

Women's Salaah

Every aspect of the religion of Islam relating to women revolves around modesty and shame. It is in this regard that Islam commands women to remain within the confines of their homes, being totally concealed from the gazes of strange men, and not to leave their homes without a valid Shar'ee need.

The manner in which a woman is commanded to perform her Salaah — commencing from her attire for salaah to her postures during Salaah — all clearly point towards the aspect of concealment. Hence, let alone the various other ibadaat of Deen, the salaah of a woman alone illustrates the great degree of modesty and shame a woman is required to display. Hence, she is commanded to adopt the very same degree of modesty and shame which she displays in her salaah in other departments of her Deeni and worldly life.

Concealment

It is an undisputed fact that the physical composition of women is different to that of men. Shari'ah has taken this into consideration and thus ordained distinct rulings for men and women in many important aspects of Deen. The underlying factor in the distinct rulings for women is that they have been commanded to do everything in a manner that is more concealing for them. This difference has also been considered in the various postures of salaah. A woman is commanded to carry out her postures in a way that is least revealing and most concealing.

Imaam Baihaqi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ has mentioned, "All the various aspects in a woman's salaah that differ from a man's salaah (i.e. the manner of fulfilling the various postures of salaah) are all based on satr (concealment). A female is commanded to carry out every posture of her salaah in a manner that conceals her body shape and limbs the most." (Sunan Kubra #3196)

Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا says that during the era of Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, when performing salaah, the women were instructed to draw their limbs together as close as possible. (Musnad Imaam A'zam il-Haskafi pg. 73)

The Four Mazhabs

From the era of Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, the Taabi'een رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ and the centuries that followed, women were commanded to perform salaah in a manner that varied from the salaah of men in certain aspects. The four mazhabs (viz. Hanafi, Maaliki, Sthaafi'ee and Hambali mazhab) are all unanimous upon the fact that the salaah of women differs from the salaah of men in certain aspects. (Fataawa Hindiyyah 1/75, Haashiyatud Dasooqi 1/249, Al-Majmoo' 3/346 & Al-Mughni 1/339)

The Desire of Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Regarding Women Performing Salaah in the Confines of their Homes

While it was the burning desire of Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ that the men of his Ummah perform their salaah with jamaat in the masjid, it was his heart's desire that the women of his Ummah perform their salaah within the confines of their homes. Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ encouraged women to perform their salaah within their homes and remain concealed from the eyes of men, to such an extent that he said, "The salaah of a woman in her bedroom is more rewarding than her salaah in the enclosed courtyard of her house, and her salaah in the innermost portion of the bedroom (a small room within the bedroom) is more rewarding than her salaah in her bedroom." (Sunan Abu Dawood #570)

Once, Hazrat Ummu Humaid رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, the wife of Hazrat Abu Humaid As-Saa'idi رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, came to Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and said, "O Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, I long to perform salaah behind you." Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied, "I am aware that you long and desire to perform salaah behind me. However, your salaah in your bedroom is more rewarding than your salaah in any other part of your home. The salaah in any other part of your home is more rewarding than the salaah in your enclosed courtyard. The salaah in your enclosed courtyard is more rewarding than the salaah in the masjid of your locality. The salaah in the masjid of your locality is more rewarding than your salaah in my Masjid (Masjid-e-Nabawi)." Hazrat Ummu Humaid رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا (in compliance and obedience with the mubaarak desire of Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ,) instructed that a small place be reserved for her salaah in the innermost portion of her bedroom, and she would devotedly perform all her salaah at that place until the end of her life. (Saheeh Ibnu Hibbaan #2217)

Before Salaah

1. Particular care should be taken to dress appropriately for salaah. A woman should wear such clothing that will conceal her entire body and hair. It is disrespectful for her to wear tight-fitting clothing that reveals the shape of her body or to wear such thin, flimsy clothing through which the actual limbs can be seen. If the clothing is such that the limbs are visible through the clothing, the salaah will be invalid.

2. Severe warnings have been sounded in the Hadith for those women who do not dress appropriately. Though the warning is general and does not specifically refer to dressing inappropriately during salaah, one would understand that when it is impermissible for a woman to dress in this manner out of salaah, then the impermissibility of her wearing such clothing when standing before Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in salaah will be even greater. Apart from this, the Fuqahaa have written that the salaah of a woman who is not clad properly during salaah and whose body limbs are visible through her clothing will not be valid.

3. Cover the entire body including the hair. Only the face, palms and feet may be exposed.

4. Prepare well in advance for salaah before the time of salaah enters.

5. Apart from the physical preparation (wudhu, etc.), you should also prepare yourself mentally that you are going to present yourself in the court of your Rabb.

