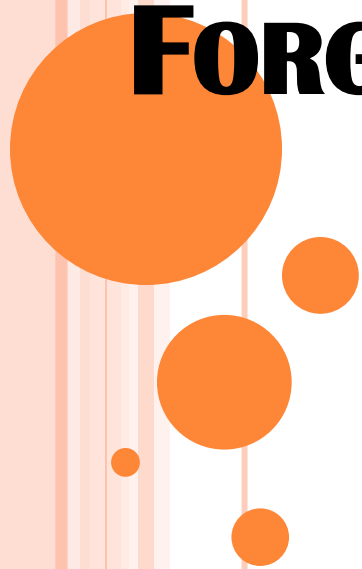


Sujood As-Sahw

**FORGETFULNESS IN PRAYER AND
PROSTRATION**



As- Sahw

- **As- Sahw means forgetfulness – when one leaves something without being aware or conscious of it. There is no blame on the one who has done so mistakenly due to forgetfulness. Sajdah as Sahw is meant to correct the defect/shortcoming in the salaah.**
- **The Prophet saw is reported to have said: My ummah have been pardoned for mistakes or forgetfulness.**
- **However, this does not have an authentic wording but Ibn Majah has a hadith with different wording but which is saheeh. “Verily Allah has removed the blame from my ummah for their mistakes or forgetfulness or that which they are forced to do.” Shaykh Albani rahimuallaah considered this authentic.**



Sujood As-Sahw

- **There are times in our prayers when we may forget something, or we may have doubt that we have completed an action, etc. The prostration of forgetfulness is: two prostrations that the one praying makes in order to compensate for mistakes occurring in the prayer due to forgetfulness (*sahw*).**
- **Its causes are three: having added something (*az-ziyadah*), having omitted something (*An-naqs*) and having been in a state of doubt (*Ash-shak*).**
- **We will look at these causes separately *insha'Allah*.**



(I) HAVING ADDED SOMETHING

Az-Ziyadah

- If the person praying deliberately adds an extra standing, sitting, bowing or prostration, then his prayer is nullified. If however, he does so due to forgetfulness and does not remember the addition until having completed it, then there is nothing upon him except *sajdah sahu*, whereupon his prayer will be rectified. If however, he remembers whilst performing that addition, then it is obligatory upon him to leave that addition and also to perform *sajdah sahu* (at the end of the prayer), and then his prayer will be correct.

An example of this is a person who prays the *Dhuhr* prayer as five *raka'at*, but does not remember that he has added except whilst in *Tashahud*. So he should complete his *Tashahud* and make the salutations (give *salam*) and then prostrate for forgetfulness, and then give the salutation (again). If however he does not remember the addition except after salutation, then he should perform prostration for forgetfulness and give the salutation (again). (The prostration for forgetfulness is two prostrations towards the *Qiblah*).

To be Continued

- **Another point is giving salutations (*Taslim*) before the completion of the prayer. This is counted as an addition of the prayer. So whoever deliberately gives salutations before the completion of the prayer, then his prayer is nullified. If however, it is done due to forgetfulness, and he does not remember this until after a long time then he should repeat his prayer again. If he remembers a short time later, such as after two or three minutes, then he should complete his prayer, give salutations and then prostrate for forgiveness and then give salutations (again).**

The proof for this is the *hadith* of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (*may Allah be pleased with him*) who said that, the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) prayed *Dhuhr* with five *raka'at*, so someone said, "Has increase been made in the prayer?" So he replied, "*And why is that?*" They said, "You have prayed five (*raka'at*)." So he performed two prostrations after having given the salutation ... and in a narration (there occurs), "*... so he turned his feet and faced the Qibla and performed two prostrations, then he gave the salutation.*" Reported by the whole group [i.e. al-Bukhari, Muslim and the four *Sunan*]



Giving Salutations (Salam) Before Completion of the Prayer

- Giving salutations before the completion of the prayer. So whoever gives the salutation before the completion of the prayer deliberately, then his prayer is nullified.
- If however, it is done due to forgetfulness, and he does not remember this until after a long time then he should repeat his prayer again. If he remembers a short time later. Then he should complete his prayer and salutation, then prostrate for forgetfulness, and then give salutation (again).

