

140804 - Are there conditions for the prostration of gratitude?

the question

Are there conditions stipulated for the prostration of gratitude, such as wearing hijab or doing wudu'?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

We may sum up the discussion on the prostration of gratitude (sujud ash-shukr) in the following points:

1. The prostration of gratitude is one of the greatest acts by which a person may express gratitude to his Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, because of what it involves of humbling oneself before Allah by placing the noblest part of the body - which is the face - on the ground, and because of what it involves of thanking Allah in one's heart, in one's words and in one's actions.
2. The prostration of gratitude is one of the proven prophetic Sunnahs which many people neglect.
3. The differing scholarly opinion as to whether the prostration of gratitude is prescribed is a view that is regarded as weak, because it goes against what is soundly narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and from many of his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in that regard.
4. The prostration of gratitude is prescribed every time the Muslims receive far reaching blessings or some suffering is warded off from them or ceases, or when a Muslim receives a blessing at an individual level, whether it was through his own efforts or not, and every time some evil is warded

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off from him.

Imam ash-Shawkani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If you say: Allah's blessings to His slaves are ongoing at every moment, I say: What is meant is new blessings which may or may not reach a person. Hence the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) only did the prostration of gratitude when new blessings were received, even though Allah's blessings came to him constantly, at every moment."(*As-Sayl al-Jarrar* 1/175).

5. The correct view is that the prostration of gratitude is not subject to the same stipulations as for prayer, such as purifying oneself, covering one's 'awrah (which includes hijab for women), turning to face the qiblah, and so on.

This is the view of many of the early generations, and it is the view that was favoured by some of the Malikis and many of the other scholars, such as Ibn Jarir at-Tabari, Ibn Hazm, Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, ash-Shawkani and as-San'ani. Many of our shaykhs regarded it as more likely to be correct, including Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn 'Abdillah ibn Baz, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Salih ibn 'Uthaymin, Shaykh 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Jibrin (may Allah have mercy on them) and others.

This is in contrast to those who stipulated the same conditions for the prostration of gratitude as for supererogatory prayers, which is the view of the Shafa'is and was also stated by most of the Hanbalis, some of the Hanafis and some of the Malikis.

The evidence quoted by those who held the first view includes the following:

- a. In order to stipulate that purifying oneself or any of the other conditions of prayer are required in the case of the prostration of gratitude, evidence is needed, but there is no evidence, because there is nothing in the Qur'an or Sunnah to suggest that these things are required in the case of this prostration, and there is no scholarly consensus to that effect and

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- no valid analogy. It is not permissible to enjoin on the ummah of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) any rulings for which there is no evidence.
- b. The apparent meaning of the hadith of Abu Bakrah – which says that if something happened to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that brought him joy, or he was given glad tidings, he would fall down in prostration in gratitude to Allah [narrated and classed as hasan by at-Tirmidhi (1578); also narrated by Abu Dawud (2774) and Ibn Majah (1394)] – and other hadiths in which it is narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did the prostration of gratitude, indicates that he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not purify himself before doing this prostration. The fact that he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) fell down in prostration immediately indicates that he would prostrate in gratitude as soon as there was a reason for doing so, whether he was in a state of wudu' or otherwise. This was also apparently the case with what his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) did.
 - c. If purifying oneself – or any of the other conditions of prayer – was required in order to do the prostration of gratitude, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would have explained that to his ummah, because they would need to know that. It is impossible that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) could have done this prostration and prescribed it for his ummah without prescribing purification or any other condition if it was required, and without instructing his companions to do that. But not a single letter has been reported from him regarding that.
 - d. The reason for doing the prostration of gratitude comes suddenly, and the one who wants to prostrate may not be in a state of purity; delaying the prostration of gratitude after the reason for it occurs, in order to do wudu' or ghusl, would cause one to miss out on the appropriate time for doing it and would make it meaningless.
 - e. These conditions – being in a state of purity and so on – are only stipulated for the prayer. One of the proofs of that is the report narrated by Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came out of

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the privy and some food was brought to him. They suggested wudu' to him and he said: "Am I going to pray, that I should do wudu'?" Narrated by Muslim (374). The prostration of gratitude is not prayer, because in the religious texts it is not called prayer, and because it does not involve doing one or two rak'ahs. Moreover, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not prescribe for it any takbir or salaam, or forming rows, or being led by an imam, as he prescribed in the case of the funeral prayer, the two prostrations of forgetfulness after the salaam, and all other prayers. So there are no stipulated conditions for the prostration of gratitude as there are for the prayer.

- f. The correct analogy is to compare a prostration that is done on its own to the recitations and adhkar that are said inside and outside of the prayer, such as recitation of Qur'an - which is the best part of the prayer and its words - and such as tasbih [saying "*Subhan-Allah* (Glory be to Allah)"], tahmid [saying "*Al-hamdu Lillah* (Praise be to Allah)"], takbir [saying "*Allahu akbar* (Allah is most great)"] and tahlil [saying "*La ilaha illa Allah* [there is no god worthy of worship except Allah)]. Just as there is no stipulation of purification for these things if they are done outside of the prayer - even though they are all parts of the prayer - the same applies to the prostration that is done on its own.

