

Sajda Upon the Ground

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Ali Al-Ahmadi

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SHARES

Sub Title:

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This Text examines why Shi'a Muslims prostrate on clay or natural earth during prayer, while Sunni Muslims generally prostrate on carpets or clothing. Originally written in Arabic by Sheikh Ali Al-Ahmadi, *Sajda Upon the Ground* traces the practice of prostration from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (S) through the rulings of his companions and later jurists.

Drawing on both Sunni and Shi'a sources, the author argues that prostrating directly on the earth, stone, or inedible vegetation was the practice established by the Holy Prophet (S). The Text examines the hadith and jurisprudential evidence behind this practice and its place in early Islamic tradition.

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Translator's Preface

In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful

The initial motivation behind translating this book was a conversation with a friend who was raised in the tradition of Sunni Islam. He stated that he understood why Shi'a Muslims put their foreheads on clay tablets during prayer. He stated that the reason was that they wanted to put their foreheads on the clay

of Karbala, the land where the Prophet's grandson, Husayn (peace be upon them both) was martyred. Although it is true that the Shi'a have a special emotional connection to Karbala, and Shi'as believe that the best clay to prostrate upon is the clay of Karbala, it is not the reason why Shi'a Muslims prostrate upon clay. As the readers of this book will see, placing the forehead directly upon the ground is a tradition established by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and followed by the early Muslims.

It is hoped that through this book, myths about why Shi'as prostrate upon clay will be dispelled. This work gives English-speaking readers a window to the logic and inner workings of the study of *hadith* and allows Sunni Muslims to see that many aspects of Shi'a *Fiqh* are present in sources commonly cited by Sunni scholars. This book should be a bridge between the two main branches of our greater Islamic community. The views of many of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the top scholars of the generations of early Muslims who followed them are showcased in this book.

English-speaking readers may notice a certain awkwardness in the style of this text. This is due in part to the style of the original Arabic text which is a style characteristic of classical Islamic scholarship. The text before you has been translated into English from the Farsi version. There are some words, such as *sajda* and prostration, and *Fiqh* and jurisprudence, which will be used interchangeably throughout this translation. The word *sajda* is the Farsi equivalent of the Arabic word *sujud*, which is used in the original Arabic text of this work. I have translated the Arabic word "*ard*" as "ground." This is ground in the sense of "earth" (with a lowercase "e"). I have translated the word "*turab*" as "soil." "*Turab*" could also be translated as "dirt," but I refrained from doing so due to the association of "dirt" with uncleanness.

The original book has dozens of references to source material from both the Sunni and Shi'a communities. I have tried to refrain from including excessive Arabic references. Those who are interested in looking up the original Arabic references could do so by referring to the Arabic or Farsi editions of this book, which are freely available on the Internet. Also, the original Arabic and Farsi versions have extensive footnotes which are not included in this English edition. Perhaps a future English edition could include the footnotes and a bibliography.

Ali Beha

19 Ramadan 1441

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Things That Are Prostrated Upon in Prayer

It is noteworthy that there is no difference amongst Muslims in the fact that it is obligatory to prostrate during prayer and to do this twice in every *rakat*. Indeed, when it comes to *sajda*, all the differences between Sunnis and Shi'as are regarding the ancillary aspects and rules. For example, how to perform *sajda*, what are the essential aspects of *sajda*, what are the conditions, what will be a barrier from making *sajda*, and what to say during *sajda*.

One of the areas of disagreement when it comes to *sajda* is regarding what material is suitable to be prostrated upon and what material is it correct to prostrate upon. Through the course of time, this disagreement and debate have become more pronounced.

It is well known, and it has been written about in the book, "Islamic Jurisprudence According to the Four Schools," by Abd al-Rahman Jaziri, that the imams of the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence have said regarding *sajda*, "Prostration is permissible upon anything including, soil, rocks, pebbles, gravel, wool, cotton, and even upon the back of another person if it is very crowded."

In the book, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*, by Ibn Rushd, he writes, "The Muslims have differed about whether keeping one's hands hidden by clothing or placing the hands on the same surface that the face is placed on at the time of *sajda* is a condition of the correctness of the *sajda* or not."

He continues, "On this subject is the disagreement regarding prostration upon the turban and whether not prostrating upon the turban is a condition or not, and in this regard there are three groups: those who say prostrating upon the turban is not permissible under any circumstances, those who say it is permissible to prostrate upon the turban, and those who differentiate between a small portion of the turban, or a thick portion of the turban and say that in the first case, it is permissible, and in the second case, it is prohibited."

