13340 - Description of the Prophet’s Prayer

the question

How did Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pray?

Summary of answer

When Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stood up to pray, he used to face the Ka`bah in a standing position, then say ‘Allahu Akbar’, then recite Al-Fatihah, then recite another surah, then make ruku`, then raise up from ruku`, then make sujud, then raise up from sujud, then make a second sujud, then stand up to make the second rak`ah.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Facing the direction of the Ka`bah

1. When you stand up to pray, face the direction of the Ka`bah wherever you are, in both fard (obligatory) and nafl (supererogatory) prayers. This is one of the pillars of prayer , without which prayer is not valid.
2. The obligation of facing the direction of prayer does not apply to one who is engaged in warfare, when he prays the fear prayer (salat al-khawf) or is engaged in heavy fighting. It also does not apply to those who are unable to do it, such as one who is sick, or one who is traveling on a ship, in a car or on a plane, if they fear that the time of the prayer will elapse (before they reach a place where they can find the correct direction). And it does not apply to one who is praying a nafl prayer or witr prayer whilst riding on a riding-animal etc., but it is mustahabb for him to face the qiblah if he is able to do so when pronouncing the takbir of ihram (at the beginning of the prayer), then he may face whatever direction he is facing.
3. Everyone who can see the Ka`bah must face it; those who cannot see it must face its

direction.

- **Ruling on not facing the Ka`bah in prayer by mistake**

1. If a person prays not facing the qiblah, because of clouds [preventing him from working out the direction from the position of the sun] or some other reason, after he did his best to work out the right direction, his prayer is valid and he does not have to repeat it.
2. If someone whom he trusts comes – whilst he is praying – and tells him of the right direction, then he must hasten to turn that way, and his prayer is valid.

Qiyam (standing in prayer)

1. It is obligatory to pray standing. This is a pillar (essential part of prayer), except for the one who is praying the fear prayer or at times of intense fighting, when it is permitted to pray whilst riding; for the one who is sick and unable to stand, he should pray sitting if he is able, otherwise lying on his side; and the one who is praying a nafl prayer, he may pray whilst riding or sitting if he wishes, and he indicates the ruku` and sujud with his head. The one who is sick may also do this, and he should make his sujud lower than his ruku`.
2. It is not permissible for one who is praying sitting down to put something raised up on the ground in order to prostrate on it. Rather he should make his sujud lower than his ruku` – as we have mentioned – if he is unable to touch the ground directly with his forehead.

- **Prayer on board a ship or airplane**

1. It is permissible to pray fard prayers on board a ship or airplane.
2. It is permissible to pray them sitting down if one fears that one may fall.
3. It is permissible to lean on a pillar or stick when standing, if one is old or weak in body.

- **Combining standing and sitting in prayer**

1. It is permissible to pray qiyam al-layl standing or sitting with no excuse, or to do both. So a person may pray and recite sitting down, and just before doing ruku` he may stand up and recite the rest of the ayahs standing up, then do ruku` and sujud, then he can do likewise in

the second rak`ah.

2. If he prays sitting down, he should pray sitting cross-legged or in whatever position he finds comfortable.

- **Praying wearing shoes**

1. It is permissible to pray barefoot, or to pray wearing shoes.
2. It is better to pray sometimes barefoot and sometimes wearing shoes, according to what is easy; one should not make it difficult to put shoes on or to take them off in order to pray. If a person is barefoot, he should pray barefoot and if he is wearing shoes then he should pray wearing shoes, except when there is a reason not to do so.
3. If he takes them off, then he should not place them to his right; rather he should place them to his left, if there is no one on his left, otherwise he should put them between his feet. There is a subtle hint that he should not place them in front of himself. This is the etiquette which most worshippers ignore, so you see them praying facing their shoes! This is what was narrated in the sahih reports from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

- **Praying on the minbar**

1. It is permissible for the imam to pray on an elevated place such as the minbar, in order to teach the people. So he should stand up on it to pray, then say takbir, recite Quran and do ruku` whilst he is on that place, then he should come down backwards so that he can prostrate on the ground at the base of the minbar, then he may go back to it and do the same in the second rak`ah as he did in the first.

- **It is obligatory to pray facing a sutrah and be close to it**

1. It is obligatory to pray facing a sutrah (screen or cover), there is no difference whether that is in the mosque or elsewhere, whether the mosque is big or small, because of the general meaning of the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “Do not pray except facing a sutrah, and do not let anyone pass in front of you, and if he insists then fight him, for he has a companion (qarin) with him” – meaning the Shaytan.
2. It is obligatory to be close to the sutrah, because this is what the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded.