The scholars of the Permanent Committee said:

The correct view is that there is no stipulation of being in a state of purity for the prostration of gratitude and the prostration of recitation, for the reciter or the listener, because they do not come under the same ruling as prayer.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Baz, Shaykh 'Abd ar-Razzaaq 'Afifi, Shaykh 'Abdullah ibn Qa'ud.

Fatawa al-Lajnah ad-Da'imah (7/263).

6. The more correct view regarding the way in which the prostration of gratitude is to be done is that it is not required to say takbir at the beginning or at the end, or to recite the tashahhud or to

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say the salaam. This is the stated view narrated from Imam ash-Shafa'i, it is the view of Imam Ahmad in one report from him, and it is the view of some of the Shafa'is, because there is no proof of that from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) or from any of his companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) was of the view that in this prostration it is not prescribe to recite any tashahhud or say any salaam; rather that is an innovation and it is not permissible to do it.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to the prostration of recitation and the prostration of gratitude, no one narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) or from his companions that any taslim is required in it, or that they used to say taslim following it. Hence Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other scholars did not speak of the taslim with regard to the prostration of gratitude. According to one of the two reports from him, Ahmad did not say the taslim following it, because there is no report that speaks of that. In the other report from him, it says that he said one or two taslims, but that is not proven by any religious text; rather it is on the basis of analogy. Similarly, those jurists who think that there should be a taslim do not have any text to support them; rather it is analogy or the view of some of the Tabi'in."(Majmu' al-Fatawa 21/277).

And he (may Allah have mercy on him) said regarding the prostration of recitation and the prostration of gratitude:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not call that prayer, and he did not prescribe forming rows, or being led by an imam, as he prescribed in the case of the funeral prayer, the two prostrations of forgetfulness after the salaam, and all other prayers. And the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not prescribe any salaam in this case, and that was not narrated from him in any report, sound or weak; rather it is an innovation. And he did

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not prescribe any opening takbir for it."(*Majmu' al-Fatawa* 23/171).

7. There is no specific dhikr that is required in the prostration of gratitude. Rather it is prescribed for the one who prostrates to say in his prostration whatever is appropriate to the situation, such as praising Allah, thanking Him, calling upon Him in supplication, seeking His forgiveness, and so on.

Ash-Shawkani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If you say: There is nothing in the hadiths to tell us what the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said in the prostration of gratitude, so what should the one who prostrates in gratitude say? I say: He should thank Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, a great deal, because this prostration is a prostration of gratitude."(*As-Sayl al-Jarrar* 1/286).

8. A person should not do the prostration of gratitude if he receives glad tidings whilst he is praying, because the reason for prostrating in this situation is not part of the prayer, and has nothing to do with it. So if he prostrates deliberately, that invalidates his prayer, as in the case of one who adds a prostration to the prayer deliberately, or prostrates during the prayer because of some mistake he made in a different prayer, or such as if he included another prayer in the prayer that he is doing. This is the view of the Shafa'is and of most of the Hanbalis.

Some of the Hanbalis said that it is recommended (mustahabb) to do the prostration of gratitude in this case [when one is praying], by analogy with the prostration of recitation. Their argument may be refuted as follows: What they mention of analogy is not valid, because it is making an analogy between two different things. The reason for the prostration of recitation is one of the actions of prayer, namely reciting Qur'an, whereas the reason for the prostration of gratitude is something outside of the prayer.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Salih al-'Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

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If someone does the prostration of gratitude during the prayer, when he is aware of the ruling and remembers it at that time, then his prayer is invalidated....

What they also mentioned is correct, namely that the prayer is invalidated by doing the prostration of gratitude, because it has nothing to do with the prayer, in contrast to the prostration of recitation, because the prostration of recitation is done for something that has to do with the prayer, namely reciting Qur'an."(*Ash-Sharh al-Mumti' 'ala Zad al-Mustaqni'* 4/107, 108).

9. The prostration of gratitude is prescribed for one who is riding a mount by gesturing and he may lean forward as much as possible.

10. It is permissible to make up the prostration of gratitude later on, if it is not possible to do it right away.

If a person is given glad tidings or a blessing comes to him and he does not do the prostration of gratitude, and he has no excuse for not prostrating when the reason for it happens, then some of the scholars stated that it is not prescribed for him to make up this prostration later on. That is because he has no excuse for delaying it. See: *Hashiyat al-Qalyubi* (1/209).

End quote. Adapted from a research paper entitled *Sujud ash-Shukr wa Ahkamuhu fi'l-Fiqh al-Islami* by Dr. 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Jibrin (may Allah preserve him), published in *Majallat al-Buhuth al-Islamiyyah* (36/267-309).

And Allah knows best.