

## **On Placing the Hands in the Prayer**

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Below is a translation from 'Tuhfatul Ahwadhee bi sharh Jaami at-Tirmidhee' by Mubaarakfooree, on the issue of where to place ones hands in prayer, (vol. 2, pp74+)

[Start of Quote from at-Tirmidhee]

"Chapter: what occurs with regards to placing the right hand upon the left in prayer

'....and some of them were of the opinion that you place them above the navel, and some below the navel. And all of that was comprehensive according to them.'

[End of quote from at-Tirmidhee]

### **Commentary**

His saying, 'And all of that was comprehensive according to them (wa kullu dhaalik waasi'un 'indahum)'

It's clear meaning is that the difference of opinion between them over placing the hands above or below the navel is one of choice and excellence. And know that the ahaadeeth and narrations that occur on this subject differ, and due to this there occurred a difference amongst the Imaams, may Allaah have mercy upon them. Here I shall mention the evidences (for each opinion) in 3 sections, alongwith an explanation of what is for them and against them.

### **Section One: In explanation of the one who holds to placing the hands below the navel, and they stick to the following ahaadeeth:**

1) The hadeeth of Wa'il bin Hujr (RA) reported by ibn Abee Shaybah in his 'Musannaf' from Wakee' from Musa bin Umar from 'Alqama bin Wail Bin Hujr from his father who said, 'I saw the Prophet (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) placing his right hand over his left below the navel.'

al-Haafidh al-Qaasim bin Qatloobagaa said in his 'Takhreej Ahaadeeth al-Ikhtiyaar Sharh al-Mukhtaar' - 'this sanad is good.' And ash-Shaykh Abu at-Tayyib al-Madanee said in 'Sharh at-Tirmidhee' - 'This hadeeth is strong from the point of view of the sanad.' And ash-Shaikh Aabid as-Sindee said in 'Tawaali al-Anwaar' - 'it's narrators are trustworthy.'

I say: even if the isnaad of this hadeeth is good, affirming the words, 'below the navel' poses a serious problem. Ash-Shaikh Muhammad Hayat as-Sindee said in his book, 'Fath al-Ghafoor,' 'the addition, "below the navel", is problematic, in fact it is a mistake arising from neglect. For I checked the authentic text of the 'Musannaf' and I saw this hadeeth in it with this sanad, with this wording but without the additional wording, "below the navel". After this hadeeth is mentioned the narration of an-Nakha'i and it's wording is close to the wording of this hadeeth, and at it's conclusion are the words, "below the navel." So maybe the sight of the scribe (of the texts of the 'Musannaf') slipped from one place to the other and interpolated the wording of the mawqoof narration into the marfu' narration (as occurs in some of the texts of the 'Musannaf')

And the writer of 'ad-Durra fee Adh'haar Gash Naqd as-Surra' said, 'And as for the hadeeth of Wail which is depended upon, reported by ibn Abee Shaybah, then there is a lot of discussion on this hadeeth. For ibn Abee Shaybah reported this hadeeth, and after it narrated the narration of an-Nakha'i and the wording of the two is close, and at the conclusion of the wording of the narration are the words, "below the navel." So the texts (of the 'Musannaf') differ, and in some of them occurs the mention of the hadeeth without specifying the place of the hands followed with the narration of an-Nakha'i, and in other texts the hadeeth is mentioned with the additional wording without the narration of an-Nakha'i following it. So it is possible that the addition arises from negligence on the part of the scribe (of the 'Musannaf') by his interpolating the wording of the narration into the hadeeth. Just as it is possible that the absence of the wording "below the navel" in the earlier texts (of the 'Musannaf' arises from neglect of the writer). But the differing in this way shows that the wording of the narration got interpolated into the hadeeth.'

I say: and the saying of these scholars is supported by the fact that Ahmad relates the hadeeth with the same sanad as ibn Abee Shaybah and the addition does not occur in it. So in the 'Musnad' of Ahmad occurs, Wakee' narrated to us from Musa bin Umar al-'Inbaree from 'Alqama bin Wail al-Hadramee from his father who said, 'I saw the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) placing his right hand upon his left in prayer.'

And ad-Daaruuqutnee also relates this hadeeth with the same sanad as ibn Abee Shaybah and there is no mention of the addition in it: al-Husain bin Ismaa'eel and Uthmaan bin Ja'far bin Muhammad al-Ahwad both related to us from Yusuf bin Musa from Wakee' from Musa bin Umar al 'Inbaree from 'Alqama bin Wail al-Hadramee from his father who said, 'I saw the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) placing his right hand upon his left in the prayer.'

