

## The Perfect Sujood

We continue with the greatest pillar of Salah, the Sujood [prostration]! Now don't you wish you could have watched the Prophet himself as he did his Sujood [prostration]? This is the aim of today's segment, to carry to you the description of the proper Sujood [prostration], just the way our Messenger prostrated before Allah, in hope that we can perfect our own performance of this precious pillar. When you are ready to perform the prostration, make sure to call out "Allahu Akbar" *on your way down* for Sujood [prostration]....Not before, nor after, but during the descent. The stronger opinion is that the palms are to touch the ground first before the knees, to avoid resembling the descent of a beast [camel].

Next, the head makes a gentle contact with the ground till the forehead [and nose] is firm upon the ground. 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 Qiblah. Palms can either be parallel with the head, or parallel with the shoulders.

Keep the elbows elevated off the ground. [For men] extend elbows as far away from your sides as possible. Keep abdomen away from the thighs. The Sujood [prostration] 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 said, "*The closest a servant ever is to His Lord, is when he is prostrating so make in it much dua.*" And what have we been taught to say, when we are down so low -

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

"How glorified and perfect My Lord is, The Most High!"<sup>1</sup>

We can add,

---

<sup>1</sup> Transliterated: "*Subhana Rabbiyal-A'ala*" [said 3 times or more]

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا وَبِحَمْدِكَ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي

“How perfect You are O Allah, Our Lord, and I praise You.  
O Allah, forgive me.”<sup>2</sup>

Or,

سُبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ رَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ

“Perfect and Holy [is He], Lord of the Angels  
and Ruh [i.e. Angel Jibrael].”<sup>3</sup>

The Prophet taught us many supplications, each with a different meaning, each with a unique flavor. Each serves to renew our focus.

To make dua is to *talk* to Allah. When you love someone, you love to talk to him more. You love to stay engaged longer! Do you remember when Allah spoke to Prophet Musa in the valley of Tuwa [below Mount Sinai]?<sup>4</sup> As Allah spoke to him, Musa listened and listened, so absorbed! Then, what did he do when Allah suddenly asked him, “*And what is that in your right hand, O Musa?*” Musa was feeling such a comfort and pleasure as he engaged with the words of his beloved Lord that a euphoria enveloped his answer... and with that... he set off in speech!... “*It is my staff; I lean upon it; and I bring down leaves with it for my sheep.*” He was so lost in the rapture of this special engagement... till he remembered the Grandeur before Him, and so...cut it short, “*.. and in it I have other uses.*”

So as you prostrate in nearness to Him, try to feel the pleasure Prophet Musa felt. Remember the love you hold for Him. Talk to Him, praise Him, ask Him, unload your burdens at His door, and reach out for the peace that only He can bring.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ ، وَبِمَعْفَاتِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ ، لَا أُحْصِي  
ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

---

<sup>2</sup> Transliterated: “*Subhanak-Allahumma Rabbana wa bi-hamdik. Allahumma ighfirli.*”

<sup>3</sup> Transliterated: “*Subboohun Quddoosun, Rabbul-mala’ikati wa-rruh*”

<sup>4</sup> See Surah Taha 20:11-47.

“O Allah, I seek refuge within Your pleasure, from Your displeasure. And within Your pardon, from Your punishment. And I seek refuge in You, from You. I cannot enumerate Your praise. You are as You have praised Yourself.”<sup>5</sup>

We have one Ruku [bowing] in each unit of Salah, but two prostrations, why? Because the Sujood [prostration] 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. [This was an especially precious time for his young grandchildren as well! And he would not come up from his Sujood [prostration], till their riding fun was satisfied!]

### A Desperate Plea!

As we have seen so far, every station in Salah has a special meaning and a unique significance, so that with every position we move to, we are transported into a new and different scene. These transitions help our *minds* to stay aware of and internalize the words we utter. These transitions help our *hearts* to stay alive throughout our Salah - alive with alternating feelings and emotions before Allah: Those of love, hope, fear, and humility. The station we arrive at now is one which should inspire immense humility and fear. It is a position resembling a position occurring on Judgment Day:

“And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], “Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do. This, Our record, speaks about you in truth. Indeed, We were having transcribed whatever you used to do.”<sup>6</sup>

وَتَرَى كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَائِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَى كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ  
بِحُزُونٍ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

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

<sup>5</sup> Transliterated: “*Allabumma, inni a’uthu biridaka min sakebatek, wa bimu’afaatika min uqubatek, wa a’uthu bika minke, la ubsi thana’an alaik anta kama athnaita ala nafsek.*”

<sup>6</sup> Surah al-Jathiyah 45:28-29.

possibly need more, than: رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي “*Rabbi ighfirli Rabbi ighfirli*” [My Lord forgive me! My Lord forgive me!] Twice, three times, four times, or more. How many times have we wronged ourselves and transgressed Allah’s bounds?

It is a time to ask for much forgiveness as we sit in this position of full servitude and helplessness. The Prophet ﷺ used to sit in this position a length equal to that of his Sujood [prostration], seeking Allah’s forgiveness and making the following dua:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي، وَارْحَمْنِي، وَاهْدِنِي، وَاجْبُرْنِي، وَعَافِنِي، وَارْزُقْنِي، وَارْقُعْنِي  
“O Allah forgive me and have mercy on me, guide me and enrich me,  
give me health and provide for me and raise me in rank.”<sup>7</sup>

The provision we ask of Allah, implies a provision in this life, and more importantly, in the next. On Judgment Day, as creation fretfully awaits its judgment, the Prophet ﷺ will prostrate before Allah’s Throne in a prolonged Sujood [prostration] - praising, glorifying, praying and crying - crying for the people of his nation....Till Allah answers him, “*Lift your head up, O Muhammad. Ask and it will be granted, intercede and it will be accepted.*”

The Prophet will rise from his Sujood [prostration] to this position, and begin his intercession for us. From this we can understand, that our prayers can be answered both when we are in Sujood [prostration], or after. As we beg for Allah’s forgiveness, we proceed to make another Sujood [prostration], for we need to draw closer still, to Our Lord...One Sujood [prostration] is not enough. And as the first Surah of the Quran, Surah al-Alaq, starts out with a recitation [“*Read!*”] and ends with a prostration, so is the case with the Rakah [unit] of Salah - It starts with recitation and ends with prostration.. 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, after all: “Are they equal-Those who know and those who do not know?”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Transliterated: “*Allahumma ighfirli wa-rhamni, wa ihdini wa-jburni, wa aafini wa-rzuqni wa-raq'uni.*”

<sup>8</sup> Surah az-Zumar 39:9.