6. Ensure that your body, clothes and the place on which the salaah is being performed are paak and clean.

Qiyaam

1. Face the qiblah.

2. Keep the feet together or as close as possible. Ensure that the feet face towards the qiblah.

3. Raise both the hands up to the chest (i.e. the fingers will be in line with the shoulders) without removing the hands from beneath the burqa.

4. When raising the hands, ensure that the palms are facing the qiblah and the fingers are kept in their natural position, neither spread apart nor tightly closed.

5. Once the hands are raised parallel to the shoulders, recite the takbeer (Allahu Akbar).

6. The head should be kept straight without tilting it forward or bending it back when reciting the takbeer.

7. Lower the hands while saying the takbeer and fold them on the chest.

8. Place the right palm on the back of the left hand with the fingers joined together, without any gap in-between. Do not form a circle



with the thumb and small finger of the right hand, nor grasp the left hand (as done by males).

9. Fix the gaze on the place of sajdah during the standing posture.

10. Recite the thanaa.

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

Glory be to You O Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى Praise be to You, blessed is Your name, very lofty is Your majesty, and there is no deity besides You.

11. Recite ta'awwuz and tasmiyah silently. Ta'awwuz is to recite:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

I seek protection in Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى from the accursed Shaitaan.

Tasmiyah is to recite:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, the most kind, the most merciful.

12. Recite Surah Faatihah followed by qiraat.

Note: Women should not perform their salaah aloud. They should perform every salaah silently.

13. Recite "aameen" after surah Faatihah.

14. Recite tasmiyah before the surah.

Note: The tasmiyah will only be recited (after Surah Faatihah) if one is going to recite a surah. If one is not going to commence any surah then tasmiyah should not be recited.

15. If you are performing a three or four rakaat fardh salaah, then in the third and fourth rakaat you will only recite Surah Faatihah. You should not recite any surah after reciting Surah Faatihah.

In the third and fourth rakaat of the fardh salaah, Surah Faatihah will be recited by the imaam and munfarid (the one performing salaah alone). The muqtadi (one who is performing salaah behind the imam) will remain silent and not recite anything in all the rakaats.

16. If you are performing sunnah or nafl salaah, you will recite qiraat in all the rakaats, regardless of whether you are performing two rakaats or four rakaats.

Ruku and Qawmah

1. Say the takbeer and go into ruku.

Note: The takbeeraat-e-intiqaaliyyah (takbeer which is recited when moving from one posture to another) should be commenced as soon as one begins moving to the next posture and should only be completed when one reaches that posture.

2. Bend slightly to the extent that the fingers are able to touch the knees.

3. Keep the fingers together.



Note: One will not grasp the knees fully nor spread out the fingers. Similarly, the head and back will not be kept in a straight line (as done by men when making ruku).

4. Keep the arms close to the sides.
5. The ankles of both the feet should be kept together.
6. Fix the gaze on the feet in the posture of ruku.
7. Recite the following tasbeeh thrice or any odd number of times:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ

Glorified is my Rabb, the most great.

8. Stand up from ruku while saying the tasmee:

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ

Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى hears the one who praises Him.

followed by the tahmeed:

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ

O Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, our Rabb, for You alone is all praise

9. Stand up erect. After standing up from ruku, do not tie your hands. Instead, leave them at your sides. This posture is called qawmah. In qawmah, stand up erect with ta'deel-e-arkaan (the body should be completely at ease) before going into sajdah.



Sajdah

1. Say the takbeer and proceed into sajdah.
2. First place the knees on the ground, then the palms, then the nose and lastly the forehead.
3. Keep the fingers closed, facing towards the qiblah.
4. Place the palms parallel to the ears.
5. Draw the limbs of the body close together and press them firmly without allowing any gap in between.
6. Keep the stomach joined to both the thighs and the arms to the sides.
7. Keep both the forearms/elbows on the ground.
8. The feet should not be upright. Instead, they should be placed flat on the ground on the right-hand side.
9. Fix the gaze on the nose in sajdah.
10. Recite the following tasbeeh thrice or any odd number of times:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

Glorified is my Rabb, the most high

11. Say the takbeer and sit up in the position of jalsah.

Jalsah

1. Sit on the left buttock and place both the feet on the right side.
2. The thighs should be joined together.
3. Place the hands on the thighs with the fingers together and the fingertips at the edge of the knees.
4. Fix the gaze on the area between the lower chest and lap whilst in jalsah.
5. Remain in the position of jalsah with the body being completely at ease and calm before going into the second sajdah.
6. Say the takbeer and proceed to the second sajdah as normal.



Second Rakaat

1. After the second sajdah say the takbeer and stand up for the second rakaat.
2. When rising from sajdah, first raise the forehead, then the nose, then the hands and lastly the knees.
3. When getting up, do not take support from the ground (unless there is a need to do so).
4. Perform the second rakaat as normal except that thanaa and ta'awwuz will not be recited at the beginning.

