﻪ ﻭﺳﺎﻟﻢ ), said, 'Jumuah in congregation is an obligatory duty upon every Muslim except four people: a slave, a woman, a child, and one who is sick.'<sup>538</sup>

Sayyidatuna Umm Atiyyah . says as part of a longer hadeeth, 'We have been forbidden from following funerals and there is no Jumuah upon us. <sup>539</sup>

**The reward of congregational prayer for men is twenty seven times more than an individual prayer. Contrary to this, the more rewarding prayer of a woman is that which is most concealed and performed within the confines of her innermost living quarters.**

Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Mas'ud ( ﺭﺿﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻨﻪ ) reports that the Prophet ( ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﺎﻳﻪ ﻭﺳﺎﻟﻢ ) said, 'The prayer of a woman in her makhda' (partition) is better than her prayer in her hujrah (chamber), and her prayer in her hujrah is better than her prayer in her bait (house).'540

Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah ( ﺭﺿﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻨﻪ ) narrates that the Prophet ( ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﺎﻳﻪ ﻭﺳﺎﻟﻢ ) said, The most beloved salah to Allah of a woman is one that she performs in the darkest spot of her home.'<sup>541</sup>

**Unlike men women should not give adhan or say the iqamah.**

Sayyidatuna Asmaa (R) narrates as part of a longer hadeeth that the Prophet ( ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﺎﻳﻪ ﻭﺳﺎﻟﻢ ) said, 'There is no adhan iqamah or Jumuah upon women.'<sup>542</sup>

Sayyidatuna Ibn Umar (R) says 'There is no adhan or iqamah upon women.'<sup>543</sup>

**There is a great difference in the awrah of a man and that of a woman in salah. Women must cover their entire body including the hair, leaving only the face, hands and feet**

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from - 'The Salah of A Believer' by Shaykh Abu Yusuf Riyadh ul Haq

**exposed.**

Ummul Mu'mineen Aisha (R) reports that the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) said, 'Allah does not accept the salah of a mature female without a scarf.'<sup>544</sup>

**Women cannot lead men in salah.**

Abu Bakrah (رضي الله عنه) reports that the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) said 'Never will those people succeed who have appointed a woman over them.'<sup>545</sup>

Jabir bin Abdullah (رضي الله عنه) reports as part of a longer hadeeth that the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) said, Know that a woman should not lead a man in salah.'<sup>546</sup>

**For the purpose of correcting or deterring someone in salah men should say 'subhanallah' loudly, whilst women are only allowed to clap their hands.**

Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) reports that the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) said, 'Tasbeeh is for men, and clapping is for women.'<sup>547</sup>

The different postures, positions and rulings concerning the prayers of the female are not the invention of a group or an individual but teaching of the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) himself. He was the very first person differentiate between the prayer of a man and a woman.

Yazid bin Abi Habib reports that the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) passed by two women who were praying salah. He said, 'When you prostrate, let part of your body cling to the earth, for women are unlike men in this regard'.<sup>548</sup>

Sayyiduna Ibn Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrates that the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) said, 'When a woman sits in salah she should place one thigh over the other, and when she prostrates she should press her stomach to her thighs in a manner that is the most concealing for her. Indeed Allah looks at her saying, "Oh my angels! I make you witness that I have forgiven her."<sup>549</sup>

Sayyiduna Wail bin Hujr (رضي الله عنه) reports that the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) said, 'Oh Ibn Hujr! When you pray make your hands level with your ears. And the woman shall raise her hands close to her bosom.'<sup>550</sup>

We derive some very important and fundamental principles about the prayer of a woman from all the above ahadeeth.

**The laws of salah are not always the same for men and women. The sunnah posture of a female in any position of salah is that which is the most concealing for her.**

Imam Baihaqi says,

'All of the laws of salah in which a woman differs from a man are based on the principle of satr (concealment). This means that the woman is instructed to do all that which is more concealing for her. The following chapters of hadeeth explain this meaning in detail.'<sup>551</sup>

As mentioned earlier, this variation in the salah of a woman has been prescribed by none other than the Prophet ( صلى الله عليه وسلم ) himself. It has remained the practice of the whole ummah till this day and is also reflected in the rulings of the Sahabah and Tabi'un. The ulama



and fuqaha of all four schools have always recognised this difference and, as is evident in their books of fiqh, have always observed the above principles whenever making a ruling about the salah of a woman. Following are a few narrations detailing the verdicts and practice of the Sahabah & together with the verdicts of some of the Tabi 'un and the ulama of the different schools of fiqh:

