

Salah Rules for Women

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 Shthab () reports that the Prophet (), 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.'⁵³⁸

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

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 () reports that the Prophet () 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 () narrates that the Prophet () said, 'The most beloved salah to Allah of a woman is one that she performs in the darkest spot of her home.'⁵⁴¹

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

Sayyidatuna Asmaa (R) narrates as part of a longer hadeeth that the Prophet () said, 'There is no adhan iqamah or Jumuah upon women.'⁵⁴²

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

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 exposed.

Ummul Mu'mineen Aisha (R) reports that the Prophet () said, 'Allah does not accept the salah of a mature female without a scarf.'⁵⁴⁴

Women cannot lead men in salah.

Abu Bakrah () reports that the Prophet () said 'Never will those people succeed who have appointed a woman over them.'⁵⁴⁵

Jabir bin Abdullah () reports as part of a longer hadeeth that the Prophet () said, Know that a woman should not lead a man in salah.'546

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 () reports that the Prophet () said, 'Tasbeeh is for men, and clapping is for women.'547

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 () 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 () 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'. 548

Sayyiduna Ibn Umar () narrates that the Prophet () 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."549

Sayyiduna Wail bin Hujr () reports that the Prophet () 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.'550

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

1. A man will raise his hands to his earlobes when commencing the prayer while a woman will only raise her hands to her shoulders.
2. A man will tie his left hand with his right hand below the naval. The woman will tie both hands on her chest.
3. A man will keep his fingers spread apart when performing *ruku'* while a woman will keep them joined.
4. A man will keep his stomach away from his thighs and his elbows away from his flanks when prostrating. A woman on the other hand will join her stomach to her thighs while observing this position.
5. When a man sits between the two prostrations and for the middle and/or final sitting he will place his buttocks on his left foot and keep his right foot erect with his toes facing towards the *Qibla*. The woman will sit on her buttocks, place her right thigh over her left and extend her left leg towards her right beneath her right leg.

Imam Bayhaqi has mentioned a principle which is the basis of the differences found in the salah of males and females.

He says:

"The separating factor between the laws of salah of males and females is that of concealment . A woman is commanded to do all those actions which are more concealing for her. " (as-Sunan al-Kubra alil-Bayhaqi: vol. 2 p 222)

RAISING THE HANDS

Hafidh Nur ud-Din Haythami states:

Wa'il ibn Hujr states that Rasulullah said to him, "O Ibn Hujr, when you perform salah, raise your hands till your ears while a woman should raise her hands till her chest . "

(Majma' uz-Zawaa'id: vol. 2 p 103, and I'laa us-Sunan: vol. 2 p 156)

Imam Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

"Abd Rabbih Ibn Zaytun said that he saw Umm ud-Dardaa raising her hands parallel to her shoulders when beginning salah. "

(al-Musannaf li-Ibn Abi Shaybah: vol. 1 p 239)

Ibn Abi Shaybah has also narrated:

"Ataa was asked how a woman should raise her hands in salah. He replied that she should raise them till her breast " (Ibid)

Based at Makkah, Ataa [the great Follower (tabi`i) and imam] used to issue this fatwa.

Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

"Hammad ibn Salamah al-Basri used to say that a woman should raise her hands parallel to her breast when beginning salah. "

(Ibid)

Hammad was based at Kufa and he used to issue this fatwa.

The narration of Ibn Jurayj has been mentioned as follows:

Ibn Jurayj said, "I asked Ataa whether a woman should gesture with her hands like a male when making takbir. Ataa replied that she should not raise her hands like a male. Then he practically indicated with his hands how it should be done by lowering his hands and drawing them very close to his body. Then he said, "In the raising of the hands, a woman is unlike a man . And if she leaves that, there is no harm. ""

The Muslim Ummah continued this practice over the centuries. Imam Zuhri used to issue the same fatwa in Madinah.

PLACING THE HANDS

Allamah Abdul-Hayy Luckhnawi writes:

"As for women, the jurists are unanimous that it is sunnah for them to place their hands on their bosoms. "

(as-Si'aayah: vol. 2 p 152)

There is ijmaa' on this mas'alah.

SAJDAH

Imam Abu Dawud has narrated the following hadith in his Maraaseel:

(Arabic text)

Translation:

"Yazid ibn Abi Habib states that Rasulullah passed by two women who were performing their salah. He said to them, "When you prostrate, then make the parts of your body touch the ground because a woman is unlike a man in these aspects. " (Maraaseel Abi Dawud p 118; and its like in as-Sunan al-Kubra alil- Bayhaqi: vol. 2 p 223)

Imam Bayhaqi narrates the following hadith:

Abdullah Ibn Umar reports that Rasulullah said, "When a woman sits during salah, she should place her one thigh over the other and when she prostrates, she must attach the stomach to her thighs so that is more concealing for her. Indeed, Allah looks at her and tells the angels, "O My angels! Bear witness that I have forgiven her. ""

(as-Sunan al-Kubra alil-Bayhaqi: vol. 2 p 223)

Imam Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates the following statement of Ali:

"It is reported that Ali said: "When a woman performs salah, she must practise ihtifaaz and keep her thighs close together. ""

(al-Musannaf li-Ibn Abi Shaybah: vol. 1 p 270, and it has been taken many ways, Abdur-Razzaq has taken it from Isra'il from Abu Is'haq from Harith from Ali and Ibn Abi Shaybah took it from Abul-Ahwas from Abu Is'haq and Bayhaqi took it from Abul-Ahwas, with the mentioned sanad)

Imam Abdur-Razzaq has quoted the following hadith in his Musannaf:

Ali says, "When a woman prostrates, she must practise ihtifaz and keep her thighs close to her stomach. "

(al-Musannaf li-Abdir-Razzaq: vol. 3 p 138)

"Ihtifaaz": to lean on one side and rest on the posterior.