The proof of this *hadith* is Abu Hurayrah (*may Allah be pleased with him*) who said that, "The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) lead them in the *Dhuhr* prayer or the *Asr* prayer and gave the salutation after two *raka'at*. Then he departed quickly from one of the doors of the mosque, and the people were saying that the prayer had been decreased. The Prophet (*peace be upon him*) meanwhile, stood by a piece of wood placed in the mosque, leaning against it, as if he was angry. So a man stood and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, have you forgotten or has the prayer been reduced?' So the Prophet of Allah (*peace be upon him*) said, 'I did not forget nor has it been reduced.' So the man said, 'Rather you have indeed forgotten.' So the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) said to the Companions, 'Is what he is saying true?' They said 'Yes' So the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) went forward and prayed what remained of the prayer, then he gave the salutation, then he prostrated twice, then he gave the salutation." [Agreed Upon]

- And if the *Imam* gives the salutation before completion of his prayer and there are some followers who missed part of the prayer and who stand up to make what they had missed, and then the *Imam* remember that there is something incomplete in his prayer that he has to make up for, so he stands to complete that - then in this case the followers who have already stood to complete what they have missed have a choice between continuing to make up what they missed and then performing prostration for forgetfulness, and between running to following the *Imam*, and when he performs the salutation to complete what they had missed, and then to prostrate for forgetfulness after giving the salutation, and this is more right and more prudent.

(II) Omission of Pillars (Arkan)

- If a person omits a pillar (*rukun* – Singular for *arkan*) from his prayer, then if it is in the initial *takbir* (*takbirat ul-ihram*), then there is no prayer for him whether he left it deliberately or forgetfully because his prayer has not been established. If it is something other than the initial *takbir*, then if it is left deliberately, his prayer is nullified. If however, he leaves it due to forgetfulness, then if he goes on and reaches its place in the next *raka'at*, then he discards the *raka'at* which he forgot it in, and the following one takes its place. If he has not reached its place in the next *raka'at*, then it is obligatory upon him to return to the missed pillar and to perform it and whatever comes after it. In either of these two cases it will be obligatory upon him to perform prostration for forgetfulness after the salutation.

An example (of this) is the case of a person who forgets the second prostration in the first *raka'at*, but remembers this whilst sitting down between the two prostrations in the second *raka'at*. So he should discard the first *raka'at* and the second one will take its place, so he counts that as his first rakat and completes his prayer based upon that. Then he should give the salutation, prostrate for forgetfulness, and then give salutation.

- A further example (is that of) a person who forgets the second prostration and the sitting before it in the first *rak'ah*. But he remembers this after standing straight from *ruku'* in the second *raka'at*. He should go back to sit and to prostrate, and then complete his prayer from then on. Then he should give the salutation, prostrate for forgetfulness, and finally give the salutation (again).

III) Doubt (Shak)

- **Doubt is to be uncertain about which of the two matters has occurred, and doubt is not taken notice of in matters of worship in three cases:**
- **If it is just a self-delusion, having no reality like devilish whisperings.**
- **If it occurs very frequently to a person such that he does not perform any act of worship except that he is caused to doubt in it.**
- **If it occurs after the completion of the acts of worship, then it is not taken into account, as long as he is not certain of it, in which case he will need to act upon what he is certain of.**

An example of this is that a person prays *Dhuhr*, and after finishing his prayer he doubts whether he prayed three or four *raka'at*. Then he takes no notice of this doubt unless he is certain that he only prayed three *raka'at*, in which case he should complete his prayer if it occurs a short while later, then he should give the salutations, prostrate for forgetfulness and then perform the salutation again. If however he does not remember until a long time has passed, then he must repeat the whole prayer afresh.

- **As for doubt in other than these three cases, then it is taken account of. Doubt in the prayer will be of two kinds:**
- **(i) That one of the two matters is more weighty in his mind, so he will act upon what is more weighty to him, then he will complete his prayer based upon that, after which he should give the salutation, prostrate for forgetfulness and finally give the salutation. An example of this is if a person prays *Dhuhr* and doubts in a *rak'ah* (as to whether) it is the second or the third *rak'ah*? But the weightier case in his mind is that it is the third, so he makes it the third. So after he performs one further *rak'ah*, he gives the salutation, prostrates for forgetfulness and then he gives the salutation.**



To be Continued

- **The proof for what is established in the Sahihayn (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and elsewhere in the hadith of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that the Prophet (may peace be upon him) said, "If one of you doubts in his prayer, then let him strive to arrive at what is correct, and complete it upon that basis. Then let him give the salutation and perform two prostrations." This is the wording of Al-Bukhari.**
- **(ii) Neither of the two possibilities are weightier in his mind. Therefore, he should act upon that which he is certain of, which will be the lesser of the two, and complete his prayer based upon that, and then prostrate for forgetfulness before giving the salutation, and then give the salutation. An example of this is if a person is praying 'Asr and doubts in a rak'ah (as to) whether it is the second or the third, and neither its being the second nor its being the third is more weighty in his mind. So he makes it the second, performs the first Tashahud and two raka'at after it, and then prostrates for forgetfulness and gives salutation.**

The proof for this is what Muslim reports from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "If one of you doubts in his prayer and does not know how many he has prayed –whether it is three or four – then let him cast away the doubt and build upon what he is certain of. Then let him perform two prostrations before giving the salutation. So if he has prayed five, then they will make his prayer even for him, and if he has prayed the full four, then they will be a humiliation for Satan."