3. Between the place where the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prostrated and the wall there would be a space nearly big enough for a sheep to pass through. Whoever does that is close enough [to the sutrah] as is required. I say: from this we know that what people do in all the mosques that I have seen in Syria and elsewhere, by praying in the middle of the mosque far away from the wall or pillars is but negligence towards the command and action of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

- How high should the sutrah be?

1. The sutrah should be approximately a handspan or two above the ground, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "When one of you places in front of him something such as the stick on the end of a saddle, he should pray and not worry about anyone who passes in front of that." This hadith indicates that a line on the ground is not sufficient, and the hadith narrated concerning that is da'if (weak).
2. He should face the sutrah directly, because this is the apparent meaning of the command to pray towards the sutrah. Stepping slightly to the right or left so that one is not facing it directly, is not correct.
3. It is permissible to pray facing a stick planted in the ground and the like, or a tree, or a pillar, or one's wife lying down in bed underneath her blanket, or an animal, even if it is a camel.

- **Prohibition of praying towards graves**

1. It is not permitted to pray facing graves at all, whether they are the grave of prophets or of others.

- **Prohibition of walking in front of one who is praying even in al-Masjid al-Haram**

1. It is not permitted to walk in front of one who is praying if there is a sutrah in front of him [i.e., it is not permissible to come between him and his sutrah]. There is no difference in this regard between al-Masjid al-Haram and other mosques, all of them are the same in that this [walking in front of one who is praying] is not permitted, because of the general meaning of the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "If the person who

passes in front of one who is praying knew how great a burden of sin resulted from that, standing for forty [years] would be better for him than passing in front of one who is praying." This refers to passing between him and the place of his prostration. The hadith which speaks of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) praying in Hashiyat al-Mataf without a sutrah and with people passing in front of him is not sahih, even though it does not say that they were passing between him and his place of prostration. It is obligatory for the one who is prostrating to prevent the one who wants to pass in front of him, even in Masjid al-Haram.

2. It is not permissible for the one who is praying towards a sutrah to let anyone pass in front of him, because of the hadith quoted above, "Do not let anyone pass in front of you…" And because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "When one of you is praying towards something which is a sutrah between him and the people, and someone wants to pass in front of him, then he should push him in the upper chest and repel him as much as he can." According to another report: "… he should stop him twice, but if he insists then he should fight him, for he is a devil."

- **Stepping forward to prevent someone passing in front of him**

1. It is permissible for a person to take one or two steps to the front, in order to prevent one who is not responsible from passing in front of him, such as an animal or a small child, and to make them pass behind him.

- **What breaks prayer**

1. The sutrah is so important to prayer that it prevents a person's prayer from being invalidated, if someone passes in front of him. This is in contrast to the one who does not use a sutrah, whose prayer is broken if an adult woman, a donkey or a black dog passes in front of him.

Niyyah (intention)

1. The worshipper must have the intention of praying the prayer for which he is standing. He

must have the intention in his heart of performing a specific prayer, such as the fard (obligatory prayer) of Zuhr or of ‘Asr, or the Sunnah of those prayers. This is a condition or pillar (essential part) of the prayer, but uttering the intention verbally is a bid’ah which goes against the Sunnah, which was not suggested by any of the imams who are followed.

Takbir

1. Then he should start the prayer by saying “Allahu akbar (Allah is Most Great).” This is an essential part of the prayer, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The key to prayer is purifying oneself (wudu’), it is entered by takbir (saying ‘Allahu akbar’) and exited by taslim (saying ‘al-salamu ‘alaykum’)” i.e, once you say takbir, certain things are prohibited and this prohibition ends when you say taslim.
2. He should not raise his voice when saying takbir in all the prayers, unless he is acting as an imam.
3. It is permissible for the muadhdhin to convey the takbir of the imam to the people, if there is a need to do so, such as if the imam is sick and his voice is weak, or because there are many worshippers praying behind him.
4. The one who is following the imam should not say takbir until the imam has finished saying takbir.

