

## In Preparation for the Greatest Pillar of Salah

We just completed a beautiful station of Salah, the Ruku' [bowing]. The Ruku' [bowing] is the prelude to Sujood [prostration]...from one posture of submission, to a greater, more complete posture of submission! But before the Sujood [prostration], comes another beautiful station of Salah - and that is, the standing after the Ruku' [bowing]. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah does not look to a servant’s Salah if he does not straighten [upright] his back between his Ruku’ [bowing] and Sujood [prostration].” Therefore, that motionless, peaceful calm maintained in the other parts of Salah must be especially maintained here as well... allowing for the bones to return to their joints, for he 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 Ruku [bowing].

سَمِعَ اللهُ لِمَنْ حَمَدَهُ

“May Allah answer he who praises Him”<sup>1</sup>

Yet as we rise for this stand, this time it is not “Allahu Akbar” that we call out, but instead, “*Sami’a-Allahu liman hamidab*”. Why? Remember what we said? That any dua/request made before The King is only proper and acceptable when preceded by praise and much extolling, right? Just as the Fatihah starts out with praise before the greatest dua 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 [prostration]!.. in which we will be the closest we can ever be to Allah! And during which, the duas/supplications, are always answered! “*Sami’a-Allahu liman hamidab*” therefore, signals us to praise Allah much before we are to make our duas when in Sujood [prostration]. And so what do we say upon that signal, once we have risen?

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ

We begin our praise: “*Rabbana walaka-alhamd* “ [Our Lord, for You is all praise!]. We can add, “*hamdan katheeran tayyiban mubarakan feeb!*” [An abundant beautiful blessed praise!]. The Prophet was once leading in prayer. When he said “*Sami’a-Allahu-liman hamidab*”, one of the companions behind him added the above extension, “*hamdan katheeran tayyiban mubarakan feeb!*”. When the

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<sup>1</sup> Transliterated: “*Sami’a-Allahu liman hamidab.*”

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 commented, “I just saw thirty something angels racing to write it first!”

مِلءَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمِلءَ الْأَرْضِ ، وَمِلءَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدُ

“[Praise] that fills/abounds the heavens, fills the earth, fills all that is between them, and fills all else of what You have willed [to be]”<sup>2</sup>

We can go a step further and say the above dua. The “all else” implies the rest of creation that for us humans is beyond our imagination and grasp [Like the Throne, the Kursi, etc.] With those words, we are humbly admitting our limitations in knowledge in comparison to that of Our Creator.

This variety of sayings available to us helps us to regularly renew our focus in Salah, for better concentration. Let us praise and praise, and praise some more...We will never be able to praise Our Lord enough...For no one can ever praise Allah the complete praise justly due to Him, save for *one*...Do you know who that *one* is? It is Allah Himself! Only He can praise Himself the complete due praise! For there are attributes and qualities belonging to Allah that we cannot even imagine nor have they been revealed to us or to any other creation! Attributes, the knowledge of which lies with Him alone, a Magnificence completely beyond our scope!

## Where True Happiness Really Lies

We have just finished the Ruku [bowing]’ and the stand after it. This stand serves to prepare us for the greatest pillar of Salah! This pillar will be the sweet seal to the Rakah [unit of Salah]. All that came before it were merely leads to it. Preludes to the grand finale...The Sujood [prostration]! ...What is Sujood [prostration] really about? Many of us have been performing the Sujood [prostration] 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 [prostration], 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

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<sup>2</sup> Transliterated: “*Mil’a-Assamawaati wa mil’a-Al-Ard, wa mil’a ma bainahuma, wa mil’a mashita min shay’en ba’d!*”

of me? I give You the most precious thing I own!..The most dignified and honored part of me...my face..and onto the lowest, most degraded spot around me, place it...the ground. For You alone, My Lord...I give You all that I am.”

Sujood [prostration] is the real secret to true happiness. How? Ask yourself this: Where does Jannah [Paradise] lie - the place of ultimate bliss? *Up above* in the seventh heaven, *close to Allah*. Where does Hell lie - the place of ultimate misery? Down below, furthest from Allah, as the gateways of Heaven do not open up for the wrong-doers. What is the highest rank that can be reached in Jannah - the point of ultimate bliss? It is a place called “Al Firdous al-A’la”, that’s where the Prophet is! Its ceiling/upper limits is Allah’s Throne! It is the highest place in Heaven, the closest one can ever come to Allah! In other words, for those who reside there, their neighbour is *Allah Himself!*

Let’s keep asking...When the Prophet ﷺ was facing his toughest time in Makkah, feeling the deepest sadness, how did Allah console him and lift his spirits? He *raised* the Prophet *to Him* during the most momentous event of all time – al-Israa wal-Mi’raaj! Till he reached the closest a man can ever reach in nearness to his Lord! Even the things that are the source of happiness in this life- a good word, a good deed *rise* to Him where they belong for Allah says, “*Unto Him ascend all good words, and the righteous deed – He exalts/raises ..*”<sup>3</sup>

So, 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.*” And what does Allah say at the end of Surah 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! The Prophet ﷺ tells us, “*Perform much Sujood [prostration], for there is not a Muslim who performs a prostration but is raised by Allah a*

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<sup>3</sup> Surah al-Fatir 35:10.

*rank in Heaven, and disburdened of a sin.”...all the way till he reaches the highest ranks!..The highest Firdous - where Allah’s Throne bounds it from above and in it abides, our beloved Prophet!*

Need more proof? Rabi’a Ibn Ka’eb was once helping out the Prophet with water for his wudu’ [ablution] when the Prophet said to him, “Ask me.” Rabi’a replied, “I ask to be with you in Paradise.” “Anything else?” The Prophet asked. “Only that”, Rabi’a said. To that the Prophet replied, “*Then help me to help you [get there], by performing much Sujood [prostration].*” 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 [prostration], make sure *your heart* is in Sujood [prostration] as well...in prostration 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 - Forgiving a sin here, easing a difficulty there. Strengthening someone weak, mending a broken heart.

Bringing into life, taking a life. Guiding to Him whom He wills, leading astray whom He wills. Providing for and blessing a people, taking away a blessing from another. Honoring a people, degrading and humiliating another. Bringing joy and happiness to some, taking it away from others. When your heart performs a prostration, you will know it. For you will rise from it with a special *glow*, “On their faces is their sign from the effect of their prostration..”<sup>4</sup>

It is that sign of the grace and light of Allah - that gentleness and kindness, that blessed peace and calmness that can come from no other source. Sujood [prostration] is the most special part of prayer. Sujood [prostration] is very precious! How many a worry has Sujood [prostration] relieved. How many a difficulty and trial has Sujood [prostration] resolved. How many a need has Sujood [prostration] fulfilled. How many a dua went unanswered, till it was made...in Sujood [prostration]!

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!

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<sup>4</sup> Surah al-Fath 48:29.



