

The Explanation of the Book Zād Al-Mustaqni‘ Fī Ikhtīṣār Al-Muqni‘
Section: Al-Sharh Al-Mumti‘ Chapter: The Description Of The Prayer.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آهله وصحبه أجمعين

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Where Should The Person Look While They Are Praying:

- When the person prays, where should his eyes be looking? Shaykh ‘Uthaymīn (رحمه الله) said that **the person should look where he makes sajdah. This is the opinion of several scholars including the jamhūr** - the majority of the Ḥanafī, Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanbalī madhāhib.
- The proof for this is the ḥadīth of ‘Ā’ishah (رضى الله عنها) where she said, “*His (صلى الله عليه وسلم) eyes would not leave the place of sajdah.*”
- Scholars differ over the authenticity of the previous ḥadīth and there are other narrations from the **Mālikī madhhab that the person should look directly in front of him** and that he does not have to look at his place of prostration.
- The proof for this is the ḥadīth of Khabāb (رضى الله عنه) that was narrated in Bukhārī, when the saḥābah asked him how he knew that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to recite in the Ḍuhr prayers, he replied by saying, “Because of the movement of his beard.” This shows that they were looking in front of them since the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was standing in front of them.
- The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said he was made to see Paradise and he went forward. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to the saḥābah, “*You all saw me move forward*”, and this is the proof that the saḥābah were looking forward.

1

- Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (رحمه الله) said that none of the ḥadīth indicate that a person should look at a specific place during the prayer.
- Shaykh Al-‘Uthaymīn (رحمه الله) said this is an affair of leniency and that the person should look at the place that will give him more khushū‘ (fear, tranquillity and calmness) in his prayer.
- There are narrations that say that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to look at his finger while he was in tashahhud, which is an exception.
- Another exception is during the Fear Prayer – Salāt-al-Khawf.
- Shaykh Al-‘Uthaymīn mentioned a weak opinion that if a person is in the Ḥarām, then he looks directly at the Ka‘bah.

The Prohibition Of Looking Up During The Prayer:

- **A person can look at the place of prostration, or look in front of them, as long as he does not look up.**
- The proof for this is the ḥadīth of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) where he said, **“What is the matter with people that look up in the prayer? They are to stop this or their eyesight will not be returned to them.”** [Bukhārī & Muslim]. Shaykh Al-‘Uthaymīn said this is a threat because of the severity of this action and a threat of this severity does not come about except because of doing a major sin.
- Ibn Ḥazm (رحمه الله) said this is a threat and threats like this do not come about except to indicate that this action is a major sin that is impermissible.
- Shaykh Al-‘Uthaymīn said **if the person looks up, he is sinful, but according to the majority of scholars, his prayer is not invalidated by looking up.**

Regarding Closing The Eyes During The Prayer:

- The correct opinion is that **it is disliked to close the eyes during the prayer.** This is the opinion of the majority of scholars, including Ibn Al Qayyim (رحمه الله).
- Ibn al Qayyim said, “It is disliked to close your eyes in the prayer, **unless you do so for a reason.**” An example would be a person that closes his eyes so that he

is not distracted by anything or anyone that passes by. In this situation, closing the eyes is closer to being mustahabb because it is done to have more khushū‘.

- If a person feels like he has more khushū‘ with his eyes closed all the time, whether there is something passing to distract him or not, then this is not recommended because the khushū‘ that you will get from this disliked action is from the shayṭān and it is like the khushū‘ of the Sūfīs.

Saying The Du‘ā’ Al-Istiftāḥ – The Opening Supplication:

- **Majority of scholars hold the opinion that du‘ā’ al-Istiftāḥ is a Sunnah.** Imām Mālik (رحمه الله) held the opinion that du‘ā’ al-Istiftāḥ was disliked based on the ḥadīth of Anas Ibn Mālik (رضى الله عنه) who said that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), ‘Umar and Abū Bakr (رضى الله عنه) used to start the prayer with Al-ḥamdu lillāhi Rabb Al-‘Ālamīn.
- Most scholars understood that when the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would begin the prayer, then the first thing they would recite audibly was Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah. Meaning they would make du‘ā’ al-Istiftāḥ silently, and then recite Al-Fātiḥah out loud. The majority of scholars did not understand the ḥadīth of Anas Ibn Mālik to be a negation of du‘ā’ al-Istiftāḥ based on other narrations like the narration of Abū Hurayrah (رضى الله عنه).
- Abū Hurayrah (رضى الله عنه) stated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would make the opening takbīr, and then he would remain silent, and then he would recite Al-Fātiḥah. When he asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) what he says when he is silent, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) mentioned one of the du‘ā’ al-Istiftāḥ. This ḥadīth is in Bukhāri and Muslim.
- The majority of scholars hold that du‘ā’ al-Istiftāḥ is a Sunnah action, if the person says it, he is rewarded, and if he does not do so, **it does not invalidate their prayer.**

The Explanation Of ‘Subḥānak Allahumma Wa Biḥamdika’:

- Shaykh Al-'Uthaymīn (رحمه الله) explained 'Subḥānak' to mean that Allāh (سبحانه) (وتعالى) is far removed from any deficiency, and that He is perfect in His Names and Attributes and does not resemble anything from His creation.
- Shaykh Al-'Uthaymīn (رحمه الله) said that there are several different opening supplications that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would make. "Subḥānak Allahumma Wa Biḥamdika" was narrated by 'Umar (رضى الله عنه), and Abū Hurayrah narrated "Allahumma bā'id baynī wa bayna....." and there are other narrations as well.
- Should a person favour one opening supplication over the other, or should they alternate between different supplications?
- Ibn Taymiyyah and Shaykh Al-'Uthaymīn (رحمهما الله) held the latter opinion, that a **person should alternate between different adīyah**. This is based on a qā'idah that says that if there are several different narrations that are authentic, then the person should act on all of these authentic narrations at different times because this protects the Sharī'ah and allows the person to implement the Sunnah.
- The wisdom behind choosing different opening supplications at different times, revives the different Sunan since certain practices or adīyah may not be known to people in certain locations. This practise is also more likely to make the person cognizant of what they are reciting because repeating the same du'ā' might become habitual and the person might not even concentrate on what he is reciting.
- Shaykh Al-'Uthaymīn (رحمه الله) said that a person should recite one opening supplication at a time since this is what has been narrated from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). It has not been narrated that he recited two opening supplications at a time.
- Shaykh Al-'Uthaymīn (رحمه الله) said that during the funeral prayer, the person should also say the opening supplication because it is still considered a Sunnah action.

وصلى الله على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم