



33 Ways of Developing  
**AL-KHUSHOO'**  
Humility and Devotion in Prayer

٣٣ سبباً للخشوع في الصلاة

Muhammad Şālih Al-Munajjid

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# **33 WAYS OF DEVELOPING KHUSHOO' IN SALAAH**

**Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid**

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## THE AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Bismillaah il-Rahmaan il-Raheem

In the Name of Allaah, Most Gracious Most Merciful

Praise be to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds, Who has said in His book (interpretation of the meaning), “...and stand before Allaah with obedience” [al-Baqarah 2:238] and has said concerning the prayer (interpretation of the meaning): “... and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for al-khaashi’oon...” [al-Baqarah 2:45]; and peace and blessings be upon the leader of the pious, the chief of al-khaashi’oon, Muhammad the Messenger of Allaah, and on all his family and companions.

Salaah is the greatest of the practical pillars of Islam, and khushoo’ in prayer is required by sharee’ah. When Iblees, the enemy of Allaah, vowed to mislead and tempt the sons of Adam and said “*Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left...*” [al-A’raaf 7:17, interpretation of the meaning], one of his most significant plots became to divert people from salaah by all possible means and to whisper to them during their prayer so as to deprive them of the joy of this worship and cause them to lose the reward for it. As khushoo’ will be the first thing to disappear from the earth, and we are living in the last times, the words of Hudhayfah (may Allaah be pleased with him) are particularly pertinent to us: “*The first thing of your religion that you will lose is khushoo’, and the last thing that you will lose of your religion is salaah. There may be a person praying who has no goodness in him, and soon you will enter the mosque and not find anyone who has khushoo’.*” (al-Madaarij, 1/521).

Because of what every person knows about himself, and because of the complaints that one hears from many people about *waswaas* (insinuating thoughts from Shaytaan) during the salaah and the loss of khushoo’, the need for some discussion of this matter is quite obvious. The following is a reminder to myself and to my Muslim brothers, and I ask Allaah to make it of benefit.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “*Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their salaah (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.*” [al- Mu’minoos 23:1-2] – i.e., fearing Allaah and in a calm manner. Khushoo’ means calmness, serenity, tranquillity, dignity and humility. What makes a person have this khushoo’ is fear of Allaah and the sense that He is always watching. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Daar al-Sha’b edn., 6/414). Khushoo’ means

that the heart stands before the Lord in humility and submission. (al-Madaarij, 1/520).

It was reported that Mujaahid said: “*...and stand before Allaah with obedience’ [al- Baqarah 2:238 – interpretation of the meaning] – part of obedience is to bow, to be solemn and submissive, to lower one’s gaze and to humble oneself out of fear of Allaah, may He be glorified.*” (Ta’zeem Qadr al-Salaah, 1/188).

The site of khushoo’ is the heart, and its effects are manifested in the physical body. The various faculties follow the heart: if the heart is corrupted by negligence or insinuating whispers from Shaytaan, the worship of the body’s faculties will also be corrupt. The heart is like a king and the faculties are like his troops who follow his orders and go where they are commanded. If the king is deposed, his followers are lost, which is like what happens when the heart does not worship properly.

Making a show of khushoo’ is condemned. Among the signs of sincerity are:

## CONCEALMENT OF KHUSHOO'

Hudhayfah (may Allaah be pleased with him) used to say: *“Beware of the khushoo’ of hypocrisy.”* He was asked, *“What is the khushoo’ of hypocrisy?”* He said, *“When the body shows khushoo’ but there is no khushoo’ in the heart.”* Fudayl ibn ‘Ayaad said: *“It was disliked for a man to show more khushoo’ than he had in his heart.”* One of them saw a man showing khushoo’ in his shoulders and body, and said, *“O So and so, khushoo’ is here”* – and he pointed to his chest, *“not here”* – and he pointed to his shoulders. (al-Madaarij, 1/521)

