6834 - What about the mark on a person’s forehead caused by sujood?

the question

When a person prays salah,usaually his forehead gets darker because of sajda and people know that he prays.
Because of this,this person can feel proud and may be some times he likes people to talk positive about him and say good remarks about him because of his prayers.
Is it O.K. or better in this case for this person to do sajda very lightly and softly or what do you suggest.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded us to do rukoo’ and sujood perfectly and completely.

It was reported from Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) that he heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Do your rukoo’ and sujood perfectly and completely, for by the One in Whose Hand is my soul, I can see you behind me when you do rukoo’ and sujood.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 6268; Muslim, 425)

Part of doing rukoo’ and sujood properly and correctly is to be at ease in both.

It was reported from Abu Hurayrah that a man entered the mosque and prayed. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sitting in a corner of the mosque, and the man came and greeted him with salaam. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) answered “Wa ‘alayk (and also upon you). Go back and pray, for you have not prayed.” So he went back and prayed, then he came and greeted the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) with salaam, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) answered “Wa ‘alayk (and also upon you). Go back and pray, for you have not prayed yet.” The third time this

happened, the man said, “Teach me, O Messenger of Allaah.” He said: “When you stand up to pray, do wudoo’ properly, then face the qiblah and say ‘Allaahu akbar.’ Then recite whatever you can of Qur’aan. Then do rukoo’ until you are at ease in rukoo’. Then stand up until you are at ease in standing, then do sujood until you are at ease in sujood. Then sit up until you are sitting up straight. Do that throughout your prayer.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 724; Muslim, 397).

Not doing rukoo’ and sujood properly and completely is something which invalidates one's prayer.

It was reported that Abu Mas’ood al-Ansaari al-Badri said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘A prayer in which a person does not straighten his spine in his rukoo’ and sujood does not count.” (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 265; he said it is hasan saheeh. Also narrated by al-Nasaa’i, 1027; Abu Dawood, 855; Ibn Maajah, 870)

Imaam al-Tirmidhi said:

“Prayer should be done in accordance with this, according to the scholars among the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and later scholars, who said that a man should straighten his spine when he does rukoo’ and sujood.”

Al-Shaafa'i, Ahmad and Ishaaq said: “A prayer in which a person does not straighten his spine in his rukoo’ and sujood does not count, because of the hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): ‘A prayer in which a person does not straighten his spine in his rukoo’ and sujood does not count.’” (Sunan al-Tirmidhi, 2/52)

It was reported from Abu Waa’il that Hudhayfah saw a man who was not doing rukoo’ and sujood perfectly and completely. When he finished praying, Hudhayfah said to him, “You have not prayed.” He (the narrator) said: “I think he said, ‘If you were to die now, you would die on something other than the Sunnah of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).’” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 382).

According to another report (758): it was reported that Zayd ibn Wahb said: “Hudhayfah saw a man who was not doing rukoo’ and sujood perfectly and completely. He said, ‘You have not

prayed. If you were to die now, you would die on something other than the fitrah to which Allaah guided Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).’”

It is essential to place the forehead and nose firmly on the ground when making sujood.

It was reported that Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘I was commanded to prostrate on seven bones: the forehead’ – and he pointed to his nose – ‘the two hands, the two knees and the toes. And do not tie up your clothes or hair.’” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 779; Muslim, 490).

There is nothing wrong with making the sujood long, especially when praying alone, or in Salaat al-Kusoof (eclipse prayer) or in qiyaam al-layl (naafil prayers at night).

It was reported from Asmaa’ bint Abi Bakr al-Siddeeq (may Allaah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed Salaat al-Kusoof (eclipse prayer). He stood and made his standing lengthy; then he did rukoo’ and made his rukoo’ lengthy; then he stood up and made his standing lengthy; then he did rukoo’ and made his rukoo’ lengthy; then he stood up and did sujood, then he sat up and did sujood again, and made his sujood lengthy. Then he stood up and made his standing lengthy; then he did rukoo’ and made his rukoo’ lengthy; then he stood up and made his standing lengthy; then he did rukoo’ and made his rukoo’ lengthy; then he stood up and did sujood, and made his sujood lengthy; then he sat up and did sujood again, and made his sujood lengthy, then he finished.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 812).