(See Lugaat al-Hadith: vol. 1 p 98)

The following narration has been quoted by Bayhaqi:

"Ali said: " When a woman performs sajdah she must keep her thighs close together. ""

(as-Sunan al-Kubra alil-Bayhaqi: vol. 2 p 222)

The following narration appears in Kanz ul-Ummal:

"Ibn Umar states that when a woman prostrates, she must let her stomach touch her thighs in order to make herself completely concealed. "

(Kanz ul-Ummal: vol. 4 p 117)

Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

"Ibrahim says that when a woman prostrates she should join her thighs to her stomach without raising her posterior and without stretching her limbs out like a male. "

(al-Musannaf li-Ibn Abi Shaybah: vol. 1 p 270)

The following words have been narrated by Ibrahim Nakha'i:

"Ibrahim said that when a woman prostrates she must draw her thighs inwards and place her stomach on them. "
" (Ibid)

Mujaahid:

"Mujaahid used to dislike that a man attach his stomach to his thighs as a woman does. "

(Ibid)

Hasan al-Basri:

"Hishaam reports from Hasan who says that woman should draw herself closely together in sajdah. "

(Ibid)

Imam Abdur-Razzaq narrates:

Ibrahim says, "A woman used to be commanded to place her arm and her stomach on her thigh when she goes into sajdah and not to spread her limbs out as a male does so that her buttocks are not raised. "

(al-Musannaf li-Abdir-Razzaq: vol. 3 p 138)

Allamah Muhammad Taahir al-Gujaraati narrates:

"When a lady performs salah, she must contract herself when she sits down and when she goes into sajdah and she must not spread her limbs out. "

(Majma' Bihar l-Anwaar: vol. 1 p 521)

Based on these narrations, the Fuqahaa have issued the following ruling:

"A woman should contract herself in sajdah and join her stomach to her thighs because this is more concealing for her. "

(al-Hidaayah: vol. 1 p 53)

THE SITTING POSITION

It is mentioned in the Musnad of Imam Abu Hanifah rahimahullah:

"Abdullah ibn Umar was asked how women performed their salah during the era of Rasulullah. He replied that initially they performed tarabbu'. Then they were ordered to themselves close together and lean onto one side by resting on their left buttocks and completely contracting themselves. "

(Jaami' ul-Masaaneed: vol. 1 p 400)

Taraabu' is to sit cross legged. This narration indicates that initially the women sat in the position of tarabbu' but this command was later abrogated and they were ordered to draw themselves close together and lean onto one side by resting on their left buttocks and completely contracting themselves.

Sheikh Abu'l-Wafaa Afghaani writes:

"This is the most authentic narration of this chapter i.e. the sitting position of women . It is for this reason that Imam Abu Hanifah has made it the basis of his madh'hab. "

(Ta'leeqash-Sheikh Abul-Wafaa Afghaani ala Kitab il-Aathaar lil-Imam Muhammad ash-Shaybaani: vol. 1 p 208)

Abu Bakr Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates:

When Ibn Abbas was asked about the salaah of a woman, he replied, "She must draw herself close together and lean onto one side by resting on her left buttock. "

(al-Musannaf li-Ibn Abi Shaybah: vol. 1 p270)

in another narration of Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah (vol . 1 p270), one finds the following words: (Arabic text)

Translation: Ibrahim said: "A woman should sit in salah as a man does. "

This quotation indicates permissibility. However, Naasir ud-Din al-Albaani has interpolated the words of this narration thus:

"A woman should so as a man does in salah. "

(Sifatu Salatin-Nabiy p 207)

This interpolation has clearly changed the meaning of the words and is a misleading act.

The following narration is also quoted by Ibn Abi Shaybah:

Khalid ibn Lajlaaj said that women were commanded with tarabbu' when they sat in salah and they should not sit like men on their buttocks. That is in order that nothing happens. "

(al-Musannaf li-Ibn Abi Shaybah: vol. 1 p 270)

The Fuqahaa took these narrations into consideration and delivered

the following ruling:

"A woman should sit on her left buttock and position her legs out on her right hand side because that is more concealing for her. "

(al-Hidaayah: vol. 1 p 55)

The above narrations indicate that Ibrahim Nakha'i used to issue the fatwa in Kufain accordance with this practise, while in Madinah Mujhaahiddid likewise as did Hasan Basri in Basrah.

These ahaadith and aathaar clearly indicate that the salah of females differs from that of males