And this is also supported by the fact that ibn Turkamaanee, the Shaykh of al-Haafidh az-Zayla'i mentioned in his 'al-Jawhar' two weak hadeeth to support his madhab where he said, 'Ibn Hazm said, "it is reported to us from Abu Hurayra who said, 'place the hand upon the hand below the navel.' And from Anas who said, 'three are from the manners of the Prophethood: hastening the iftaar, delaying the suhoor, and placing the right hand upon the left below the navel in the prayer.'""

And before these two hadeeth he quotes the narration of Abu Majliz in the 'Musannaf' of ibn Abee Shaybah, 'Ibn Abee Shaybah said in his 'Musannaf' from Yazeed bin Haaron from al-Hajjaaj bin Hisaan who said I heard Abu Majliz or I asked him, "how do I place (my hands)?" He said, "place the palm of the right hand on the back of the left hand below the navel"

And he does not quote any other narration from the 'Musannaf' of ibn Abee Shaybah, and it is clear that the narration of Wa'il in which the addition, 'below the navel' occurs was not in there. And if it was there with this addition then ibn Turkamaanee would have quoted it, for it is inconceivable that he would mention two da'eef hadeeth to support his madhab, and quote the narration of Abu Majliz from the 'Musannaf', and not quote the marfu' hadeeth of Wa'il with this addition present and it's saheeh sanad.

And this is also supported by the fact that ash-Shaikh Muhammad Hayat as-Sindee said in his letter, 'Fath al-Ghafoor', 'that more than one of the Companions of Hadeeth reported this hadeeth and there was no mention of the words, "below the navel", in fact I have not seen or heard any of the people of knowledge mention this hadeeth with this addition except al-Qaasim. And this is ibn Abd al-Barr the Haafidh of his time saying in 'at-Tamheed,' 'And ath-Thawri and Abu Haneefah said, "below the navel" and this is narrated from Alee and Ibraaheem an-Nakha'i but it is not authentic from them.' So if this authentic hadeeth with this additional wording was in the 'Musannaf' he would have mentioned it because he often quotes from the 'Musannaf' in this chapter and others. And this ibn Hajr, the Haafidh of his time, saying in his 'Fath', 'And ibn Khuzaimah reported from Wa'il that he placed them upon his chest, and in al-Bazaar (the wording is) near his chest ('inda sadrihi), and Ahmad reports a similar hadeeth from the hadeeth of Halb.' And he says

in the 'Takhreej al-Hidaayah' that the narration of Alee is da'eef, and is contradicted by the hadeeth of Wail bin Hujr, "I prayed with the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) and he placed his right hand upon his left on his chest." And he indicates this in 'Takhreej Ahaadeeth ar-Raafi'ee.' So if this addition was present in the 'Musannaf' he would have mentioned it, and his books are replete with ahaadeeth and narrations.

And this is as-Suyutee, the Haafidh of his time, saying in 'Wadhaa'if al-Yawn wa al-Lail', 'he used to place his right hand upon his left and place them firmly on his chest.' And he mentioned in his 'Jaami al-Kabeer' about eight hadeeth of Wail from the 'Musannaf' and the wording of some of them is, 'I saw the Prophet (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) place his right hand upon his left in prayer.' And this is the wording that the author of 'Naqd as-Surra' mentioned with the addition, 'below the navel' and if this addition was present then as-Suyutee would have mentioned it. And this is al-Aini saying in the commentary of Bukhaaree, 'ash-Shaafi'ee relied upon the hadeeth of Wa'il bin Hujr reported by ibn Khuzaimah in his 'Saheeh' who said, "I prayed behind the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) and he placed his right hand upon his left on his chest." And our Hanafee scholars seek support with evidences that are not strong (ghayru watheeqa).'

So if this addition was present in the 'Musannaf' he would have mentioned it, and his works are replete with quotes from it. And this is ibn Ameer al-Haaj, who outdid his shaykh ibn al-Hammaam in research and depth of investigation, saying in 'Sharh al-Maniyyah', 'What is established in the Sunnah is to place the right hand upon the left in prayer, and there is no authentic hadeeth that establishes the place of placing them on the body except the aforementioned hadeeth of Wa'il.' So if this hadeeth were present with this addition, Ibn Ameer al-Haaj would have mentioned it especially since his commentaries are overflowing with quotes from the 'Musannaf'." [End of quote from as-Sindee]

I say (in conclusion): the aforementioned hadeeth of Wail bin Hujr even though it's sanad is good, there is a severe problem in affirming the wording, 'below the navel' as you have come to know.