Others have said that as long as part of the forehead touches the ground while prostrating upon the turban, it is correct and permissible, but in any other case, it is not. This disagreement amongst the scholars of different schools of thought has been seen throughout history.

At any rate, Twelve-Imam Shi'as, following their Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) believe that *sajda* is only permissible upon the earth or ground, such as soil, sand, stones, pebbles, and that which has grown from the earth and is not clothing or food. To prove this claim, in addition to the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), they refer to the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrated by the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

Alterations Which Have Come About in Performing the Sajda

Whenever we consider the issue of *sajda* with sufficient contemplation and attention to detail, we realize that this issue has gone through several historical phases and transitions over the centuries since the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This issue has been affected by many factors and changes. These factors were not limited to mistakes or mere differences of opinion between scholars of jurisprudence and hadith, rather political intrigue and tribal prejudice played a role in the current differences of opinion we see regarding this issue.

We are not overstating the situation when we say that when we study the history of the beginning of Islam and we pay attention to the issue of *sajda*, we see that in the initial stages of its legislation, this issue had special qualities and circumstances of its own. In contrast, the issue of *sajda* has undergone changes in its qualities and circumstances over the course of time.

With this contemplation, we see that in the later years, *sajda* has turned into something completely different than what it was in the early days of Islam. This will become clear through an examination of the *hadith* and actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the traditions of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), the *tabi'een*, and the rulings of the jurists.

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The Four Periods of Sajda

The changes that have occurred in *sajda* can be divided into four distinct time periods which we have outlined below:

The first period: prostration upon the ground and parts of the ground, such as soil, sand, pebbles, stones, and *madar* (baked clay).

The second period: prostration upon the ground and its parts and that which grows from the earth. Also, *sajda* upon *khumra* (a detailed explanation of this word will come later) and mats woven from palm fiber. During this period *khumra* became a common household item and could be found in masjids and homes

alike.

During this period, the people of Mecca would pray in the *Jami'* Mosque and would place their foreheads upon a *tinfisa* (a palm fiber mat the width of a cubit) during prostration. After prayer, each person would gather his mat, carry it home on his shoulder, where it would be taken care of by a servant who would be assigned the task. (*Encyclopedia of Islam*)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) and his family would always use a *khumra* for prostration, to the point where Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) is quoted in a tradition as saying, "Our followers are not needless of four things: First, a *khumra* to pray upon..." (A detailed explanation will come later.)

Also during this period, we see that a large number of the Companions and the *tabi'een* would refrain from prostrating upon anything other than soil, to the point that they would place some soil on their *khumra* and prostrate on that as a precaution to ensure they were performing it correctly. Of course, this action was either the result of not being informed of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) actions or a mistake in *ijtihad*. (More on this will come later.)

As far as the reason behind weaving the *khumra*, it was said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and the Muslims would prostrate upon soil, *madar*, pebbles, and stones. However, the heat and cold would hurt them, to the point that the burning heat of the ground would burn their hands and faces. Also, on rainy days, their hands and faces would be covered in water and mud. The water and mud were the reason the floor of the masjid was later coated with sand and pebbles. The Muslims of the time complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about their discomfort in the burning heat and in the cold. Of course, it is noteworthy that at this time, they were known to move the pebbles on the floor around or cool them in their hands to alleviate the extreme heat somewhat and make it tolerable to make *sajda* upon.

At first, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not take any action based on the complaints of the Muslims. After a while, he allowed noon prayers on hot days to be delayed until it was not so hot. After this, based on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) instructions, the Muslims began weaving *khumras*.

Or, according to another narration, a group of Muslims began weaving *khumras* without any instruction from the Prophet (peace be upon him), but when he saw them using the *khumras*, he approved of it, and it thus became a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

The third period: prostration upon anything, regardless of whether it is from the earth or otherwise, such as clothing made from silk, cotton, or wool. Also, carpets and rugs woven from silk, wool, and cotton.

The fourth period: during this period prostration upon clothing emerged as a slogan of the Sunni community, and prostration upon soil was considered *bid'ah* (innovation) by the Sunni community and emerged as a slogan of the Twelve-Imam Shi'a community. In some cases it has gone farther than this,

and prostration upon soil has been considered idolatry and heterodoxy.