- **Raising the hands – how it is to be done**

1. He should raise his hands when saying the takbir, or before or after doing so. All of these are proven in the Sunnah.
2. He should raise them with the fingers stretched out.
3. He should raise them level with his shoulders, or sometimes until they are level with his earlobes. I say: with regard to touching the earlobes with the thumbs, there is no basis for this in the Sunnah, rather in my view this has to do with waswas (insinuating whispers of the Shaytan).

- **Placing the hands – how it is to be done**

1. Then he should place his right hand on his left, immediately after the takbir. This is the way of the prophets (peace be upon them), and this is what the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enjoined upon his Companions. It is not permissible to let the arms hang at the sides.
2. The right hand should be placed on the back of the left hand, wrist and forearm.
3. Sometimes the left hand may be grasped with the right. The combination of placing and grasping, which was favoured by some later scholars, has no basis.

- **Where they should be placed**

1. The hands should be placed on the chest only; there is no difference between men and women in this regard. I say: placing them anywhere other than on the chest is da'if (weak) or has no basis.
2. It is not permissible to put the right hand on the waist.

1. Humility and looking at the place of prostration

1. The worshipper must be humble in his prayer, and should avoid everything that may distract him from it, such as adornments and decorations. He should not pray where there is food that he wants to eat, or when he needs to urinate or defecate.
2. Whilst he is standing, he should look towards the place where he will prostrate.
3. He should not look to the right or the left, because looking here and there is a snatching away which the Shaytan steals from the prayer of the slave.
4. It is not permissible for him to look up at the sky.

- **Du`a al-Istiftah (du`a at the start of prayer)**

1. Then he should start the prayer with some of the du`as which are narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). There are many of these, the most famous of which is "Subhanaka Allahumma wa bihamdika, wa tabaraka ismuka wa ta'ala jadduka, wa la ilaha ghayruka (Glory and praise be to You O Allah, blessed be Your name and exalted be Your Majesty, and there is no god but You)." The command to do this is proven so we should adhere to it. Whoever wants to see the other du`as may refer to Sifat al-Salah, p. 91-95,

Maktabat al-Ma’arif, Riyadh, edition. [In English, see “The Prophet’s Prayer described” by Shaykh al-Albani, al-Hanif Publications, p. 14-19]

- **Recitation of Quran**

1. Then he should seek refuge with Allah – this is obligatory, and he is sinning if he omits to do so.
2. The Sunnah is sometimes to say “A’udhu Billahi min al-Shaytan ir-rajim, min hamzihi wa nafkhihi wa nafathihi (I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan, from his madness, his arrogance and his poetry),” – poetry here refers to blameworthy kinds of poetry.
3. And sometimes he may say, “A’udhu Billah is-Sami’ il-A’lieem min al-Shaytan… (I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, All-Knowing, from the Shaytan…).”
4. Then he should say silently – whether the prayer is to be recited aloud or silently – “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim (In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful).”

- **Reciting al-Fatihah**

1. Then he should recite Surat al-Fatihah (the first surah of the Quran) in full, including the Basmalah (Bismillahi ar-Rahman ar-Rahim). This is an essential part of the prayer, without which the prayer is not valid. Those who do not speak Arabic must memorize this surah.
2. Those who cannot remember it should say: “Subhan Allah, wa’l-hamdu-Lillah, wa la ilaha ill-Allah, wa Allahu akbar, wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa Billah (Glory be to Allah, praise be to Allah, there is no god but Allah, Allah is Most Great, and there is no strength and no power except with Allah).”
3. The Sunnah is to recite it one verse at a time, and to pause at the beginning of each ayah. So he should say: “Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim (In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful),” then pause. Then say, “Al-Hamdu Lillahi Rabb il-‘Alamin (All the praises and thanks be to Allâh, the Lord of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists), then pause. Then say: ‘al-Rahman ar-Rahim (The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful), then pause… and so on, until the end of the surah.

This is how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to recite the whole surah,

pausing at the end of each ayah and not joining one ayah to the next, even if there is continuity of the meaning.

1. It is permissible to read it as Maliki Yawn id-Din or Maaliki Yawm id-Din.

1. How the one who is praying behind the imam should recite it

1. The one who is praying behind the imam should recite it behind the imam in prayers where Quran in recited silently and in prayers where it is recited aloud, if he cannot hear the imam's recitation, or if he pauses after completing it so that those who are praying behind him can recite it. We think that this pause was not proven in the Sunnah. I say I have mentioned the evidence of those who think that this pause is permissible and the refutation of that evidence, in Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Da'ifah, no. 546, 547, part 2, p. 24-26, Dar al-Ma'arif edition.