**2) The hadeeth of Alee (RA) reported by Abu Dawood, Ahmad, ibn Abee Shaybah, ad-Daaruuqutnee, al-Bayhaqee and Abu Juhayfah that Alee said, 'the Sunnah is to place the hand upon the hand below the navel.'**

I say: it's isnaad contains Abd ar-Rahmaan Ishaq al-Waasitee, and this hadeeth revolves around him. And he is da'eef and it is not correct to depend upon him. al-Haafidh az-Zayla'i said in 'Nasb ar-Raayah' after mentioning this hadeeth, 'ibn Qattaan said, "Abd ar-Rahmaan bin Ishaq, he is ibn al-Harb Abu Shaybah al-Waasitee and ibn Hanbal and Abu Haatim said about him, "rejected in hadeeth." And ibn Ma'een said, "he is nothing." And Bukhaaree said, "there is a problem in him." And al-Bayhaqee said in 'al-Ma'rifah', "it's isnaad is not authentic, And ar-Rahmaan bin Ishaq al-Waasitee is alone in reporting it and he is abandoned." And an-Nawawee said in 'al-Khulaasa' and 'Sharh Saheeh Muslim', "and it is a hadeeth which is weak by agreement for Abd ar-Rahmaan bin Ishaq is weak by agreement."

And Shaikh ibn al-Hammaam said in 'at-Tahreer', 'when al-Bukhaaree says about someone, "there is a problem in him" then his hadeeth are not depended upon or used for support, or given any consideration.'

So when you come to know all of this, it becomes clear that this hadeeth of Alee is not to be depended upon, or used as support or given any consideration. Then it also contradicts the tafseer of Alee to the saying of Allaah, "wanhar" that he placed his hand upon the center of his left forearm and placed them upon his chest - reported by al-Bayhaqee, ibn Abee Shaybah, ibn al-Mundhir, ibn Abee Haatim, ad-Daaruuqutnee, Abu ash-Shaykh, al-Haakim and ibn Mardawiyah as in 'ad-Durra al-Manthoor'.

al-Faadil Mulla al-Haddaad said in 'Haashiyah al-Hidaayah', 'so when the hadeeth of placing the hands below the navel is weak, and contradicts the narration of Alee that he explained His saying, "wanhar", by placing the right hand upon his left on his chest then it is obligatory to act upon the hadeeth of Wa'il which an-Nawawee mentioned. Then this (da'eef) hadeeth of Alee is also to be considered abrogated according to the way of the Hanafiyyah. The author of 'ad-Durra fee Idh'haar Gash Naqd as-Surra', and he is Hanafee in madhab, said, "Abu Dawood reports on the authority of Jarir ad-Dabbi that he said, 'I saw Alee placing his right hand upon his left wrist above the navel.' So the principle of our scholars is that when the Companion acts contrary to what he narrates then this indicates the abrogation of what is narrated.'

I say: the isnaad of the narration of Alee, I mean the one that Abu Dawood relates from Jarir ad-Dabbi is saheeh as you will come to know.

**3) The hadeeth of Abu Hurayra** reported by Abu Dawood from Abu Waa'il who said, 'Abu Hurayra said, hold the hand with the hand below the navel.' I say: the isnaad of this hadeeth also contains Abd ar-Rahmaan bin Ishaq al-Waasitee. So this hadeeth is also not fit to depend upon, or use as a support or give any consideration to as you have just come to know.

**4) The hadeeth that ibn Hazm mentions** in 'al-Muhalla' in ta'leeq form from Anas with the wording, 'three are from the manners of the Prophethood: hastening the iftaar, delaying the suhoor, and placing the right hand upon the left below the navel in the prayer.'

I say: I have not come across the sanad of this hadeeth, and the Hanafee scholars mention it in their books and depend upon it but they do not mention it's isnaad. And if the isnaad of something is not known then it is not correct to depend upon it, or use it as support or give it any consideration.

The author of 'ad-Durra' said, 'and as for the hadeeth of Anas, "from the manners of the Prophethood is placing the right hand upon the left below the navel" about which al-Aini said that it is reported by ibn Hazm, then it's sanad is not known so as to look into it's narrators and see if they are acceptable or not. And this hadeeth has been reported by more than one of the Muhadditheen without the addition, "below the navel", and an addition (to the wording of a hadeeth) is only acceptable from known and reliable narrators.'