The Words of the Companions, the Tabi'een, and the Jurists

The Opinions and Rulings of the Companions

1. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud only prostrated upon soil.
2. Abu Bakr ibn Abi-Qahafa only prostrated upon soil.
3. Abdullah ibn Umar would prohibit people from prostrating upon their turbans, and he himself would prostrate upon a *khumra*. It is narrated that he would put his hands and forehead directly on the ground without any barrier.
4. Ubadah ibn As-Samit Al-Ansari Al-Khazraji stated that it was obligatory to make *sajda* upon the ground without any barrier.
5. Jabir ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari only considered *sajda* upon *hasbaa* (pebbles) to be permissible.
6. Uthman ibn Haneef would prostrate upon a *khumra*.
7. Khabbab ibn Al-Aratt considered it a duty to prostrate upon pebbles.
8. Amir al-Momineen Ali ibn Abi-Talib (peace be upon him) would prohibit *sajda* upon the turban and would command people to make *sajda* upon the ground without any barrier. The Imams of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) followed him in this.
9. Abdullah ibn Abbas considered touching the nose and the forehead to the ground during *sajda* to be obligatory and issued rulings in this regard. It has been attributed to him that he considered prostrating upon clothing to be permissible.

10. It is apparent from the words of Imam Malik and others that Umar ibn Al-Khattab considered *sajda* upon anything other than the ground to be impermissible when one has a choice, and issued rulings in this regard. As we saw earlier, most of the Companions considered it a duty to prostrate upon pebbles.
11. It has been narrated from Abu Huraira, Anas ibn Malik, Mughira ibn Shu'ba and Ibn Mas'ud that *sajda* is permissible on clothing and mats. (There will be more discussion about this later.)
12. Musayyib ibn Rafi' says that Umar ibn Al-Khattab said, "Whoever is bothered by the heat on Friday may spread his clothing out and prostrate upon it, and if it is too crowded, he may make prostration upon the back of the person in front of him." (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)

The Rulings of the Tabi'een and Those Who Followed Them

1. Masruq ibn Al-Ajda', one of the companions of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, would not allow *sajda* upon anything other than the ground, even on a ship.
2. Ibrahim An-Nakha'i, a jurist of Kufa who was also one the *tabi'een*, would stand on a *barda* and make *sajda* upon the ground. A narrator says, "We asked him what a *barda* is and he replied, 'a rug woven from palm fiber.'" In another narration it says, "He used to pray on a rug and prostrate on the ground." (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq and a number of other sources)
3. Ata, the student of Ibn Abbas, gave rulings as to the impermissibility of *sajda* upon *safa* and the necessity of performing *sajda* upon *bat-ha* (gravel).

Ibn Jurayj says, "I told Ata that I am going to pray on *safa*, whereas if I wanted to, I could find some *bat-ha* closeby. He said, 'No.' (meaning, do not pray on the *safa*) Then, I said to him, 'Could I pray on soil that has sand and clay, but no *bat-ha* even if I could find *bat-ha* close by?' He answered, 'If there is soil, it is sufficient, and there is nothing wrong with that.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)

It has also been narrated from Ibn Jurayj that he said, "I asked Ata, 'What is your opinion on prayer upon *khumra* and *wata* (carpet) and do you consider it permissible?' He answered, 'As long as it is not under the hands and face of the one who is praying, there is no problem, even if it is under his knees, because the has been made on the ground.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)

Ibn Jurayj also says, "Someone asked Ata, 'Do you permit prayer upon *jadam* (flat ground with some sand on it) if I wipe the dirt off my face afterward?' He answered, 'Yes.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)

It has been narrated that Ibn Jurayj said, "I told Ata, 'I pray in the masjid (prayer area) that I have in my house and that has a floor of marble and plaster, while there is no soil or *bat-ha*.' He answered, 'I do not like it and do not prefer it. *Bat-ha* is more preferable to me.' I asked him, 'If I have enough *bat-ha* to place my face on, will that amount be enough?' He said, 'Yes. If it is enough for one's face or your forehead and nose, there is no problem, even if there is no *bat-ha* under the hands.' I asked again, 'So, in your opinion, it is better to have all body parts involved in *sajda* on *bat-ha*?' He answered, 'Yes.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)

4. Ibn Sirin says, "I had a wound on my face, and I put a dressing on it. Then I asked Ubaidah As-Salmani, 'Should I make *sajda* upon it?' He answered, 'Open the dressing.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)

The reason behind the command to open the dressing is that the dressing prevents the forehead from touching the ground without a barrier. Ubaidah, who was one of the reciters of Quran and one of the great *tabi'een*, gave rulings that it is obligatory to make *sajda* upon the ground without any barrier.

5. Salih ibn Khaiwan As-Saba'i narrates the obligatory nature of *sajda* upon the ground from the Prophet (peace be upon him) and apparently, he bases his opinion on this *hadith*.