- **Recitation after al-Fatihah**

1. It is Sunnah to recite – after al-Fatihah – another surah , even in Salat al-Janazah (funeral prayer), or some ayahs, in the first two rak`ahs.
2. The recitation may be made lengthy sometimes , and shorter sometimes, for reasons of travel, coughing, sickness or the crying of an infant.
3. The recitation varies according to the prayers. The recitation in Fajr prayer is longer than it is in all the other prayers. Next longest is Zuhr, then 'Asr, then 'Isha, then Maghrib, usually.
4. The recitation in the night prayers (qiyam al-layl) is longer than all of these.
5. The Sunnah is to make the recitation longer in the first rak`ah than in the second.
6. He should make the recitation in the last two shorter than in the first two rak`ahs, half the length. If you want more details on this topic, see Sifat al-Salah p. 102 (Arabic original).

- **Reciting al-Fatihah in every rak`ah**

1. It is obligatory to recite al-Fatihah in every rak`ah.
2. It is Sunnah to add to it in the last two rak`ahs as well.
3. It is not permissible for the imam to make his recitation longer than that which is described

in the Sunnah, because that is difficult for those who may be praying behind him, such as the elderly and sick, or nursing mothers, or those who have other things to do.

- **Reciting aloud and reciting quietly**

1. Quran should be recited aloud in Fajr and Jumu'ah prayers, 'Eid prayers, prayers for rain (istisqa), prayers at the time of an eclipse (kusuf) and in the first two rak`ahs of Maghrib and 'Isha.

He should recite silently in the first two rak`ahs of Zuhr and 'Asr, in the third rak`ah of Maghrib and in the last two rak`ahs of 'Isha.

1. It is permissible for the imam occasionally to make an ayah audible in the prayers where recitation is to be done silently.
2. In Witr and Qiyam al-Layl, he should recite silently sometimes and aloud sometimes, and he should be moderate in raising his voice.

- **Tartil – reciting at a measured pace**

1. The Sunnah is to recite the Quran at a measured pace, not quickly or hastily. It should be read in a manner that clearly distinguishes each letter, beautifying the Quran with one's voice. He should observe the well known rulings of the scholars of Tajwid and he should not recite it in the innovated manner of singers or according to the rules of music.

- **Prompting the imam**

1. It is prescribed for the one who is praying behind the imam to prompt the imam if he hesitates in his recitation.

Ruku` (bowing)

1. When he has completed the recitation, he should pause briefly, to catch his breath.
2. Then he should raise his hands in the manner described for takbirat al-ihram (the takbir at the beginning of prayer).

3. And he should say takbir (“Allahu akbar”). This is obligatory.
4. Then he should do ruku`, bowing as deeply as his joints will let him, until his joints take the new position and are relaxed in it. This is an essential part of prayer.

- **How to do ruku`**

1. He should put his hands on his knees, firmly, spacing the fingers out, as if he is grasping his knees.
2. He should spread his back and make it level so that if water were poured on it, it would stay there (not run off).
3. He should not lower or raise his head, but make it level with his back.
4. He should keep his elbows away from his sides.
5. In ruku`, he should say “Subhana Rabbiy al-‘Azim (Glory be to my Lord, the Almighty) three times or more. There are other kinds of dhikr which may be said in ruku`, some of which are long, some of medium length and some short. See Sifat Salat al-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), p. 132, Maktabat al-Ma’arif edition [The Prophet’s Prayer Described, p. 44].

- **Making the essential parts of prayer equal in length**

1. It is Sunnah to make the essential parts of prayer equal in length, so the ruku`, the standing after ruku`, the prostration and the sitting between the two prostrations should be made approximately the same in length.
2. It is not permissible to recite Quran in ruku` or in sujud.

- **Straightening up from ruku`**

1. Then he should straighten up from ruku`. This is an essential part of the prayer.
2. Whilst straightening up, he should say, “Sami’a Allahu liman hamidah (Allah listens to the one who praises Him).” This is obligatory.
3. He should raise his hands when straightening up, in the manner described above.
4. Then he should stand straight until every vertebra has returned to its place. This is an essential part of the prayer.