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, explaining the difference between the khushoo’ of true faith and the khushoo’ of hypocrisy: “The khushoo’ of true faith is when the heart feels aware and humble before the greatness and glory of Allaah, and is filled with awe, fear and shyness, so that the heart is utterly humbled before Allaah and broken, as it were, with fear, shyness, love and the recognition of the blessings of Allaah and its own sins. So no doubt the khushoo’ of the heart is followed by the khushoo’ of the body. As for the khushoo’ of hypocrisy, it is something that is put on with a great show, but there is no khushoo’ in the heart. One of the Sahaabah used to say, ‘I seek refuge with Allaah from the khushoo’ of hypocrisy.’ It was said to him, ‘What is the khushoo’ of hypocrisy?’ He said, ‘When the body appears to have khushoo’ but there is no khushoo’ in the heart.’ The person who truly feels khushoo’ before Allaah is a person who no longer feels the flames of physical desire; his heart is pure and is filled with the light of the greatness of Allaah. His own selfish desires have died because of the fear and awe which have filled his heart to overflowing so that his physical faculties have calmed down, his heart has become dignified and feels secure in Allaah the remembrance of Him, and tranquillity descends upon him from his Lord. So he has become humble (*mukhbit*) before Allaah, and the one who is humble is the one who is assured. Land that is “*mukhbit*” is land that is low-lying, in which water settles, so the heart that is “*mukhbit*” is humble and content, like a low-lying spot of land into which water flows and settles. The sign of this is that a person prostrates to his Lord out of respect and humility, and never raises his head until he meets Him. The arrogant heart, on the other hand, is one that is content with its arrogance and raises itself up like an elevated portion of land in which water never settles. This is the khushoo’ of true faith.”

As for overdoing it, and the khushoo’ of hypocrisy, this is the attitude of a person who tries to make a great show of khushoo’, but deep down he is still filled with desires. So on the outside he appears to have khushoo’, but the snake of the valley



and the lion of the forest reside within him, watching for prey. (Al-Rooh, p. 314, Daar al-Firk edn., Jordan).

Khushoo' in prayer happens when a person empties his heart for it (prayer), and focuses on it to the exclusion of all else, and prefers it to everything else. Only then does he find comfort and joy in it, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *"... and my joy has been made in salaah."* (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 5/456. The hadeeth is in Musnad Ahmad, 3/128 and Saheeh al-Jaami', 3124).

Allaah has mentioned *al-khaashi'eena wa'l-khaashi'aat* (men and women who are humble (before their Lord)), and described this quality as one of the qualities of those who are chosen. He tells us that He has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e., Paradise). [See al-Ahzaab 33:35].

One of the benefits of khushoo' is that it makes prayer easier for a person. Allaah tells us (interpretation of the meaning): *"And seek help in patience and al-salaah (the prayer), and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for al-khaashi'oon [i.e., the true believers, those who obey Allaah with full submission, fera much from His Punishment, and believe in His Promise and in His Warnings]"* [al-Baqarah 2:45]. The meaning is that the burden of prayer is heavy indeed, except for those who have khushoo'. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 1/125). Khushoo' is very important, but it is something that is easily lost and is rarely seen, especially in our own times, which are the last times. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *"The first thing to be lifted up (taken away) from this ummah will be khushoo', until you will see no one who has khushoo'."* (Al-Haythami said in al-Majma', 2/136: It was reported by al-Tabaraani in al-Kabeer, and its isnaad is hasan. See also Saheeh al-Targheeb, no. 543. He said it is saheeh).