After narrating the *hadith*, Baihaqi says, "Salih ibn Khaiwan, who is trustworthy and among the *tabi'een*, narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man who was prostrating upon one side of his forehead while his turban was covering that portion of his forehead. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) pushed aside the turban from his forehead. (*Sunan Al-Kubra* of Baihaqi and others)

6. Harith Al-Ghanawi says, "Marra ibn Sharahil Al-Hamdani made *sajda* in such a way that the soil had left a scar on his forehead. When the man died, one his family members saw in a dream that his forehead was shining like a bright star." (*Sifat As-Safwa* of Ab al-Faraj

ibn Al-Jawzi)

7. For Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, the Umayyad Caliph, it was not enough to simply use a *khumra*. He would place some soil upon it, and prostrate upon that.
8. It has been narrated from Urwa ibn Zubayr that he considered it *makruh* to pray on anything other than the ground. This has been narrated from others as well.
9. Ibn Uyayna says, "I heard Razin, the *mawla* of Ibn Abbas, saying, 'Ali ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas wrote to me in a letter to send him some pieces of the stones of Al-Marwa to prostrate upon.'" (*Akhbar Makkah* of Al-Azraqi)
10. Hasan Al-Basri says, "There is no problem with prostrating upon a part of the turban." Similarly, it has been narrated from him that he said, "I saw a group prostrating upon their turbans while praying and one of them had his hand in his shirt." (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq) Bukhari stated that this was a matter of necessity.
11. It is narrated from Abu Duha that he said, "Shareeh used to prostrate upon his hat." (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)
12. Abd al-Rahman ibn Yazid used to prostrate upon his turban.
13. Zubayr asked Ibrahim An-Nakha'i, "Is it permissible to make *sajda* upon one's turban?" He answered, "*Sajda* upon the forehead (upon the ground) is preferable to me and better." (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)
14. Ibn Jurayj says, "I asked Nafi', the *mawla* of Ibn Umar, 'Did Ibn Umar consider it *makruh* to prostrate upon leveled ground and (as a result) look for sand and soil (to prostrate upon)?' He answered, 'No. He did not differentiate.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)

15. Muammar says, "I asked Az-Zuhri about *sajda* on *tinfisa*. He replied, 'There is no problem with it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray upon a *khumra*.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)
16. Hasan Al-Basri says, "There is no problem with a person praying upon a palm fiber rug or on a *khumra*." (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)
17. Ibn Tawus says, "I witnessed a rug being spread out for my father and he prayed upon it. I assumed this was because the area was dirty." (This is Tawus ibn Kayan Al-Yamani, one of the *tabi'een*.) (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)
18. Laith says, "I saw Tawus during the illness which preceded his death. He was praying on his rug and prostrating upon it." (*At-Tabaqat Al-Kubra* of Ibn Sa'd)
19. Muhammad ibn Rashed says, "I saw Mak-hul prostrating upon his turban. I asked him, 'Why are you prostrating on it?' He answered, 'It keeps the cold away from my eyes.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd Al-Razzaq)
20. Yunus narrates that Hasan Al-Basri used to pray upon a *tinfisa*. His feet and knees were on it, but he would put his hands and face on the ground or on a reed mat.
21. Ibn Sirin says, "Praying on a *tinfisa* is a new thing." (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
22. Sa'id Ibn Al-Musayyib says, "Jaber ibn Zayd considered praying upon a rug made of animal skin to be *makruh*, and he considered praying upon a rug made of plant fiber to be *mustahab*." (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
23. Abu Ubayda says, "Abdullah used to pray and he would not make *sajda* on anything other than the ground." (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)

24. Mujahid says, “There is nothing wrong with prostrating upon the ground and that which grows from it.” (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
25. Abu Hazim Al-Ashja’i narrates that the servant of Uzza said, “I heard that Abu Bakr forbade *sajda* and prayer upon *barathi*’.” (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
26. Hisham says his father considered it *makruh* to prostrate upon anything other than the ground. (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
27. Abd al-Malik ibn Sa’id says, “I saw Sa’id ibn Jubayr praying while standing on a rug and he prostrated on that rug.” (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
28. Nafi’ says that whatever Ibn Umar prayed on anything, he would make *sajda* upon that same thing. (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
29. Qays ibn Ebad Al-Qaysi would pray on his animal’s woolen saddle blanket. (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
30. Isma’il ibn Khalid says, “I saw Murra Al-Hamdani pray on his saddle blanket.” (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abu Shayba)
31. Umar considered *sajda* to be “placing the forehead upon the ground.” In other words, from Umar’s viewpoint, *sajda* means to place one’s forehead upon the ground. (*At-Taratib Al-Idariyya* of Al-Katani)

Viewpoints and Opinions of the Jurists

Ibn Battal says, “There is no difference of opinion amongst the jurists of the cities regarding the permissibility of *sajda* upon *khumra* except for that which has been narrated about Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz that he used to bring some soil to his place of prayer and put it on his *khumra* and prostrate on that. Also, there is that which has been narrated from Urwa ibn Az-Zubayr that he did not approve of *sajda*

upon anything other than the earth. Of course, this opinion has been narrated from others as well.