Ash-Shaikh Haashim as-Sindee said in his letter, 'Diraahim as-Surra', 'and from them is what az-Zaahidee mentioned in his 'Sharh al-Qudooree', and ibn Ameer al-Haaj and ibn Najeem mentioned in 'al-Bahr ar-Raa'iq', that it is reported from the Prophet (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) , "three are from the habit of the Messengers: hastening the iftaar, delaying the suhoor, and placing the right hand upon the left below the navel in prayer." He said: I have not come across the sanad to this hadeeth except that az-Zaahidee added that it is reported by Alee bin Abu Taalib (RA) from the Prophet (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) . But ibn Ameer al-Haaj and ibn Najeem said, "that the reporters of hadeeth do not know the wording, 'below the navel' from a marfoo or mawqoof narration."

So these ahaadeeth that are depended upon to place the hands below the navel as you have come to know that none of them are correct to use as evidence.

## **Section 2: In mention of the one who sticks to holding the hands above the navel.**

I have not come across a marfu' hadeeth that lends evidence to this position. Yes there is the narration of Alee (RA) which indicates this, as reported by Abu Dawood in his 'Sunan' from Jareer ad-Dabbi who said, 'I saw Alee grasping his left wrist with his right hand above the navel.'

I say: this isnaad is saheeh or hasan, but it is the action of Alee and is not marfu'. Also the clear meaning of his saying, 'above the navel' is a place raised from the navel, i.e. upon the chest or near the chest, as occurs in the hadeeth of Wa'il bin Hujr and the hadeeth of Halb at-Taa'ee and the mursal of Tawwoos, and these three ahaadeeth will follow. And this interpretation is supported by his (RA) tafseer of His saying, "wanhar" by placing the hands upon the chest in the prayer as has preceded.

### **Section 3: In mention of the one who holds to placing the hands upon the chest.**

These depend on some ahaadeeth, from them the hadeeth of Wa'il bin Hujr who said, 'I prayed with the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) and he placed his right hand upon his left on his chest in the prayer.' Reported by ibn Khuzaimah, and this hadeeth is authentic, authenticated by ibn Khuzaimah as was made clear by ibn Sayyid an-Naas in his 'Sharh at-Tirmidhee.' And ash-Shaikh Muhammad Qaa'im as-Sindee al-Hanafee acknowledges this in his letter, 'Fawz al-Kiraam' that this hadeeth fulfills the conditions of ibn Khuzaimah where he says, 'I believe that this hadeeth fulfills the conditions of ibn Khuzaimah, and this is strongly suggested in the manner of al-Haafidh in 'al-Ittihaaf', and is obvious from the words of ibn Sayyid an-Naas after he mentioned the hadeeth of Wa'il bin Hujr in 'Sharh at-Tirmidhee' - "and ibn Khuzaimah authenticated it".'

And ibn Ameer al-Haaj, who outdid his shaykh ibn al-Hammaam in research and depth of investigation, said in 'Sharh al-Minniyyah', 'What is established in the Sunnah is to place the right hand upon the left in prayer, and there is no authentic hadeeth that establishes the place of placing them on the body except the aforementioned hadeeth of Wa'il.'

And this was likewise said by the author of 'al-Bahr ar-Raa'iq' as is found in 'Fath al-Ghafoor' of Shaikh Hayat as-Sindee. And ash-Shawkanee said in 'Nail', 'and ibn Khuzaimah reported in his 'Saheeh' and authenticated it.'

And al-Haafidh said in 'Fath al-Baaree' , 'and he did not mention (i.e. Sahl bin Sa'd) the place to put them on the body. And ibn Khuzaimah reported from Wa'il that "he placed them upon his chest", and in al-Bazaar (the wording is) "near his chest" ('inda sadrihi), and Ahmad reports a similar hadeeth from the hadeeth of Halb. And in the 'Zawaa'id al-Musnad' is the hadeeth of Alee that he placed his hands below the navel and it's isnaad is da'eef.'