To be Continued

- **And from the examples of doubt is a person who arrives whilst the Imam is in the bowing (ruku'). So he gives the initial takbir whilst he is standing up straight, and then he performs the ruku' and this will result in one of three cases:**
- **That he is certain that he has reached the Imam whilst he was performing ruku', before he raises up from it. So he has caught the rak'ah and recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah is not required from him in this case.**
- **That he is certain that the Imam raised up from the ruku' before he reached him, then this rak'ah has escaped him.**
- **That he doubts as to whether he caught up to the Imam whilst he was performing ruku' – such that he catches that ruku' or whether the Imam raised up from the ruku' before he caught him – such that he will have missed that rak'ah. So if one of the two is more weighty in his mind, then he acts upon that and completes his prayer upon that basis and he gives the salutation, performs prostration for forgetfulness, and then gives the salutation. This is unless it is the case that he did not miss anything from the prayer because no prostration will be due upon him in that case.**

To be Continued

- But if neither of the two cases has more weight in his mind then he acts upon that what is certain (which is that he has missed a *rak'ah*), so he completes his prayer upon that basis and he prostrates for forgetfulness before giving the salutation, then he gives the salutation.
- It should generally be noted that if a person doubts in his prayer, he should act upon that which he is certain of, or upon what is weightier in his mind – in accordance with the details already mentioned previously. Then if it becomes clear to him that the course of action he has proceeded upon is in accordance with reality and that he has neither added to or deleted anything from his prayer, then he no longer has to perform the prostration for forgetfulness, due to the fact that doubt which necessitates it is no longer present.
- A different saying is that it is still necessary to perform the prostration of forgetfulness in order to humiliate the Shaytan, due to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), "And if he has prayed it completely then the two prostrations will be a humiliation for the Shaytan."
- And due to the fact that he performed a part of his prayer in a state of doubt with regards to its performance and this is the more correct saying insha'Allah.

An example of this is if a person prays and doubts in a rak'ah, whether it is the second or third rak'ah. Neither of these two possibilities carries more weight in his mind, so he makes it the second rak'ah and completes his prayer upon that basis. But whilst continuing, it becomes clear to him, that it was the second rak'ah in reality. In such a case there is no prostration for forgetfulness due upon him in the saying most well known in the madhhab, but prostration for forgetfulness before the salutation is required from him and the second saying that we hold to be preferable.

Prostration for Forgetfulness for One Praying Behind an Imam

- If the Imam forgets, then it is obligatory upon those following him in prayer to follow him in performance of the prostration for forgetfulness due to the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), "The Imam is appointed to be followed, so do not differ with him ... " until he said, " ... so when he prostrates then prostrate ... " This hadith is agreed upon from the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).
- So whether the *Imam* prostrates for forgetfulness before the salutation or after it, it is obligatory upon those praying behind him. This is except for the one who arrived late and needs to make up the part of the prayer he missed, he should not follow the *Imam* in performance of prostration after the salutation, as this is not possible for him. This is because, he cannot give the salutation along with the *Imam*, so what he should do, is to first make up what he has missed, and then give the salutation, then to prostrate for forgetfulness, and then to give the salutation.
- An example of this (is if) a man enters the prayer along with the Imam in the final rak'ah, and a prostration for forgetfulness is due from the Imam after the salutation. So when the Imam gives the salutation, this man should stand to complete what he missed and does not prostrate along with the Imam. Then he has completed what he missed and has given the salutation, he should then perform prostration for forgetfulness after the salutation. But if the follower and not the Imam forgets in the prayer, and nothing of the prayer escapes him, then no prostration is due from him. This is because his prostrating would cause him to differ from the Imam and to disrupt his state of following him. Also the companions (may Allah be pleased with him), left the At-Tashahhud when the Prophet (peace be upon him) forgot it, so they stood along with him and did not sit for the At-Tashahhud in order to comply with the duty of following the Imam.