## RULINGS ON KHUSHOO'

According to the most correct view, khushoo' is obligatory. Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah], may Allaah have mercy on him, said: "Allaah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *'And seek help in patience and al-salaah (the prayer), and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for al-khaashi'oon ...'* [al-Baqarah 2:45]. This implies condemnation of those who are not khaashi'oon... Condemnation only applies when something obligatory is not done, or when something forbidden is done. If those who do not have khushoo' are to be condemned, this indicates that khushoo' is obligatory (waajib)... The fact that khushoo' is obligatory is also indicated by the aayaat (interpretation of the meaning): *'Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their salaah (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness... These are indeed the inheritors, who shall inherit the Firdaws (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever.'* [al-Mu'minoon 23:1-2, 10-11] Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, tells us that these are the ones who will inherit Firdaws (Paradise), which implies that no-one else will do so... Khushoo' is obligatory in prayer, and this includes calmness and khushoo' [the original says 'khushoo'; perhaps what is meant is khudoo' meaning submission, humility]. Whoever pecks like a crow in his sujood (prostration) does not have khushoo', and whoever does not raise his head fully from rukoo' (bowing) and pause for a while before going down into sujood is not calm, because calmness implies doing things at a measured pace, so the person who does not do things at a measured pace is not calm. Whoever is not calm does not have khushoo' in his rukoo' or sujood, and whoever does not have khushoo' is a sinner... Another indication that khushoo' in prayer is obligatory is the fact that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) warned those who do not have khushoo', such as the one who lifts up his gaze to the sky (in prayer), because this movement and raising of the gaze goes against the idea of khushoo'..." (Majma' al-Fataawa, 22/553-558).

Concerning the virtues of khushoo' and as a warning to the one who neglects it, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *"Five prayers which Allaah has made obligatory. Whoever does wudoo' properly for them, prays them on time, does rukoo' properly and has perfect khushoo', it is a promise from Allaah that he will be forgiven, but whoever does not do this, has no such promise – if Allaah wishes, He will forgive him, and if He wishes, He will punish him."* (Reported by Abu Dawood, no. 425; Saheeh al-Jaami', 3242).

Concerning the virtues of khushoo', the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also said: *"Whoever does wudoo' and does it well, then prays*

*two rak'ahs focusing on them completely [according to another report: and does not think of anything else], will be forgiven all his previous sins [according to another report: will be guaranteed Paradise].” (Al-Bukhaari, al-Bagha edn., no. 158; al-Nisaa'i, 1/95; Saheeh al- Jaami', 6166).*

When we look at the things that help us to have khushoo' in prayer, we find that they may be divided into two types: things that help you to have and to strengthen khushoo', and warding off the things that reduce and weaken khushoo'. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) explained the things that help us to have khushoo':

“Two things help us to [develop khushoo']: a strong desire to do what is obligatory, and weakness of distractions.

With regard to the first, the strong desire to do what is obligatory:

[this means that] a person strives hard to focus on what he is saying and doing, pondering on the meanings of the Qur'an recitation, dhikr and du'aa's, and keeping in mind the fact that he is speaking to Allaah as if he sees Him, for when he is standing in prayer, he is talking to his Lord.

Ihsaan means 'that you worship Allaah as if you see Him, and if you cannot see Him, He can see you.' The more the slave tastes the sweetness of salaah, the more attracted he will be to it, and this has to do with the strength of his eemaan.

The means of strengthening eemaan are many, and this is why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to say, *'In your world, women and perfume have been made dear to me, and my joy is in prayer.'* According to another hadeeth, he said, 'Let us find comfort in prayer, O Bilaal' – he did not say, 'Let us get it over and done with.'

With regard to the second, weakness of distractions:

This means striving to push away all distractions that make you think of something other than the prayer itself, and warding off thoughts that keep you mind off the purpose of the prayer. This is something which differs from one person to another, because the extent of waswaas has to do with the extent of one's doubts and desires and the heart's focus and dependence on what it loves, and its efforts to avoid what it dislikes.” (Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 22/606-607)

On the basis of this division, we will now discuss some of the means of developing Khushoo'.

