



235969 - It is not stipulated that one should be in a state of purity to do the prostration of recitation or of gratitude

the question

How did some of the scholars reach the conclusion that it is not stipulated that one should be in a state of purity [to do the prostration of recitation] on the grounds that both the Muslims and the polytheists prostrated when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recited Surat an-Najm, even though the story is from the Makkan period, and the matter is ambiguous, so the analogy regarding this issue should be referred to the conditions stipulated for prayer in general? Prostration is a significant part of the prayer, so no attention should be paid to the action of a polytheist. Or should we say that as we are not supposed to investigate this ambiguous story, we may understand it in general terms and take it at face value. So is it possible that some of the Muslims who prostrated were not in a state of purity? Please advise me.

Summary of answer

The majority of scholars, including the four madhabs, are of the view that it is not permissible to do the prostration of recitation without wudu. Some of the scholars favoured the view of Ibn `Umar and said that it is not stipulated that one should be in a state of purity in order to do the prostration of recitation. The scholars include Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) and, among contemporary scholars, the Permanent Committee for Academic Research and Ifta'. However, there is no doubt that the best is for a person to do wudu, especially the reciter who is going to recite Quran. It is prescribed to do wudu before reciting Quran, because it comes under the heading of remembering Allah (dhikr).

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.



Is being in a state of purity stipulated in order to do the prostration of recitation?

This is an issue concerning which the scholars differed. The majority of scholars, including the four madhabs, are of the view that being in a state of purity is stipulated in order to do the prostration of recitation.

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There is no difference of opinion that the prostration of recitation is subject to the same stipulations as prayer in terms of being free from both ritual impurity and physical impurity, forming the intention, facing towards the qiblah and doing it at the right time [that is, when you hear the verse in which a prostration of recitation is required]. That is apart from what al-Bukhari narrated from Ibn `Umar, that he used to prostrate without being in a state of purity. Ibn al-Mundhir also narrated that from ash-Sha`bi.

End quote from *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, 9/438.

Who are those who said that it is not stipulated that one should be in a state of purity in order to do the prostration of recitation?

Some of the scholars favoured the view of Ibn `Umar, and said that it is not stipulated that one should be in a state of purity in order to do the prostration of recitation. These scholars include Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him).

Al-Fatawa al-Kubra, 5/340.

Among contemporary scholars, this view was favoured by the Permanent Committee for Academic Research and Ifta', as mentioned in *Fatawa al-Lajnah*, 7/263; and by Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz ibn Baz



and Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on them).

The evidence for that is found in hadiths and in the actions of the Sahabah

Their argument is that the hadiths which speak of the prostration of recitation do not indicate that it is stipulated that one should be in a state of purity; rather it is more likely that they indicate that that is not stipulated.

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

There is nothing in the hadiths about the prostration of recitation to suggest that the one who prostrates should have wudu. Those who prostrated with the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) were those who listened to his recitation, and there is no report from him to suggest that he instructed any of them to do wudu; moreover it is very unlikely that they would all have had wudu. Furthermore, the polytheists also prostrated with him, as noted above, and they were impure and even if they did wudu, it would not have been not valid.

End quote from *Nayl al-Awtar*, 5/347.

The hadith which mentions that the polytheists prostrated was narrated by al- Bukhari (1071) from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) and says that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) prostrated during the recitation of [Surat] an-Najm, and the Muslims, the polytheists, the jinn and the humans prostrated with him.

Al-Bukhari included this report in a chapter entitled Chapter: Prostration of the Muslims with the polytheists, and the polytheist is impure and cannot have wudu; Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) used to prostrate without having done wudu.

The evidence in this hadith is the fact that the polytheists did not purify themselves, and it would not have been valid on their part if they had done that. It is unlikely that all of the Muslims would have had wudu at that moment, yet despite that there is no report to indicate that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) rebuked the polytheists for prostrating because they were not in a state of purity, or that he told the Muslims that that was stipulated.



Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

He – Ibn Rushd – said: it may be possible to reconcile the chapter heading with the report of Ibn `Umar by noting that it is unlikely that all the Muslims present when the verse was recited had wudu, because they were not prepared for that. If that was the case, then those who went ahead and prostrated without wudu did so for fear of missing the prostration, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) approved of that; therefore we may conclude from that that it is permissible to prostrate without having done wudu, when it is difficult to do wudu. This is supported by the fact that the wording of the text says “and the Muslims, the polytheists, the jinn and the humans prostrated with him.” Ibn `Abbas said that everyone prostrated, and among them were those whose wudu would not be valid (even if they did it), which implies that this prostration must be valid with or without wudu. And Allah knows best.

End quote from *Al-Fat-h*, 2/554.

Fatwas of contemporary scholars about prostrating without being in a state of purity

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *Fatawa Nur `ala ad-Darb*, 10/461: The correct view is that it is not stipulated that one should be in a state of purity in order to do the prostration of recitation and gratitude, because a person may recite without being in a state of purity, and he may prostrate, praise be to Allah. He may hear good news that brings him joy, so he does the prostration of gratitude. When news came to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that made him happy, he would prostrate to Allah in gratitude, and he would recite Quran to his companions, and when he came to a verse in which there was a sajdah, he would prostrate and they would prostrate with him, and he did not say to them: No one should prostrate unless he is in a state of purity. It is well known that any gathering will include those who are in a state of purity (have wudu) and those who are not in a state of purity, so if being in a state of purity was stipulated, he would have said to them: Whoever is not in a state of purity should not prostrate. The fact that he did not say that indicates that being in a state of purity is not stipulated



in this case.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Is it permissible for one who does not have wudu to do the prostration of recitation or gratitude?

He replied: The ruling on this matter is based on the difference of scholarly opinion regarding the prostration of recitation and of gratitude: are they like prayer or not? If we say that they are like prayer, then it is obligatory to be in a state of purity in order to do them, but if we say that they are not like prayer, then it is not obligatory to be in a state of purity in order to do them.

The one who examines the reports of the Sunnah will realize that they are not like prayer, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to do the prostration of recitation, and there is no report from him to indicate that he used to say takbir when he prostrated and when he rose from prostration, or that he said the taslim, except for a hadith narrated by Abu Dawud about saying takbir for the prostration but not when rising from it, and he would not say the taslim either.

The one who examines the reports about the Prophet's prostration of recitation or of gratitude will realise that it does not come under the heading of prayer. Based on that, the prostration of recitation and the prostration of gratitude are not like prayer, and as that is the case, it is not forbidden for one who does not have wudu to do the prostration of recitation or of gratitude. It is soundly narrated from `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that he used to do the prostration of recitation without wudu.

Undoubtedly the best is for a person to do wudu, especially the reciter who is going to recite Quran. It is prescribed to do wudu before reciting Quran, because it comes under the heading of remembering Allah (dhikr), and wudu is prescribed for all dhikr.

End quote from *Majmu` Fatawa wa Rasa'il al-`Uthaymin*, 11/215; see also *Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 4/90.



What is more likely to be correct and more prudent regarding the ruling on doing the prostration of recitation without wudu

But what is more prudent in all cases is not to prostrate except when one is in a state of purity, just as it is appropriate to recite Quran when in a state of purity. End quote. This is what Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin said in more than one place. See: *Al-Mumti`*, 1/327 and 14/310; *Fatawa Nur `ala ad-Darb*, 8/2.

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. [162634](#), [140804](#), [480298](#), [5126](#) and [22650](#).

And Allah knows best.