(*Sharh Al-Ahwadhi Ala Jami At-Tirmidhi and Fat-h Al-Bari*)

In his book, *Al-Umm*, Ash-Shafi'i writes, "If a person puts his forehead upon the ground during *sajda* and clothing or something else becomes a barrier between his forehead and the ground, such a *sajda* is not correct. An exception is made if the person has a wound on his forehead. In this case, he has a valid excuse. If he puts a piece of cloth over the wound and allows even a small portion of his forehead to make contact with the ground, even this much is sufficient for *sajda* to have taken place while a small portion of the forehead has reached the ground."

He continues, "I would like that the one saying his prayers would place his hands directly on the ground regardless of how hot or cold the weather is, but if it is the case that he did not do this and he covered his hands to protect them from the cold or heat, he does not need to repeat his prayers or perform *sajda sahw*."

After a long discussion on the subject, he writes, "The face must remain uncovered during the prayer, and it is not necessary for the knees and the feet to be uncovered."

In explaining this *hadith*, "When we were praying with the Prophet (peace be upon him), one of us put a corner of his clothing down on the place where he was making *sajda* because of the intense heat," Ibn Hajar says, "The point that is being alluded to in this *hadith* is that in *sajda*, the rule is that there be no barrier between the ground and the forehead. The exception to this rule is the inability to make *sajda* without a barrier, in which case the rule is suspended or put on hold." (*Fat-h Al-Bari*)

In his book, *An-Nil*, Ash-Shawkani, explaining the above-mentioned *hadith* writes, "This hadith points to the permissibility of prostrating upon clothing to protect oneself from heat. It alludes to the fact that the rule in *sajda* is that there be no barrier between the ground and the forehead because in the *hadith* the placing of clothing on the ground has suspended this rule due to inability."

In the same book, in the explanation of the *hadith* of Thabit ibn Samit, which says, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) was standing in prayer in the mosque of Bani Abd al-Ash-hal while wrapped in a cloak and he placed his hands on it during *sajda* to protect them from the cold pebbles," he writes, "This noble *hadith* shows that so long as the one who is praying has a valid excuse, he may protect himself with part of the clothing that he wearing, regardless of whether the excuse be rain, cold, or heat, as in the *hadith* of Ibn Abu-Shayba."

After narrating the *hadith* of Abu Sa'id, which says, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed on a palm fiber mat," Tirmidhi said, "In this regard, *hadiths* have been narrated from Anas and Mughira ibn Shu'ba as well."

Abu Eisa says, "The *hadith* of Abu Sa'id is *hasan* (good) and acting according to this precedent is prevalent among a majority of the scholars except for a group who choose to pray on the ground

because it is *mustahab*.” (*Sunan* of Tirmidhi)

After narrating the *hadith* of Jabir ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari which says, “I used to pray the noon prayer with the Prophet (peace be upon him). I would take a handful of sand and pebbles in my hand to allow it to cool and during *sajda* I would put my forehead upon the handful of sand and pebbles because of the intense heat, “ Baihaqi writes, “If *sajda* upon part of the clothing were permissible, it would be much easier than cooling off pebbles and using them in *sajda*. Then, there would be no need to cool the pebbles.”

The author says, “I say, if prostration upon clothing which one is wearing or that which is not wearable, such as a handkerchief or a rug made out of cotton, silk, or wool were unconditionally permissible, in this case there would be no need to prostrate upon soil, pebbles, or rock which has been heated in the sun, or cooled by the rain or winter cold because prostration upon clothing is many times easier than prostration on soil or rock.”

Malik has said, “Prostration upon *tinfisa*, carpets made of animal hair fiber, clothing, and leather is *makruh*.” He repeatedly stated that there is no problem standing, sitting, and praying upon them, but one must not prostrate upon them and one must not place the palms of the hands on them (during prostration). He did not see any prohibition in prostration upon *hasbaa* and things that grow from the earth. (*Fat-h Al-Bari*)

Malik says, “One must not prostrate upon clothing except in cold or heat, in which case it is permissible on the condition that the clothing be made of cotton.”