## THE MEANS OF DEVELOPING KHUSHOO'

### STRIVING TO GAIN THAT WHICH GIVES AND STRENGTHENS KHUSHOO'

This can be achieved in several ways, such as the following:

#### PREPARING ONESELF FOR PRAYER PROPERLY

For example:

By repeating the words of the adhaan after the muezzin;

By pronouncing the du'aa' to be recited after the adhaan: *“Allaahummah Rabba haadhihi'l-da'wati'l-taammah wa'salaati'l-qaa'imah, aati Muhammadan il-waseelata wa'l-fadeelah, wab'ath-hu'l-maqaam al-mahmood alladhi wa'adtah* (O Allaah, Lord of this perfect call and the prayer to be offered, grant Muhammad the privilege (of interceding) and also the eminence, and resurrect him to the praised position that You have promised)”;

Reciting du'aa' between the adhaan and the iqaamah;

Doing wudoo' properly, saying Bismillaah before it and making dhikr and saying the du'aa' after it, *“Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wahdahu laa shareekah lah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluhu* (I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger)” and *“Allaahummaj'alni min al-tawwaabeena waj'alni min al-mutatahhireen* (O Allaah, make me of those who repent and make me of those who purify themselves)”;

Using siwaak to cleanse and perfume the mouth that is going to recite Qur'aan in a short while, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *“Purify your mouths for the Qur'aan.”* (Reported by al-Bazaar, who said: we do not have it with any better isnaad than this. Kashf al-Astaar, 1/242. Al-Haythami said: its men are thiqaat. 2/99. Al-Albaani said: its isnaad is jayyid. Al-Saheehah, 1213);

Wearing one's best and cleanest clothes, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *“O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes) while praying...”* [al-A'raaf 7:31]. Allaah is most deserving of seeing us “take our adornment” for Him. Clean, pleasant smelling clothes are also more comfortable and relaxing, unlike clothes for sleeping or working in.

We should also prepare ourselves by covering our ‘awrah properly, purifying the spot where we are going to pray, getting ready early and waiting for the prayer, and making the rows straight and solid, without any gaps, because the shayaateen come in through the gaps in the rows.

### **MOVING AT A MEASURED PACE DURING PRAYER**

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to move at a measured pace during salaah, allowing every bone to return to its place. (Its **isnaad** is classed as saheeh in *Sifat al-Salaat*, p. 134, 11th edn. Ibn Khuzaymah also classed it as saheeh as mentioned by al-Haafiz in *al-Fath*, 2/308). He commanded those who were not doing their prayer properly to do this too. He said, *“None of you has prayed properly until he does this.”* (Reported by Abu Dawood, 1/536, no. 858).

Abu Qutaadah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *‘The worst type of thief is the one who steals from his prayer.’* He said, *‘O Messenger of Allaah, how can a person steal from his prayer?’* He said, *‘By not doing rukoo’ and sujood properly.’*” (Reported by Ahmad and al-Haakim, 1/229; Saheeh al-Jaami’, 997).

Abu ‘Abd-Allaah al-Ash’ari (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, *‘The one who does not do rukoo’ properly, and pecks in sujood, is like a starving man who eats only one or two dates; it does not do him any good at all.’*” (Reported by al-Tabaraani in *al-Kabeer*, 4/115. In Saheeh al-Jaami’ it says, hasan).

The one who does not move at a measured pace in his prayer cannot have khushoo’ because haste is a barrier to khushoo’ and pecking like a crow is a barrier to reward.

### **REMEMBERING DEATH WHILST PRAYING**

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *“Remember death in your prayer, for the man who remembers death during his prayer is bound to pray properly, and pray the prayer of a man who does not think that he will pray any other prayer.”* (al-Silsilat al-Saheehah by al-Albaani, 1421. It was reported from al-Suyooti that al-Haafiz ibn Hajar classed this hadeeth as hasan).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also advised Abu Ayyoob (may Allaah be pleased with him): *“When you stand up to pray, pray a*