5. Whilst standing thus, he should say, “Rabbana wa laka al-hamd (our Lord, to You be all praise).” (There are other kinds of dhikr which may be said at this point. See Sifat al-Salah, p. 135/The Prophet’s prayer described, p. 47). This is obligatory for every person who is praying, even if he is following an imam, because this is the dhikr of standing after ruku`, and saying “Sami’a Allahu liman hamidah” is the dhikr of straightening up from ruku`. It is not prescribed to put the hands one over the other during this standing, because this was not narrated (from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)). For more details, see Sifat Salat al-Nabi, 1 – Istiqbal al-Qiblah (The Prophet’s Prayer Described – Facing the Ka`bah).
6. He should make this standing equal in length to the ruku`, as stated above.

Sujud (prostration)

1. Then he should say “Allahu akbar” – this is obligatory.
2. He should raise his hands sometimes.

- **Going down on the hands**

1. Then he should go down into sujud on his hands, putting them down before the knees. This is what was commanded by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and it is proven that he did this, and he forbade imitating the manner in which a camel sits down, which is by kneeling with its forelegs first.
2. When he prostrates – which is an essential part of the prayer – he should put his weight on his palms and spread them out.
3. He should keep the fingers together.
4. And point the fingers towards the qiblah.
5. He should put his palms level with his shoulders.
6. Sometimes he should make them level with his ears.
7. He should keep his forearms off the ground. This is obligatory. He should not spread them along the ground like a dog.
8. He should place his nose and forehead firmly on the ground. This is an essential part of the

prayer.

9. He should also place his knees firmly on the ground.
10. The same applies to his toes.
11. He should hold his feet upright with his toes touching the ground. All of this is obligatory.
12. He should make his toes point in the direction of the qiblah.
13. He should put his heels together.

- **Being at ease in sujud**

1. He should be at ease in sujud, distributing his weight equally on the parts of the body which should be in contact with the ground during sujud. They are: the nose and forehead, the palms, the knees, and the toes.
2. Whoever is at ease in his sujud in this manner has got it right. And this being at ease is also an essential part of the prayer.
3. In sujud, he should say, “Subhana Rabbiy al-‘A’la (Glory be to my Lord Most High)” three times or more. (There are other kinds of dhikr also, see Sifat Salat al-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), p. 145/The Prophet’s Prayer described, p. 55).
4. It is mustahaab to offer a lot of du`a during sujud, because it is a time when du`a is likely to be answered.
5. He should make his sujud almost as long as his ruku`, as described above.
6. It is permissible to prostrate on the bare ground, or on something covering the ground such as a garment or carpet, or a mat, etc.
7. It is not permitted to recite Quran whilst prostrating.

- **Iftirash and Iq’a between the two sajdahs**

[Iftirash means sitting on the left thigh with the right foot upwards and its toes pointed towards the qiblah; iq’a means resting on both heels and feet]

1. Then he should raise his head, saying takbir. This is obligatory.
2. He should raise his hands sometimes.
3. Then he should sit at ease, until every vertebra returns to its place. This is obligatory.

4. He should spread his left leg and sit on it. This is obligatory.
5. He should put his right foot upright.
6. And make its toes point towards the qiblah.
7. It is permissible to sit in iq'a sometimes, which means resting on the heels and feet.
8. Whilst sitting thus, he should say, "Allahumma ighfir li warhamni wajburni, warfa'ni, wa'afini warzuqni (O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, strengthen me, raise me in status, pardon me and grant me provision)."
9. If he wishes, he may say, "Rabbi ighfir li, Rabbi ighfir li (My Lord, forgive me, my Lord, forgive me)."
10. He should make this sitting almost as long as his sujud.

- **The second sajdah**

1. Then he should say takbir – this is obligatory,
2. He should raise his hands sometimes when saying this takbir.
3. He should do the second prostration – this is also an essential part of the prayer.
4. He should do in the second prostration what he did in the first.

- **The sitting of rest**

1. When he raises his head from the second prostration and he wants to get up for the second rak`ah, he should say takbir. This is obligatory.
2. He should raise his hands sometimes.
3. He should sit up straight, sitting on his left foot, until every bone returns to its place.

- **The second rak`ah**

1. Then he should get up for the second rak`ah, supporting himself on his hands with his fists clenched as if kneading dough. This is an essential part of the prayer.
2. He should do in the second rak`ah what he did in the first.
3. Except that he should not recite the du`a for starting the prayer.
4. He should make it shorter than the first rak`ah.