### **Verdicts and practice of the Sahabah (رضى الله عنهم):**

Khalid bin al Lajlaaj reports as part of a longer hadeeth that women were ordered to do tarabb'u 552 when sitting in salah.553

Nafi' narrates that Safiyyah (رضى الله عنها) would pray and do tarabb'u.554

Nafi' also narrates that the womenfolk of Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Umar's (رضى الله عنه) family would do tarabb'u.555

Sayyiduna Ibn Umar (رضى الله عنه) was once asked, 'How did women pray their salah during the time of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)' He replied, 'They used to sit cross legged until they were told to practice ihtifaz'556

Sayyiduna Ali (رضى الله عنه) says, 'When a woman prostrates she should do ihtifaz and press her thighs together.', and in Abdul Razzaq's narration 'press her thighs against her stomach.'557

Sayyiduna Ibn Abbas (رضى الله عنه) was asked about the prayer of a woman. He replied, 'She should pull herself close together and do ihtifaz.'558

### **Verdicts of the Tabi'un and other ulama:**

Ibn Jurayj reports, 'I asked Ataa: "Should a woman motion with her hands at the time of takbeer as a man does?" he replied, "She should not raise her hands with takbeer in the manner of men." Ataa then demonstrated (the way in which she should.) He placed his hands very low and then pulled them towards him. He then said, "The posture of a woman in salah is not that of a man."559

Ataa also says, 'A woman should pull herself together when she bows down into ruk'u: she should bring up her arms to her stomach and pull herself together as much as possible. When she prostrates she should bring up her arms close to her and press her bosom and stomach against her thighs: she should pull herself together as much as possible.560

Hasan al Basri says, 'A woman should pull herself close together in sujud.' 561

Hasan and Qatadah both say, 'When a woman prostrates she should pull herself together as much as possible. She should not allow for any space between her limbs so that her posterior is not raised.'562

One certain author has argued that all the descriptions of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prayer are equally applicable to both men and women and there is nothing in the sunnah that excludes women from any of them. Insha Allah the contents of this chapter will answer that claim. The author then goes on to say that this is the view of Ibrahim al Nakhai who said, 'A woman's actions in the prayer are the same as a man's.' - transmitted by Ibn Abi Shaibah

(1/75/2), with a saheeh sanad from him.

This is not what Ibrahim al Nakhai said at all nor is it his view. His narration transmitted by Ibn Abi Shaibah actually reads, 'A woman will sit in salah just as a man does.'<sup>563</sup> This somehow has been misquoted as 'A woman's actions in the prayer are the same as a man's.'!

In fact, Ibrahim al Nakhai's other narrations quite clearly contradict the above report. His view about the prayer of a woman as reported by Ibn Abi Shaibah and others is as follows:

Ibrahim al Nakhai says, 'When a woman prostrates she should press her stomach against her thighs. She should not raise her posterior nor should she allow for any space or distance between the limbs of her body as a man does.'<sup>564</sup>

He also says, 'When a woman prostrates she should bring her thighs together and press her abdomen to them.'<sup>565</sup>

He also says, 'A woman should sit to one side in salah.'<sup>566</sup>

Imam Baihaqi says,

'All of the laws of salah in which a woman differs from a man are based on the principle of satr (concealment). This means that the woman is instructed to do all that which is more concealing for her. The following chapters of hadeeth explain this meaning in detail.'<sup>567</sup>

Ibn Qudamah al Maqdisi al Hanbali quotes Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal in his al Mughni as saying, 'I consider sadl <sup>568</sup> to be better for a woman.' He also quotes the narration of Sayyiduna Ali (رضي الله عنه) who says, 'When a woman prays salah she should do ihtifaz and press her thighs together.'<sup>569</sup>

Imam Ahmad was asked about how a woman should prostrate and sit for tashahhud. He replied, 'She should do whatever is more concealing for her.' He added, 'She should do tarabb'u in tashahhud and draw her legs to one side (sadl).'570

According to the narration of Abu Dawood, Imam Ahmad was asked about how a woman should sit in salah. He replied, 'She should press her thighs together.'<sup>571</sup>

Qadhi Iyadh has also quoted from some Salaf that the sunnah for women is tarabb'u.<sup>512</sup>

All the above quite clearly demonstrates that the prayer of a woman is different in some aspects from that of a man, and that this distinction was first made by none other than the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), and then maintained by the prominent Sahabah and Tabi'un. Furthermore, as can be seen in their works, there is almost universal agreement amongst the scholars of all schools of fiqh on this issue.

