

each other in forming the lines while attributing it to a 'Sunnah' practice. Those who adopt this practice, wrongfully link it back to a directive from the Prophet (S.A). Due to their exaggeration in this habit, they are forced to adopt unusual forms in their Salaat which are contradictory to the standing posture in Salaat. It is often seen that their legs are kept wide apart and a large gap and space is created between their both feet bringing about an unnatural manner of the standing posture. This action is mainly due to one's ignorance of understanding the real purpose of the statement of the Sahabahs and therefore adopts only the literal meaning, one which the followers of the Dhahiri Mazhab have done”.

“As for the space which must exist between the both feet of the Musali while in Salaat, there is no fixed limit established from the traditions. It has been entrusted to the Musali to keep his feet apart in a comfortable position which enables him/her to have full concentration, humility, sincerity and devotion in Salaat”. (Ma'rifus Sunan, Pg.297, Vol.2, H.M Saeed Company, Karachi 1983).

It is also recorded that according to the majority of the former scholars along with the four Imams of Fiqh, 'touching of the shoulders and feet in Salaat' simply indicated to the rule that there should be no gaps between the Musalis in Salaat.

No one from amongst them adopted the literal meaning of any of those traditions." (Faidhul Baari - Commentary of Sahih Al Bukhari by the great Muhadith and Faqih, Allama Shah Anwaar Al-Kashmiri, Pg.236, Vol.2, Maktaba Rasheediya, Queta).

In summary what is required from the Musalis is that they should ensure that the lines are straight and that there is no gap and space between the lines. These are the guidelines which are narrated from the Prophet (S.A) and are recorded in many books of Ahadith. Statements such as: 'Fill the gaps', 'do not leave any space for Satan', 'stand straight and be close to each other' are mentioned and there is no statement or directive from the Prophet (S.A) which requires a person to touch his ankles and feet to another person's ankles and feet in Salaat.

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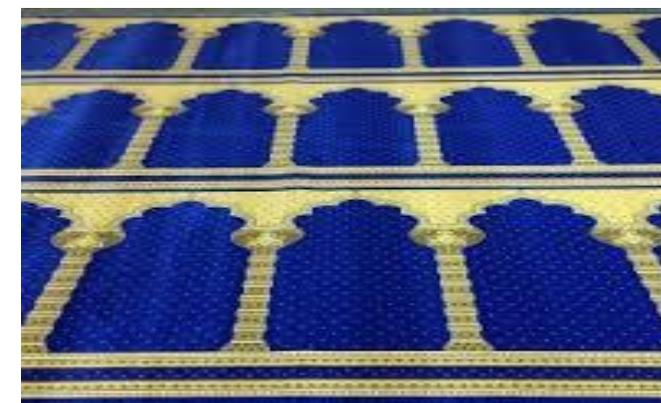
Tafseer (Commentary of the Holy Quraan)

Date & Time: Mondays - 7.00 p.m to 8.00 p.m

Venue: Darul Uloom Boys' College

Touching each other's ankles in Salaah

By: Mufti Waseem Khan (May Allah protect him)



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From the teachings of the blessed traditions, it is evident that while forming the lines for Salaat in Jamaat, they must be very straight and no space must exist between the Musalis in the line.

In one tradition, Anas (R.A) reported that the Prophet (S.A) said: "Straighten your lines and be close to each other" (Recorded by Imam Bukhari, Hadith No.719, Pg.141, Darussalam).

Similar traditions have been recorded by many other compilers of Ahadith which make it abundantly clear that in the matter of forming lines for Salaat, the Messenger of Allah (S.A) gave specific orders to:

- 1) Straighten the lines and
- 2) Refrain from leaving empty spaces in the lines.

However, while trying to implement these guidelines, some Muslims have adopted the practice to ensure that the ankles of the Musalis touch one another while forming the lines for Salaat. This practice, although it has been mentioned by Imam Bukhari in his compilation, it is not evident to be the words, actions or guidelines of the Prophet (S.A). Instead, it is the words of the narrator of the tradition, who, after narrating the words of the Prophet (S.A), said "one of us used to touch his shoulder to the shoulder

of his companion (the one standing close to him) and touch his feet with his companion's feet." (Bukhari, Hadith No.725, Pg.142, Darussalam) These are not the words of the Prophet (S.A).

The Commentators of Sahih Al Bukhari like Hafiz Ibn Hajar (in his book Fathul Baari) and Hafiz Badrudeen Aini (in his 'Umdatul Qaari') along with others have indicated to this. As such, it is totally wrong for one to attribute this action to the Prophet (S.A) by saying that it is his hadith (tradition) or that he has given such instructions.

The tradition which was recorded before this statement was that of the Prophet (S.A) in which he said "Straighten your lines, for certainly I see you from behind my back." Anas (R.A) recorded this and he then said, "And one of us used to touch his shoulder to the shoulder of his companion and touch his feet to his feet." (Bukhari, Hadith No.725, Pg.142, Darussalam).

After recording this, Hafiz Ibn Hajar states that this was the statement of Anas (R.A) which simply showed the emphasis they placed upon straightening the lines and closing the gaps in the lines for Salaah. (Fathul Baari - Commentary of Sahih Al Bukhari, Pg.268, Vol.2, Qadimi Kutub Khana). A similar explanation has been given by Hafiz Badrudeen Aini in his commentary of Sahih Al

Bukhari (Umdatul Qaari, Pg.259, Vol.5, Maktaba Rashidiya, Queta, Pakistan).

Another tradition recorded by Imam Bukhari states that the act of placing one's shoulder and feet close to another was in reality the practice of some Sahabahs in order to straighten their lines and fill the gaps and was not a directive from the Prophet (S.A).

In the 'Chapter of touching of the shoulders', the statement of the companion Numaan bin Basheer (R.A) is recorded where he states, "I saw a person from amongst us touching his ankle to the ankle of his companion."

After recording this, the Commentators of Sahih Al Bukhari, namely Ibn Hajar and Aini have stated, "Some are of the opinion that this statement is upon its real meaning but it is not so. Instead, it was an **exaggeration** on the part of the narrator to describe the straight lines as well as the closeness of the Musalis in the lines. (Fathul Baari - Commentary of Sahih Al Bukhari, Pg.268, Vol.2, Qadimi Kutub Khana /Umdatul Qaari, Pg.259, Vol.5, Maktaba Rashidiya, Queta, Pakistan).

While commenting on this act, the great Muhadith - Allama Yusuf Al Binori, author of Ma'rifus Sunan (Commentary of Tirmizi) states in his book, "The explanation of these scholars refute the action adopted by some who lay great emphasis on touching their ankles and feet to