In continuing his discussion, he says, “I heard that Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Abdullah ibn Umar would prostrate upon clothing in cold and hot weather.”

He writes, “There is no problem standing on an animal’s blanket and praying ...and prostrating upon the ground, or standing upon clothing or a mat and the like, and prostrating upon a *khumra* or a palm fiber mat.” (*Al-Mudawwanat al-Kubra*)

In the book, *Aun Al-Ma’bud*, in the explanation of the *hadith* of Anas, which says, “In the intense heat, we were praying with the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). Each one of us who was unable to put his forehead on the ground would spread out his clothing and prostrate upon that,” it has come, “In this *hadith*, using clothing and other things during prostration and using them as a barrier between the ground and the face in order to protect against cold and heat has been considered permissible.”

Khattabi says, “People have differed in this regard. The majority of the jurists, such as Malik, Awza’i, Ahmad, *As-hab Ar-Ra’y*, Is-haq ibn Rahway consider it permissible.”

Ash-Shafi’i says, “The same way that prostrating upon the turban does not suffice and is not permissible, this is not permissible.” It is as if these words and this ruling of Ash-Shafi’i are an

interpretation of the *hadith* of Anas that the clothing that is spread out is different from what the person is wearing.

Later in *Aun Al-Ma'bud*, continuing, it says, "In my opinion Ash-Shafi'i considered it to be clothing which is separate (from one's body) and Baihaqi supported this interpretation with the *hadith* of Isma'ili (regarding holding pebbles in the hand until they cooled) saying, 'If prostration upon clothing which one is wearing were permissible, there would be no need to cool pebbles in one's hand, considering that this action takes time.'" (*Aun Al-Ma'bud ala Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud* of Azim Abadi)

In *Irshad As-Sari* after narrating the *hadith* of Anas, it has come, "Abu Hanifa, Malik, and Ishaq considered prostration upon clothing in intense heat to be permissible and in their ruling, they used the *hadith* of Anas as evidence. Umar ibn Al-Khattab and others have said the same thing. Ash-Shafi'i has interpreted this *hadith* as differentiating between clothing that is connected to the body and that which is separate from the body or that which is connected to the person, but does not move with the person when he moves, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, if one knowingly and wilfully prostrates upon something that moves when he moves, his prayer is invalid because clothing is considered part of a person. (*Irshad As-Sari fi Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari* of Qastalani)

The book *Al-Mudawwanat al-Kubra* mentions the opinions and rulings of Malik on this issue and ancillary discussions and we do not see any reason not to mention them here.

Malik says, "*Sajda* upon clothing is not permissible except in cold and heat, provided that the clothing is of cotton."

Ibn Al-Qasem says that Malik has said, "It has reached me that Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Abdullah ibn Umar would prostrate and place their hands upon clothing in cold and hot weather."

Sahnun, the author of *Al-Mudawwanat al-Kubra*, asked Ibn Al-Qasem if it is permissible to prostrate upon a saddle blanket or a small palm fiber mat in hot or cold weather. He replied, "We have not asked Malik about this, but he considered it *makruh* to prostrate upon clothing, even if it be made of cotton. I consider clothing to be like a saddle blanket or a palm fiber mat. Therefore, by generalizing the subject, Malik allowed *sajda* upon clothing in cold and hot weather."

Sahnun asked Ibn Al-Qasem again, "In your opinion, is the saddle blanket considered to be like clothing?"

He answered, "Yes, ...Malik says there is no problem with praying upon the ornamental rug which is placed over the saddle blanket and above which sits the saddle as long as the prostration takes place on the ground. Also, there is no problem with standing on clothing or a rug or such things during prayer on the condition that a *khumra* or a palm fiber mat or something such as these things be used for placing the hands and face on during prostration."

He says, "Ibn Wahab told me, 'A man narrated from Ibn Abbas that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to fend off the heat and the cold of the ground with his abundance of clothing.'"

Ibn Wahab says, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) witnessed a man who was prostrating on one side of his forehead while it was covered with a portion of his turban. Then, the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) moved his turban away from his face."

Waki' narrates from Sufyan, and he narrates from Umar (a man from the Ansar), "I saw Anas ibn Malik who was sitting in prayer on a *tinfisa* and in front of him was a *khumra* which he used for *sajda*."

Malik says about one who prostrates on his turban, "It is best if he pushes away a portion of his turban from his face so that his forehead makes contact with the ground." I (Ibn Al-Qasem) said, "So, is it permissible for one to make *sajda* upon his turban?" Malik answered, "I do not like it and I do not prefer it, but if someone does so, it is not necessary to repeat the prayer."