- **Sitting for the Tashahhud**

1. When he completes the second rak`ah, he should sit for the Tashahhud . This is obligatory.
2. He should sit in iftirash, as described above for the sitting between the two prostrations.
3. But it is not permitted to sit in iq'a at this point.
4. He should put his right hand on his right thigh and knee, and the end of the right elbow on the thigh, not far from it.
5. He should spread his left palm on his left thigh and knee.
6. It is not permissible to sit resting on one's arms, especially the left arm.

- **Moving the finger and looking at it**

1. He should clench all the fingers of his right hand, and put the thumb on the middle finger sometimes.
2. Sometimes he should make a circle with them.
3. He should point with his index finger towards the qiblah.
4. He should look towards it.
5. He should move it, making du`a with it, from the beginning of the Tashahhud until the end.
6. He should not point with the finger of his left hand.
7. He should do all of this in every Tashahhud.

- **How to say Tashahhud and the du`a following it**

1. The Tashahhud is obligatory, and if he forgets it, he must do the two prostrations of forgetfulness (sajdat al-sahw).
2. He should recite it silently.
3. The wording of the Tashahhud is: "Al-tahiyyatu Lillahi wa'l-salaawatu wa'l-tayyibat. Al-salamu 'alayka ayyuha'l-Nabiyyu wa rahmat-Allahi wa barakatuhu. Al-salamu 'alayna wa 'ala 'ibad-Illah il-salihin. Ash-hadu an la ilaha ill-Allah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluhu (All compliments, prayers and pure words are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy and blessings of Allah. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous slaves of Allah. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and I bear witness that

Muhammad is the slave and Messenger of Allah).” [Other versions are mentioned in Sifat Salat al-Nabi/The Prophet’s Prayer Described, but what is mentioned here is the most sound].

Sending salams upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): this is what was prescribed after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and is narrated in the Tashahhud of Ibn Mas’ud, ‘Aishah and Ibn al-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them). For more details see Sifat Salat al-Nabi, p. 161, Maktabat al-Ma’arif, Riyadh, edition/ The Prophet’s Prayer Described, p. 67).

1. After that, he should send prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), by saying: “Allahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala ali Muhammad kama salayta ‘ala Ibrahim wa ‘ala ali Ibrahim, innaka hamidun majid. Allahumma barik ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala ali Muhammad kama barakta ‘ala Ibrahim wa ‘ala ali Ibrahim, innak hamidun majid (O Allah, send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent prayers upon Ibrahim and upon the family of Ibrahim; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory. O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad as You sent blessings upon Ibrahim and upon the family of Ibrahim); You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory).”
2. If you wish you may shorten it and say: “Allahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala ali Muhammad, wa barik ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala ali Muhammad, kama salayta wa barakta ‘ala Ibrahim wa ‘ala ali Ibrahim, innaka hamidun majid (O Allah, send prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, and send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent prayers and blessings upon Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory).”
3. Then in this Tashahhud he may choose any of the du`as that he likes of those that have been narrated, and call upon Allah using these words.

- **The third and fourth rak`ahs**

1. Then he says takbir – which is obligatory. The Sunnah is to say takbir whilst still sitting.
2. He should raise his hands sometimes.

3. Then he should stand up for the third rak`ah, which is an essential part of prayer, as is the following rak`ah.
4. He should do likewise if he wants to get up for the fourth rak`ah.
5. But before he gets up, he should sit up straight, by adjusting his left leg, until every bone returns to its place.
6. Then he should get up, supporting himself on his hands, as he did when getting up for the second rak`ah.
7. Then in the third and fourth rak`ahs, he should recite al-Fatihah. This is obligatory.
8. He may add an ayah or more to that occasionally.

- **Reciting Al-Qunut when calamity strikes**

1. It is Sunnah to recite Qunut and pray for the Muslims when any disaster befalls them.
2. Qunut should be recited after standing up from ruku` and saying “Rabbana wa laka’l-hamd (Our Lord, to You be praise).”
3. There is no specific du`a to be recited regularly in Qunut, rather one should recite whatever is appropriate when disaster strikes.
4. He should raise his hands when reciting this du`a
5. He should recite it aloud if he is acting as an imam.
6. Those who are praying behind him should say “Amin” to this du`a.
7. When he has finished, he should say takbir and prostrate.

