2108 - Hands or Knees First When Going to Sujud?

the question

Regarding prostration in prayer, I have read two different versions. One (on this website) says that it is better that your knees touch the floor before your hands. In the book

The Prophet's Prayer, it says one should place one's hands on the ground before the knees - and quotes hadith supporting this (claiming knees before hand is as the camel and not advisable. Is there a correct way?

Summary of answer

Malik, Al-Awza`i and the scholars of Hadith thought that one should go to Sujud hands first, based on the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah who said: The Messenger of Allah said: “When any one of you prostrates, let him not go down as the camel does; let him put his hands down before his knees.”

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The scholars have differed as to how one should go down in Sujud , whether one should go hands first or knees first.

According to the Hanafis, Shafi`is and one opinion narrated from Ahmad, the person who is praying should go down on his knees first, then on his hands.

At-Tirmidhi (may Allah have mercy on him) thought that this was the opinion of the majority of scholars, and said in his Sunan (2/57):

“This is how it is done according to the majority of scholars: they think that a man should go down on his knees before he puts his hands down, and when he gets up he should raise his hands before

his knees. Those who express this opinion take as evidence the Hadith of Wa'il ibn Hijr, who said: I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), when he did Sujud , putting his knees down before his hands, and when he got up he raised his hands before his knees. (Narrated by Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, At-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah and Ad-Daraqutni, 1/345)

He said:

"The only one who narrated it was Yazid ibn Harun from Shurayk. Nobody reported from Asim ibn Kulayb except Shurayk, and Shurayk is not strong.

Al-Bayhaqi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Sunan (2/101): 'Its chain of narrators is weak." Al-Albani classed it as inauthentic in Al-Mishkat (898) and Al-Irwa (2/75)

Other scholars classed it as authentic, such as Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) in Zad Al-Ma`ad).

Among those who thought that one should go down into Sujud knees first were Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah and his student Ibn Al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on them); contemporary scholars who favour this view include Shaykh `Abd Al-`Aziz ibn Baz and Shaykh Muhammad ibn Salih Al-`Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on them).

Malik, Al-Awza`i and the scholars of Hadith (may Allah have mercy on them) thought that one should go into Sujud hands first, based on the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, When any one of you prostrates, let him not go down as the camel does; let him put his hands down before his knees. (Narrated by Ahmad, 2/381, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, and An-Nasa'i)

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Majmu` (3/421): "It was reported by Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i with a good chain of narrators."

It was classed as authentic by Shaykh Al-Albani in Al-Irwa' (2/78), who said: This is an authentic chain of narrators, all of whose men are trustworthy, the men of Muslim, apart from Muhammad ibn `Abdullah ibn Al-Hasan, also known as An-Nafs Az-Zakiyyah Al-Alawi, who is trustworthy)

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) made a valuable comment on this matter in Al-Fatawa (22/449):

“Praying in both ways is permissible, according to the consensus of the scholars. If a person wants to go down knees first or hands first, his prayer is valid in either case, according to the consensus of the scholars, but they disputed as to which is preferable.”

The scholar should act upon whichever opinion he believes is more likely to be correct, and the ordinary Muslim should follow the opinion of a scholar whom he trusts.

For more details, please refer to the following answers: 2427 , 13340 , and 65847 .

And Allah knows best.