Ibn Al-Qasem says, "Malik said, 'It is not preferable to me for someone to take a handful of pebbles or soil from a shady area and take it with him to a sunny place and make *sajda* upon it.' Malik did not like for a Muslim to make *sajda* upon a *tinfisa*, a rug woven of animal hair, clothing, or leather. He would say, 'There is no problem with sitting and praying on them, but one must not make *sajda* upon them. Also, one must not place his hands on them during *sajda*.' In Malik's view, there is no problem with making *sajda* on pebbles and things that grow from the earth and putting one's hands on them in *sajda*."

Malik says, "In my belief, one who is praying must put his hands on the same surface that he puts his face on." He also says, "There is nothing wrong with spreading out clothing and praying on that and putting one's face and hands on that during *sajda* to protect against heat or cold."

After narrating a *hadith* about praying on a reed mat, Al-Ahwadhi says, "Most of the learned scholars have acted according to this *hadith*, except for a group who choose to pray on the ground because it is *mustahab*."

In his book, the writer of *An-Nil* writes, "There are several *hadiths* about prayer on a palm fiber mat being *mustahab* that have been narrated by Zaid ibn Thabit, Abu Dhar, Jaber ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari, Abdullah ibn Umar, Sa'id ibn Musayib, Mak-houl, and a number of the *tabi'een*. Sa'id ibn Musayib stated directly that this is *sunnah*."

Abd al-Rahman ibn Yazid always made *sajda* on his turban.

Imam Malik ibn Anas gave rulings that it is *mustahab* to make *sajda* upon the ground and that which grows from the ground.

Ibn Qayyim writes, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) would make *sajda* with his forehead and nose without his turban getting in the way. In no *hadith* that is correct or good has it been narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrated upon his turban. However, Abd al-Razzaq in *Al-Musannaf*

narrates the *hadith* of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to make *sajda* upon his turban.” (*Zad Al-Ma’ad* of Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawzi)

This *hadith* is from Abdullah ibn Muhriz and is *matruk* and Abu Ahmed narrates it from the *hadith* of Jaber but it is the narration of Amr ibn Shahr from Jaber Al-Ju’fi, both of which are *matruk*, and it can be said that a *matruk* has narrated from a *matruk*.

In *Al-Marasil*, Abu Dawud wrote, “The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) witnessed a man praying in the mosque who was making *sajda* while his forehead was covered by his turban. Then, the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) moved the man’s turban out of the way. The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) would usually make *sajda* on the ground and sometimes on water and mud, on *khumra*, and on a mat of woven palm stems and leaves.

That which has been mentioned until here is a summary of the viewpoints of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), the scholars, and the jurists which have reached us on the issue of *sajda*. These statements and opinions can be summarized as follows:

Sajda upon soil, gravel, and pebbles, if it is possible, is obligatory, and in the case that *sajda* upon them is not possible, *sajda* upon any part of the ground is permissible. This opinion has been narrated from Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, Ata, and Ibn Masud. Some have said that *sajda* is purely obligatory, such as Abu Bakr, Masruq, Ubadah, and Ibrahim An-Nakha’i.

Others have said that *sajda* upon the ground or anything that grows from it is obligatory if one has a choice, and it is permissible to make *sajda* upon clothing if the ground is too hot or too cold as Ibn Umar, Umar, Malik, Abu Hanifa, Ibn Hajar, Shawkani, Ahmed, Awza’i, Is-haq ibn Rahwayh, and As-hab Ar-Ra’y have said.

Others have said that *sajda* upon the ground or anything that grows from it is obligatory if one has a choice, and it is permissible to make *sajda* upon clothing woven from cotton if the ground is too hot or too cold, keeping in mind that *sajda* directly on the ground is *mustahab*, as has been narrated from Ash-Shafi’i and Malik.

Others have said or have had attributed to them that *sajda* upon the ground or anything that grows from it, as well as any type of clothing is permissible as Abu Hurairah, Makhoul, Anas, and the majority of the jurists that came after the fourth century AH have said or have had attributed to them.

There is a moderate voice and a middle path and it is this: that *sajda* upon the ground or anything that grows from it is obligatory if one has a choice and it is permissible upon other than the ground and that which grows upon it in case of necessity, whether that necessity be hot or cold weather or otherwise.

In the coming pages we will examine the arguments and the discussions surrounding them, God willing.