It was reported that Hudhayfah said: “I prayed with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) one night. He started to recite al-Baqarah, and I thought that he would do rukoo’ after one hundred aayaat, but he carried on. I thought that he would finish it and then do rukoo’, but he carried on. Then he started to recite al-Nisaa’ and he recited it all, then he started to recite Aal ‘Imraan, and he recited it all, at a steady and moderate pace. If he recited an aayah which mentioned tasbeeh (glorifying Allaah), he would glorify Allaah; if he recited an aayah which mentioned asking, he would ask Allaah; if he recited an aayah which mentioned seeking refuge with Allaah, he would seek refuge with Him. Then he did rukoo’ and started saying ‘Subhaan Rabbi

al-al’Azeem,’ and his rukoo’ was almost as long as his standing. Then he said, ‘Sami’a Allaahu li man hamidah’ and stood up, and his standing was almost as long as his rukoo’. Then he prostrated and said, ‘Subhaana Rabbi al-A’laa’, and his sujood was almost as long as his standing.” (Narrated by Muslim, 772)

The Sunnah in sujood is to be level in sujood, as it was narrated from Anas that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “be level in sujood, and none of you should spread his forearms as a dog spreads them.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 788; Muslim, 493).

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah preserve him) said:

This means that you should do sujood in a level way, not bunched up tight so that the stomach rests on the thighs and the thighs on the calves, and not stretched out as some people do when they prostrate, so that they are almost lying on their fronts. Undoubtedly this is a kind of bid’ah and is not Sunnah. It was not narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or from any of the Sahaabah, as far as we know, that a person should stretch out his back in sujood. He should stretch his back in rukoo’, but in sujood he should raise his stomach and not stretch it out.” (al-Sharh al-Mumti’, 3/168).

If a person does as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded, and he is prostrating on soil or a rough surface, then he may get a mark on his forehead. This may generate some pride in his heart, as mentioned in the question, but if a person’s heart is filled with sincere faith and he does what he does only for the purpose of seeking that which is with Allaah, then he will not care what people say about him. But if he deliberately tries to make a mark on his forehead that looks like the sign of sujood, then this is a kind of showing off and lying, so woe to him of the punishment of a painful Day!

With regard to the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“… You see them bowing and falling down prostrate (in prayer), seeking Bounty from Allaah and (His) Good Pleasure. The mark of them (i.e. of their Faith) is on their faces (foreheads) from the traces of prostration (during prayers)….” [al-Fath 48:29]

-- the correct meaning of the phrase “the mark of them is on their faces” is that this refers to the light of obedience and worship, and it does not necessarily mean that there is a physical mark on the skin in the place of prostration.

Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his Tafseer of this aayah:

“… ‘the mark of them is on their faces from the traces of prostration’ -‘Ali ibn Abi Talhah said, narratingfrom Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them): ‘the mark of them is on their faces’ means their outward appearance. Mujaahid and others said that it means khushoo’ and humility. Ibn Abi Haatim said: my father told us, ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Tanaafusi told us, Husayn al-Ja’fi told us, from Zaa’idah from Mansoor from Mujaahid: ‘the mark of them is on their faces from the traces of prostration’ – he said: (this means) khushoo’ (humility). I said, I always thought that it meant this mark on the face. He said, That may appear between the eyes of one whose heart is harder than Pharaoh’s. Al-Saddi said: Prayer makes their faces beautiful. One of the Salaf said; Whoever prays more at night, his face becomes more handsome by day… Some of them said that a hasanah (good deeds) brings light (noor) to the heart and a glow to the face, an increased provision and the love of the people.”

The point is, the fact that this mark is present on the skin and there is a change in the colour of the forehead, does not mean that a person is righteous and sincere. By the same token, if this mark is absent, that does not mean that a person is failing in his prayers. In many cases it has to do with the nature and sensitivity of an individual’s skin.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah preserve him) was asked: is there any report to indicate that the mark on the forehead caused by sujood is a sign of the righteous?

He replied:

This is not one of the signs of the righteous; the sign is the light (noor) which appears on the face, and being content and at peace, a good attitude, and the like.

As for the mark made by sujood on the face, it may appear on the faces of people who do not

even pray the obligatory prayers, if their skin is very soft and sensitive, and it may not appear of the faces of people who pray a lot and make lengthy sujood.

(Fataawaa Islamiyyah, 1/484)

In conclusion, then, if you are sincere towards Allaah and seek to earn His pleasure when you pray, then what people say will not affect you; in fact, their praise of you may be a kind of hastening of glad tidings for you in this world. So follow the Sunnah and do sujood properly, and then do not worry about whether people praise you or condemn you. We ask Allaah to make you sincere and to accept your prayers.

And Allaah knows best.