- **Qunut al-Wit – when it is to be recited, and what wording it should have**

1. Qunut in Witr is prescribed occasionally.
2. It should be recited before ruku`, unlike Qunut recited at times of calamity.
3. He should recite the following words:

“Allahumma ihdini fiman hadayta, wa ‘afini fiman ‘afayta, wa tawallani fiman tawallayta, wa barik li fima a’tayta, wa qini sharra ma qadayta, fa innaka taqdi wa la yuqda ‘alayk, wa innahu la yadhillu man walayta, wa la ya’izzu man ‘adayta, tabarakta rabbana wa ta’alayta, wa la manja minka illa ilayk

(O Allah, guide me amongst those whom You have guided; pardon me amongst those whom You have pardoned; turn to me in friendship amongst those to whom You have turned in friendship; bless me in what You have bestowed; save me from the evil of what You have decreed; for indeed You decree, and none can influence You; and he is not humiliated whom You have befriended; nor is he honoured whom You take as Your enemy. Blessed are You, O Lord, and exalted. There is no place of safety from You except towards You).”

1. This du`a was taught by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), so it is permissible, because it was narrated from the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them).
2. Then he should do ruku`, and the two prostrations, as before.

- **The final Tashahhud and placing the left foot under the right leg**

1. Then he should sit for the final Tashahhud. This is obligatory.
2. He should do the same as in the first Tashahhud.
3. But he should sit mutawarikan, which means placing the left foot under his right leg.
4. He should put his right foot upright.
5. It is also permissible to lay the right foot along the ground sometimes.
6. He should cover his left knee with his left palm, leaning heavily on it.

- **The obligation of sending prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and of seeking refuge with Allah from four things**

1. It is obligatory for him in this Tashahhud to send prayers upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), some versions of which we have quoted above when discussing the first Tashahhud.
2. He should also seek refuge with Allah from four things and say: “Allahumma inni a’udhu bika min ‘adhab Jahannam wa min ‘adhab al-qabri wa min fitnat il-mahya wa’l-mamat, wa min sharri fitnat il-masih al-dajjal (O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the torment of Hell, from the torment of the grave, from the trials of life and death and from the evil of the tribulation of the Dajjal).”

The trials of life means the temptations of this world and its desires which a person faces in his life. The trials of death means the torment of the grave and the questioning of the two angels. The tribulation of the Dajjal means the extraordinary feats that will be done at his hands, by which means people will be led astray, and they will follow him and believe his claim to be divine.

- **Du`a before the salam**

1. Then he may pray for himself as he sees fit, as narrated in the Quran and Sunnah. There are many such good du`as. If he does not know any such du`as then he can say whatever is easy for him, for things that will benefit him in his religion and in his worldly affairs.

- **Various kinds of taslim (saying salams)**

1. Then he should say salams to his right, which is an essential part of the prayer, turning his face so that the whiteness of his right cheek may be seen (from behind).
2. Then he should say salams to his left, turning his face so that the whiteness of his left cheek may be seen, even in the funeral prayer
3. The imam should raise his voice when saying salam, except in the funeral prayer.
4. The salam takes various forms:

- “Al-Salamu ‘alaykum wa rahmat-Allahi wa barakatuhu” to the right, and “Al-salamu ‘alaaykum wa rahmat-Allah” to the left.
- The same, but without saying “wa barakatuhu”.
- “Al-Salamu ‘alaykum wa rahmat-Allahu” to the right, and “Al-salamu ‘alaykum” to the left.
- Saying one salam, tilting the head slightly to the right.

O my Muslim brother, this is what I was able to summarize from Sifat Salat al-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) [The Prophet’s Prayer Described], in an attempt to make it more accessible to you, so that it would be clear to you, as if you could see it with your own eyes. If you pray in the manner described to you of how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), prayed, then I hope that Allah will accept that from you, because by doing that you will have truly put into practice the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “Pray

as you have seen me pray.”

Moreover you must not forget the importance of presence of mind and humility in prayer, for this is the ultimate purpose of standing before Allah in prayer. The more you can develop the attitude of humility and submission in prayer as described to you in the prayer of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the more benefits you will reap, as indicated by our Lord when He said (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahsha (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed).” [Al-‘Ankabut 29:45]

Finally, I ask Allah to accept our prayer and all our good deeds, and to store up their reward until the Day when we meet Him:

“The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart [clean from Shirk (polytheism) and Nifaq (hypocrisy)].” [Al-Shu’ara 26:88 – interpretation of the meaning]

And Allah knows best.