And it is clear from the words of al-Haafidh that he considered the hadeeth of Wa'il to be saheeh or hasan, because he mentioned here three hadeeth for the purpose of appointing the place where the hands are to be placed: the hadeeth of Wa'il, the hadeeth of Halb and the hadeeth of Alee. And he declared the hadeeth of Alee to be da'eef, and was silent about the hadeeth of Wa'il and Halb, and if these were also weak according to him then he would have made that clear.....And also al-Haafidh made clear in 'ad-Diraayah', after mentioning the hadeeth of Wa'il reported by ibn Khuzaimah, 'it is in Muslim without the words, "upon his chest".'

So it is clear from the words of al-Haafidh that this hadeeth is reported in Muslim, with the same text and sanad, but without mentioning where the hands were to be placed.

In conclusion the hadeeth of Wa'il bin Hujr is saheeh and acceptable to depend upon and to derive evidence that placing the hands on the chest in prayer is totally correct.

And from the hadeeth that these scholars depend upon is the hadeeth of Halb at-Taa'ee reported by Imaam Ahmad in his 'Musnad' that Yahya bin Sa'eed narrated to us from Sufyaan, from Samaak bin Qabeesa bin Halb from his father that, 'I saw the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) turn from his left to right, and place these on his chest, and Yahya al-Yamane depicted

this by placing the right hand upon the left (on the chest) above the level of the elbows.' And the narrators of this hadeeth are all trustworthy, and the isnaad is linked ....[biographies of the narrators omitted]....and the author of 'Aathar as-Sunan' acknowledged that it was hasan, so to derive evidence from this that the place for the hands in prayer is on the chest is correct.

And from the ahaadeeth these scholars depend upon is the hadeeth of Tawoos reported by Abu Dawood in 'al-Maraaseel' who said, 'Abu Tawba narrated to us from al-Haytham i.e. ibn Humaid from Thawr from Sulaiman bin Musa from Tawoos who said, 'The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu `alaihi wasallam) placed his right hand upon his left and placed them firmly upon his chest while in prayer.'

And this hadeeth is found in some of the texts of Abu Dawood. And al-Haafidh al-Mizzi said in 'al-Atraaf' under the letter 'taa' from the book 'al-Maraaseel': 'the hadeeth reported by Abu Dawood in 'Kitaab al-Maraaseel' and this was likewise stated by al-Bayhaqee in 'al-Ma'rifah'. And the hadeeth of Tawoos is mursal, because Tawoos is a Taabi'ee (so he could not have seen the Messenger ﷺ) and it's isnaad is hasan. And the mursal hadeeth is considered a proof with Abu Hanifah and Maalik and Ahmad in general. And according to Shaafi'ee it is a proof when supported by something that occurs via another route that builds upon the first route be it Musnad or mursal. And this mursal hadeeth is supported by the aforementioned hadeeth of Wa'il and Halb at-Taa'iee. So deriving evidence from these to place the hands upon the chest in prayer is correct.

Addendum: Some of the Hanafiyyah try to claim that the hadeeth of Wa'il is mudtarib (confused/confounded) because ibn Khuzaimah reports this hadeeth with the wording 'upon the chest' and al-Bazzar with the wording 'near the chest' and ibn Abee Shaybah with the wording 'below the navel'.

I say: it is firmly established in the Usul of Hadeeth that if the hadeeth simply differs in it's wordings then this does not necessitate idtiraab. Rather from it's conditions is that the different aspects of the narrations be equivalent in authenticity, so if one of the narrations is found to be stronger then it takes precedence, and if they are equivalent then one can find a reconciliation according to the principles of the Scholars of hadeeth.

And in this case the aspects of difference are not equivalent, for indeed affirming the wording of Ibn Abee Shaybah 'below the navel' poses a serious problem as has preceded. And as for the wording of ibn Khuzaimah, 'upon the chest', and the wording of al-Bazzar, 'near the chest', then the first is stronger and takes precedence over the second, the reason being that the first has supports with the hadeeth of Halb and the mursal of Tawoos, contrary to the second for it has no witnesses.....and even if we were to accept that they were equivalent then a reconciliation is possible - that the two narrations were reported with regards to two different prayers. And similar to this difference is the difference of the wording of the ahaadeeth to do with raising the hands to the level of the shoulders or to the level of the ears. [i.e. the narrations depict different prayers and it is permissible to do either/or]. So the saying of the Hanafiyyah that the hadeeth of Wa'il is mudtarib is not to be given any attention.

[the next three pages (83-85) go on to refute the claim of the Hanafiyyah that the hadeeth of Wa'il is shaadh (odd/irregular) and why the narrations here are not shaadh and the hadeeth of ibn Masud 'then he did not repeat that' is]