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Lesson 32: Niyyah, Takbir and Qiyam

1. Niyyah

The person starting prayer must have, just before starting, a clear 'intention' that the specific prayer is '*qurbatan ilal-Laah*', i.e. in obedience to Allah. Thus three things are *wajib* in *niyyah*:–

- (a) The prayer must be specified;
- (b) It must be for the sake of God only, not for any other motive;
- (c) That intention must remain unaltered up to the end.

Note: It is not necessary to say these things in words. The intention and attention of mind is enough.

2. Takbiratul-Ihram

The phrase '*Allahu Akbar*' is called *takbir*. '*Ihram*' means 'imposition of limits'. Thus the '*takbir*' just after *niyyah* is called '*Takbiratul-Ihram*', because it limits the man in his actions; now he cannot do any work except prayer. There are 4 conditions in it:

- (a) It must be in the approved form, i.e. '*Allahu Akbar*' without any addition or change and without joining it with other wordings.
- (b) It must be in correct Arabic.
- (c) It must be said while standing (details will come afterwards).
- (d) Body must be in '*tama'ninat*' (not moving, but still).
- (e) *Muwalaat*: The letters and words should be recited one after another without gap.

3. Qiyam (standing)

It is '*ruk'n*' while reciting '*Takbiratul-Ihram*' and before going to '*ruku'*': and is *wajib* (but not *ruk'n*) at the time of reciting Surahs or *Tasbihat Arba'ah*. In *qiyam*, it is *wajib* that:

- (a) The *musalli* (person praying) should stand erect and facing qibla;
- (b) He should be motionless (*tama'ninat*).
- (c) Also he should not lean against anything unless he is unable to stand without support.

Substitutes of Qiyam

1. If a man cannot stand without support he should or may stand with support;
2. If he cannot stand, even with support, he should sit without support;
3. If he cannot sit without support, he may sit with support,
4. If he cannot sit even with support, he must lie on his right side, facing qibla;
5. If it is not possible, he must lie on his left side facing qibla;
6. If even that is not possible, he should lie down on his back, his feet towards the qibla.

In the last three alternatives, he should bow down for *ruku* and *sajdah*; the bowing for *sajdah* should be more than that for the *ruku*. If he cannot bow down, he should perform *ruku* and *sajdah* with his eyelids.

If he can stand for a part of the prayer, he should stand up to that time, and then should sit down.

This rule applies to the alternatives also.

Sunnat (mustahab) differences between the qiyam of a man and of a woman

Man stands with his feet apart from 4 to 8 inches; woman stands with her feet close to each other.

Man stretches his hands downwards resting on thighs; woman keeps her hands on her breasts.

Man and woman both should keep their eyes (during *qiyam*) on the place of *sajdah* (muhr).

Ruku'

4. *Ruku'* (bowing): It is *wajib* in each *rak'at* once; except *Salat al-Ayaat* which has 5 *rukus* in each *rak'at*.

There are 5 *wajibs* in *ruku'*:—

- (a) To bend so low that the palms rest on the knees;
- (b) To recite '*dhikr*' of *ruku'* after bending up to the approved position. *Dhikr* of *Ruku'*: '*Subhanallah*' (Glory be to Allah) 3 times, or '*Subhana Rabbiyal 'Azeemi wa bi hamdih*' (Glory and Praise be to my Lord Cherisher, the Great) once.
- (c) While reciting the *dhikr*, one should remain motionless as far as possible;
- (d) Standing again after *ruku'*, raising the head first;
- (e) '*Tama'ninat*' in the *qiyam* after *ruku'*.

These things are *sunnat* in *ruku'*:—

- (a) Saying *takbir* before kneeling down;
- (b) Keeping the eyes fixed between the feet during *ruku'*;
- (c) Reciting *dhikr* 3, or 5, or 7 or more times;
- (d) Reciting *salawat* after *dhikr*;
- (e) Reciting '*Sami'allahu liman hamidah*' after standing erect after *ruku'*.

Sunnat (mustahab) differences between ruku' of a man and of a woman:

- (a) A man must keep his palms on his knees; a woman on her thighs above the knees;
- (b) A man should keep his fingers stretched on his knees; a woman should keep them joined together;

- (c) A man should keep his arms and elbows away from the body, a woman should keep them joined to her body;
- (d) A man should keep the knees stretched backwards, a woman should keep them not so tight;
- (e) A man should keep his back in such a horizontal level that even if a drop of water is dropped on the back it does not move down; a woman should keep her back in an arch fashion.

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