### **List of differences between the prayer of a man and a woman.**

Some of the differences as mentioned in the Hanafi books of fiqh are listed below. In all the postures and movements of salah, including qiyam, ruk'u, sajdah, and tashahhud a woman should adopt that which is the most modest and concealing for her.

At the beginning of salah a woman should not raise her hands to her ears but only to her

shoulders or close to her bosom.<sup>573</sup>

In qiyam, women are to place their hands on their bosoms. They can fasten them in any one of the different ways 'akdh' (grasping) or 'wadh' (placing) described in part two, or they can simply rest the right palm on the left one.

Unlike men, in ruk'u, women should tuck their arms into the body and not spread them outward. They should also merely place their hands over their knees with closed fingers, and not grasp them with the fingers spread wide open.<sup>574</sup> In fact, women should try to keep their fingers close together in all the postures of salah.

During prostration men should allow for some space and distance between their stomachs and thighs, and arms and the side of the body, whilst women should press these limbs together.

Again in prostration, men should raise their arms off the ground and allow for some distance but women should let them cling to the ground.

During the sitting of tashahhud, men are to rest on their legs and raise their right foot with the toes facing qiblah, whereas women are to take out both their legs towards the right hand side of the body and rest on the posterior without raising their right foot.

And Allah Knows Best

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Notes:

538 Abu Dawood 1067 and Hakim 1062. Hakim declared it saheeh and Dhahabi agreed.

539 Ibn Khuzaimah 1722

540 Abu Dawood 570 and Ibn Khuzaimah 1690.

541 Ibn Khuzaimah 1691, and Tabarani in al M'ujam al Kabeer as mentioned by Hafidh Haithami 2/35. Hafidh Haithami also says that its narrators are authentic.

542 Baihaqi 1921. 543 Baihaqi 1920.

544 Ahmad 24012, Ibn Majah 655, Abu Dawood 641, Tirmidhi 377, Ibn Khuzaiir 775, Hakim 917 and Baihaqi 3254. Hakim declared it saheeh and Dhahabi agreed.

545 Ahmad 19507, Bukhari 4163, Tirmidhi 2262 and Nasai 5388.

546 Ibn Majah 1081 and Baihaqi 5131.

547 Bukhari 1145.

548 Abu Dawood in his al Maraseel p18 (Muassasah al Risalah edition), and Baihaqi 3201.

549 Baihaqi 3199. He also declared it dhaeef.

550 Tabarani in al M'ujam al Kabeer 22/19 no.28. Hafidh Haithami says 2/103, 'Tabarani has narrated it as part of a long hadeeth on the virtue of Wail bin Hujr 4fc with a chain of Maimoonah bint Hujr narrating from her auntie Umm Yahya bint Abdul Jabbar. I have not identified her but the rest of the narrators are reliable.'

551 Baihaqi 2/314.

552 i.e., to draw out one's right leg towards the right side of the body and to place the left leg beneath the right leg. 553 Ibn Abi Shaibah 2783.

554 Abdul Razzaq 5074 and Ibn Abi Shaibah 2784.

555 Ibn Abi Shaibah 2789.

556 Narrated by all three, Abu Muhammad al Bukhari, Qadhi Umar bin al Hasan Ashnani, and Ibn Khusruw in their Musnads of Imam Abu Hanifah's ahadeeth Ihtifaz is to lean to one side and rest on the posterior. It is more or less the same a sadl.

