

# **Points of Benefit Regarding Movements in Salaah**

**Rulings on Movements in Prayers**

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**Based upon several talks  
& *Fatawaas* by our Sh.  
Muhammad bin Salih Al-'Uthaimeen *(rahimahullaah)***

**Transcribed** by sis Umm 'Ali, Haleima el Amazighia,  
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**Text Edition** by sis Umm Ahmad, al-Kanadiyyah

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# Points of Benefit Regarding Movements in Salaah

## Rulings on Movements in Prayers

In the Name of Allaah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. I testify that there is no true god worthy of worship except Allaah and that Muhammad is Allaah's true slave and Messenger.

In the Hadeeth of the Prophet (ﷺ: *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) concerning the redirecting the direction in the prayers towards Makkah, we know that the companions moved while in Salaah when the command came to redirect towards the *Qiblah*, a move for the benefit of the Salaah. And thus their move was an obligatory one, since it is inevitable that they must face the *Qiblah*.

"The Prophet prayed facing *Bait-ul-Maqdis* (i.e. Jerusalem) for sixteen or seventeen months but he wished that his *Qibla* would be the *Ka'ba* (at Mecca). (So Allah Revealed (2.144) and he offered 'Asr prayers (in his Mosque facing Ka'ba at Makkah) and some people prayed with him. A man from among those who had prayed with him went out and passed by some people offering prayer in another mosque, and they were in the state of bowing. He said, "I, (swearing by Allah,) testify that I have prayed with the Prophet facing Makkah." **Hearing that, they turned their faces to the Ka'ba while they were still bowing.** Some men had died before the *Qibla* was changed towards the Ka'ba. They had been killed and we did not know what to say about them (i.e. whether their prayers towards Jerusalem were accepted or not). So Allah revealed: -- "And Allah would never make your faith (i.e. prayer) to be lost (i.e. your prayers offered (towards Jerusalem). Truly Allah is Full of Pity, Most Merciful towards mankind." (2.143) [see *Bukhari*, vol. 6, no. 13].

The movements in Salaah can be classified into five categories:

1. *Waajibah* (obligatory)
2. *Mustahabah* (recommended or praiseworthy)
3. *Muharamah* (forbidden)
4. *Makroohah* (disliked)
5. *Mubaahah* (allowable)

### 1. The movement which is obligatory is the one upon which an obligation or an abstention from something unlawful depends.

For example, if a person is told that the *Qiblah* is to his right, while in the prayer, it is obligatory upon him, to move so as to face the *Qiblah*.

Similar to this is if a person is praying alone behind the row, then it becomes clear to him that there is a gap in the row in front of him, then the movement to close this gap and for him to enter the row, becomes in this case obligatory.

Also, if the avoidance of something *haram* depends upon this movement, then the movement becomes obligatory. For example, a man is praying and sees on his head-cover, or turban or hat, some impurity, some filth. In this case he must move to take off this head-cover. And from this is the incident which took place with the Prophet (ﷺ) when Jibreel (عليه السلام: '*alayhi salaam*) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was leading the people in Salaah and he told him that there was some *Najaasah* (impurity) on his shoes. So he took them off since this is an obligation:

**Abu Sa'eed reported that the Prophet removed his shoes and the people behind him did likewise. When he finished the prayer, he asked, "Why did you remove your shoes?" They said, "We saw you remove yours." He said, "Gabriel came to me and informed me that there was some filth on them. Therefore, when one of you comes to the mosque, he should turn his shoes over and examine them. If one finds any dirt on them, he should rub them against the ground and pray with them on."** [The hadeeth is related by Ahmad, Abu Dawood (650, English), al-Hakim, Ibn Hibban and Ibn Khuzaimah. The latter graded it as saheeh. This narration from Abu Sa'eed is declared saheeh also by An-Nawawi, Ibn Katheer, Ibn Hajar and al-Albaani]

## **2. When the movement is praiseworthy or recommendable. This is when a recommended action depends upon it.**

Take for example a group of three persons who established the congregational prayer. One stood to the right of the Imaam and the other stood to his left. In this case the Imaam would gently push them to his back, behind him. This pushing is recommended.

Also this is recommended if done to prevent something disliked.

For example, if in front of you there is something distracting your calmness in Salaat, like decoration-type, then it is recommended for you to take it away, because they take away from your *khushoo'*.

And from that, if a person feels the need to scratch on some part of his body, like some itching on his head or on his hand, and it is distracting him, he needs to scratch it. In this case it is recommended for him to scratch it, and this happens a lot.

## **3. The movement in Salaah is forbidden if it is frequent and successive without necessity.**

Some of the scholars (*rahimahumullaah*) mentioned that the frequency is determined by three movements. So, if the person makes three consecutive moves without need then this nullifies the prayer.

Other scholars (*rahimahumullaah*) state that, there is no justification to limit this to a number, because this requires a *daleel* (evidence). The criteria of what constitutes many moves is what is commonly conventional to be many, such that if the person is seen doing that, it would appear that as if he is not praying. And these moves are to be consecutive - one after the other and without a need to do so.

So, for example we see some people making many consecutive and unnecessary moves, checking his garment, hat, checking the time, moving a pen from one pocket to another, and so forth. But if, on the other hand, while in prayer, he hears some sounds behind him and all of the sudden there is a beast or a lion or something dangerous coming towards him, so he runs away. Although in this case he is making many moves, this is for a necessity and therefore this does not nullify his prayers.

**4. The fourth movement in Salaah is that which is disliked. These are few while there is no need for them.**

People do this a lot nowadays. Sometimes you see them looking at their watch during Salaah. And it is the Shaytaan who incites these people to make such moves.

**5. The final category is the movement that is allowable.** These are slight moves because they may be needed, or many moves because of necessity.

**6-There remains one kind of category, which is the core of the Salaah and that is the heart-movement.**

If the heart is directed to Allaah '*Azza waj Jaal* (Most Might and Magnificent) and the believer feels that he is standing before Allaah (ﷻ), between His Hands, and he has a sincere longing to draw near to Him in his Salaah and he fears Him, then in this case his heart is present and in submissiveness and humility. And this is the most perfect situation. If otherwise, then his heart will go in all directions. As in the Hadeeth of 'Ammmaar bin Yaasir (*radiya allaahu 'anhu*):

**I heard Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) say: "A man returns after saying his prayer while a tenth part of his prayer, or a ninth part, or an eighth part, or a seventh part, or a sixth part, or a fifth part, or a third part, or half of it, is recorded for him."** [Abu Dawood, no. 789; declared *hasan* by al-Hafidh al-'Iraqi, and al-Albani].

So, the self-talk which may occur in the Salaah, it takes out of its perfection, but it does not nullify it.

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All Praise is due to Allaah, and may Allaah's Salaah and Salaam be upon our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his pure household, the noble companions, and those who follow on their Path. Aameen.

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**Saleh As-Saleh**

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