To be Continued

- But if he misses part of the prayer due to forgetting whilst praying behind the *Imam*, or whilst making up what he had missed on his own, then he must prostrate for forgetfulness after completion of what he had missed. This prostration will be either before or after the salutation depending on its cause, as he preceded.

An example of this (is if) a follower forgets to say "*Subhana rabbi al-'adhim*" in the *ruku'*, but does not miss any action of the prayer, he does not need to prostrate, but if a *rak'ah* or more is missed by him, then he must make it up and then prostrate for forgetfulness before the salutation.

- A further example (is if) a follower prays the *Dhuhr* prayer along with the *Imam*, then when the *Imam* stands for the fourth *rak'ah*, the follower remains sitting thinking it to be the last *rak'ah*. But when he knows that the *Imam* has stood, he stands. So if he hasn't missed anything of the prayer, then no prostration is due for him. But if it causes him to miss a *rak'ah* or more, then he should make that up and give the salutation, and then prostrate for forgetfulness, and give the salutation. This prostration is because of the sitting that he added to the prayer when the *Imam* stood for the fourth *rak'ah*.
- (Note): For what has preceded it, will be clear that the prostration for forgetfulness is sometimes performed before the salutation, and sometimes after it.



To be Continued

- So it is performed before salutation in two case:
- (i) If it is due to deficiency, due to the *hadith* of 'Abdullah ibn Buhaynah (*may Allah be pleased with him*) that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) prostrated for forgetfulness before the salutation when he left the first *Tashahhud*, and the *hadith* with it's wording has proceeded.
- If it is due to doubt when is unable to distinguish which of the two possibilities carries more weight in his mind, due to the *hadith* of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri about one who doubts in his prayer and does not know how many he has to pray, whether it is three or four *raka'at*. So the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) commanded such a person to perform two prostrations before giving the salutation, and the *hadith* and it's wording have preceded. And the prostration for forgetfulness is performed after the salutations;
- (ii) If it is due to an addition in the prayer, due to the *hadith* of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud when the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) prayed *Dhuhr* with five *raka'at*, so they mentioned this to him after the salutation, so he (*peace be upon him*) performed two prostrations and then gave the salutations. He (*peace be upon him*) did not explain that his prostration after the salutation was due to the fact that he only knew of the addition after having performed it. So this shows that this ruling is general and that prostration because of addition is to be done after the salutation – whether he knows of the addition before the salutation or after it.

To be Continued

- From this also is the case of one who forgetfully gives the salutation before completion of the prayer, then he remembers and completes it. He has added a salutation within the prayer, so he should prostrate after salutation due to the *hadith* of Abu Hurayrah, that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) gave the salutation in the *Dhuhr* or the *'Asr* prayed after two *raka'at*. They mentioned it to him, so he completed the prayer and then gave the salutation, then prostrated for forgetfulness, then the *hadith* with its wording has preceded.
- (iii) If it is due to forgetfulness when one of the two possibilities carries more weight in his mind, due to the *hadith* of Ibn Mas'ud that the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) commanded the one who forgets in his prayer should strive to ascertain what is correct, and then to complete his prayer on that basis, then to give the salutation and to prostrate and the *hadith* and its wording have preceded.
- Then if two cases of forgetfulness occur for him, one of them requiring prostration before the salutation and the other requiring prostration after it, then the scholars say that prostration before the salutation predominates, so he should prostrate before it.

An example of this (is if) a person prays *Dhuhr* and stands up for the third *rak'ah* without sitting for the first *Tashahhud*, then he sits in the third *rak'ah* thinking it to be the second. He then remembers that it is the third – so he should stand, pray a further *rak'ah* and prostrate for forgetfulness and then give the salutation. So this person left the first *Tashahhud* which requires prostration before the salutation and added a sitting in the third *rak'ah* which requires prostration after the salutation, so the prostration after the salutation predominates and Allah knows best.

To be Continued

- **So I ask Allah that He should grant us and our Muslim brothers understanding of His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace be upon him) and that we act upon them inwardly and outwardly in matters of 'Aqeedah, worships and dealings. Then He grants us all good out come, indeed He is the Most Beneficent, the Most Gracious.**
- **All praise is for Allah, The Lord of all creation, and may Allah extol and send blessings and peace upon our Messenger (peace be upon him), upon his true followers and all his companions.**
- **Written and compiled by the one in need of Allah, The Most High, Muhammad ibn Salih Al-Uthaymin on the 04/03/1400H.**
- **Translated by Abu Talhah Daawood ibn Ronald Burbank**