557 Abdul Razzaq 5072 and Ibn Abi Shaibah 2777. Muhaddith Dhafar Ahmad Uthmani 3/32 has declared it hasan.

558 Ibn Abi Shaibah 2778.

559 Abdul Razzaq 5066 and Ibn Abi Shaibah 2474.

560 Abdul Razzaq 5069.

561 Ibn Abi Shaibah 2781.

562 Abdul Razzaq 5068.

563 Ibn Abi Shaibah 1/242, no 2788.

564 Abdul Razzaq 5071 and Ibn Abi Shaibah 2782.

565 Ibn Abi Shaibah 2779.

566 Abdul Razzaq 5077 and Ibn Abi Shaibah 2792.

567 Baihaqi 2/314.

568 To draw out the right leg to one side of the body and place the left leg beneath one's right thigh. In this way the posterior will come to rest on the ground rather than on the left leg. She would, therefore, not be resting on her legs, but on her posterior as mentioned in the narration of Sayyiduna Ali (رضي الله عنه)

569 Ibn Qudamah in al Mughni 2/135.

570 Masaail of Imam Ahmad narrated by his son Abdullah 373.

571 Masaail of Imam Ahmad narrated by Abu Dawood p51.

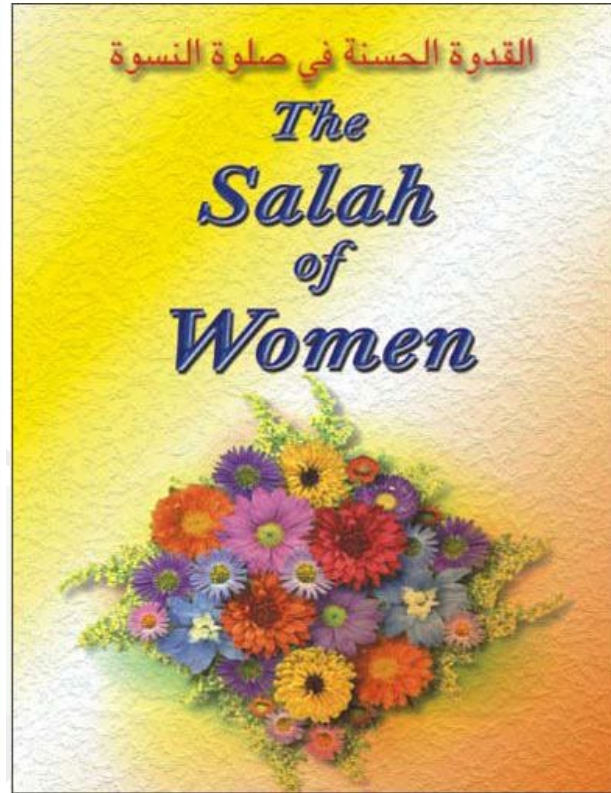
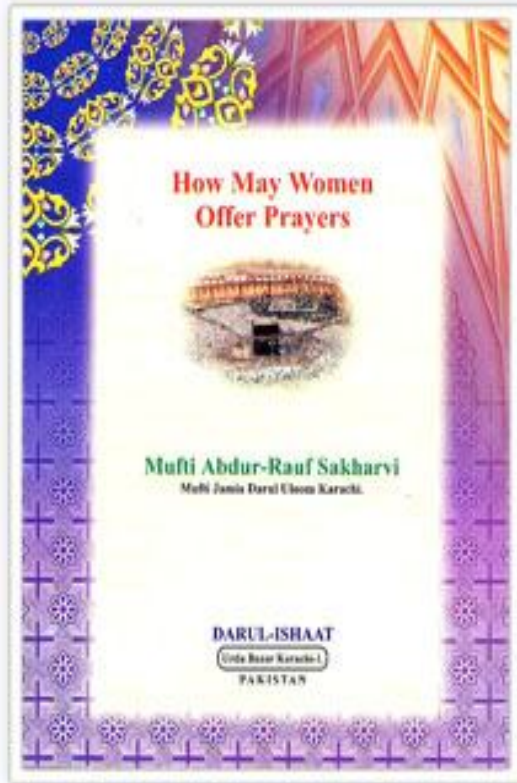
572 Awjaz al Masalik 2/119.

573 Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal also says that she should raise them slightly and, according to one narration, she should not raise them at all.

574 In some books of Hanafi fiqh it has been suggested that in ruk'u they should also bend their backs and knees slightly. The Hanbali scholar Imam Khiraqi also says as part of a longer statement, 'The woman should gather herself in ruk'u and sujud.' (al Mughni 1/134.)

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Further details may be seen in the following works:



House of Verification