Qa'dah and Salaam

1. After the second sajdah of the second rakaat, sit in the position of qa'dah in the same manner as explained for jalsah.
2. Recite the tashahhud:



اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى الْوَسِيَّةِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ السَّلَامَ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ السَّلَامَ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللهِ الصَّالِحِينَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

All verbal ibaadaat, physical ibaadaat and monetary ibaadaat be only for Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. May the special peace of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى descend upon you, O Nabi صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and Allah's تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى choicest mercies and blessings. May peace descend upon us and upon all the pious servants of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and I bear witness that Hazrat Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is His servant and messenger.

3. When saying اَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ form a ring with the thumb and middle finger of the right hand, raise the index finger towards the qiblah and close the remaining two fingers (the small finger and finger next to it). When saying اَلَا اللهُ lower the index finger. The thumb and middle finger will remain joined like a ring until the end of the qa'dah.



As for the left hand, then it will be placed on the thigh with the fingers together and the fingertips at the edge of the knee.

4. If you are performing a three or four rakaat salaah then you should not recite anything besides the above tashahhud. After reciting the tashahhud, stand up for the third rakaat.

5. If it is the last qa'dah then recite Durood-e-Ebrahim after the tashahhud followed by a dua from the Quraan Majeed or Hadith.

The Durood-e-Ebrahim is as follows:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلَى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ
حَمِيْدٌ مُّجِيْدٌ

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلَى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ
حَمِيْدٌ مُّجِيْدٌ

O Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى! Shower Your mercy on Hazrat Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his family as You showered Your mercy on Hazrat Ebrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and his family. Surely You are praiseworthy and most high.

O Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى! Bless Hazrat Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his family as You have blessed Hazrat Ebrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and his family. Surely You are praiseworthy and most high.

One may recite the following dua which is reported in the Hadith:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِيْ ظُلْمًا كَثِيْرًا وَلَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ فَاعْفِرْ لِيْ مَغْفِرَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِكَ وَارْحَمْنِيْ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ

O Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى! I have oppressed myself excessively (through committing sins), and no one can forgive sins besides You, so forgive me with special forgiveness from Your side and show mercy to me, for indeed You alone are all-forgiving and all-merciful.

6. After completing your dua, make salaam by saying

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ

while turning your head to the right side, and then again while turning your head to the left side.

7. Do not lower or jerk your head while making salaam.

8. When making salaam on either side, fix your gaze on your shoulders.

9. Turn your face on both sides to the extent that the cheek can be seen from behind.

10. After the salaam, recite اَسْتَغْفِرُ الله thrice.

11. Engage in dua (as this is a time for the acceptance of duas).

12. Recite Tasbeeh-e-Faatimi after every salaah. Tasbeeh-e-Faatimi is for one to recite 33 times Subhaanallah, 33 times Alhamdulillah, 33 times Allahu Akbar, and complete the hundred by reciting:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

There is no deity besides Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى alone, who has no partner. To Him belongs the kingdom (of the entire universe), and only for Him belongs all praise and He alone has complete power over everything.

Statement of Hazrat Imaam Shaafi'ee رَحِمَهُ اللهُ

Hazrat Imaam Shaafi'ee رَحِمَهُ اللهُ has written in Ikhtilaaful Hadith:

We do not know of any of the respected wives of Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ leaving their homes to attend the Jumuah Salaah or any other salaah in the masjid, even though the respected wives of Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, on account of their special position and relationship with Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, would have been more rightful and worthy than any woman to fulfil the faraa'idh in the masjid, yet they did not do this. There were many women who were close to Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, from the women of his household, his respected wives, his daughters, his slave women and the slave women that belonged to his household, yet I do not have knowledge of even a single woman from them who left the home to attend the Jumuah Salaah behind Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, despite Jumuah Salaah being compulsory on the men to a greater degree than all the other salaah.

Similarly, we do not have knowledge of any of them leaving the home to attend the congregational salaah, neither during the night nor during the day, nor did they even go to the masjid in Qubaa, although Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would go to Qubaa, sometimes riding his conveyance and sometimes on foot, nor did they go to any of the other masaajid.

I have no doubt that on account of their special relationship with Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, they were eager to acquire virtue and reward and they knew the avenues of earning reward better than other women, yet they did not go to the masjid for salaah.

I do not have knowledge of any of our pious predecessors instructing any one of their womenfolk to attend the Jumuah Salaah nor the congregational salaah, neither during the night nor during the day. If they knew that there was any virtue in the women leaving their homes and attending the congregational salaah, they would have definitely instructed them and permitted them to do so. Rather, it is related that Hazrat Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "The salaah of a woman in her bedroom is better than her salaah in the communal room of her home, and her salaah in the communal room of her home is better than her salaah in the masjid." (Ikhtilaaful Hadith pg. 625-626)

Ihya'ud Deen is run by a panel of Ulama under the auspices of Madrasah Taleemuddeen.