The First Period: Sajda Upon Soil and Parts of the Ground

The First Group of Arguments in Favor of the Obligatory Nature of Sajda Upon the Ground

The Arguments of the Shi'a on the Subject of Sajda Upon Soil and Parts of the Ground

The Shi'a, have advanced arguments in favor of their viewpoint from the narrations of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) and they, in turn, have narrated with their own direct chain of righteous narrators from the Prophet (peace be upon him). In addition, they have brought arguments from the words and actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as narrated by the Sunni authors in their books, as well as the words and actions of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). We are to present what has reached us of these arguments in the following pages.

The Hadith of “Ju’ilat li al-ard,” Its Words and Credentials

In a *hadith*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is quoted as saying, “*Ju’ilat li al-ard masjidan wa tahuran.*” This means, “The ground (earth) has been made for me as a place of prayer (*sajda*) and purification.” (This *hadith* has been narrated in dozens of Sunni and Shi'a sources, such as Muslim, Bukhari, Ahmed, Nisa'i, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Kulayni's *Al-Kafi*, Saduq's *Khisal*, and *Bihar al-Anwar* of Majlisi) This saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is evidence of the obligatory nature of performing *sajda* upon the ground. This *hadith* has been narrated in various forms, which we will bring in the following paragraphs.

Another wording is, “*Ju’ilat lanal ard kulluha masjidan wa tahuran,*” meaning, “The ground (earth) in its entirety has been made for us as a place of prayer (*sajda*) and purity.”

In another wording we see, “*Ju’ilat li al-ard tayyiba wa tahuran wa masjidan,*” meaning, “The ground has been made for me as a place of purity, purification, and prayer (*sajda*).”

Here are several versions of this *hadith*.

“*Ju’ilat laka wa li ummatikal ardu kulluha masjidan wa tuhan,*” meaning, “The entire earth has been

made as a place of prayer (*sajda*) and purity for you and your *umma* (nation).”

“*Innallaha ja’ala li al-ard masjidan wa tuhanan, aynama kuntu atayammam wa usalli alayha*,” meaning, “Verily Allah made the ground a place of prayer (*sajda*) and purity so that wherever I may be, I could make *tayammum* and pray on it.”

“*Ju’ilatil ardu laka wa li ummatik tuhanan wa masjidan*,” meaning, “The ground has been made for you and your *umma* as a purifier and a place of prayer (*sajda*).”

“*Ju’ilat li al-ard masjidan turabaha wa tuhanan*,” meaning, “The soil of the earth has been made for me a place of prayer (*sajda*) and purity.”

“*Ju’ilatil ardu masjidan wa turabuha tuhanan*,” meaning, “The earth has been made a place of prayer and its soil, a purity.”

" عن أبي أمامة الباهلي: أن رسول الله (ص) قال فضّلني ربي على الأنبياء عليهم الصلاة والسلام أو على الأمم بأربع قال أرسلت إلى الناس كافة، وجعلت الأرض كلها لي ولأمتي مسجداً وطهوراً فأينما أدركت رجلاً من أمتي الصلاة فعنده مسجده وعنده طهوره " الحديث.

“It is narrated from Abu Amama Al-Bahili that truly the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said, ‘My Lord has preferred me over the prophets (peace be upon them) or over the other nations in four things.’ Then he said, ‘I have been sent to all mankind. The entire earth is a place of *sajda* and purity for me and my nation. So, wherever a man from my nation finds himself at the time of prayer, there is his place of *sajda* and purification...”¹

[An Explanation Regarding This Noble Hadith](#)

There is no problem with the *hadith* as far as its chain of narration is concerned. This noble *hadith* is *mutawatir* and the great curators of *hadith* have mentioned it in their authoritative books.

The meaning of the *hadith*: this *hadith* points to the fact that the only thing that is permissible to prostrate upon is the ground. The subject for which the predicate “purity” has been affirmed is the same subject for which the predicate “a place of *sajda*” has been affirmed. If these two predicates had different subjects, it would be necessary to state each subject separately. Therefore, the same way that “purity” is affirmed for the earth, according to the aforementioned, this same earth is also a place of *sajda*.

Of course, it must be pointed out that there is no contradiction between interpreting the *hadith* this way and interpreting it thus: this *hadith* shows that *sajda* specifically belongs to God and does not have a specific place, rather the entire earth is a place of *sajda* for Muslims whose worship of God is unlike the People of the Book, who have restricted the worship of God to specific places, such as churches and temples.

These two simultaneous meanings do not negate each other as it is possible for multiple rules and meanings to be derived from the same statement. Rather, this is a specialty of the speech of the most eloquent of the prophets (peace be upon him), upon whose tongue the Quran was revealed, who grew up in the academy of linguistic fluency and eloquence.

The first interpretation can be understood from the words of Al-Jassas, "That ground which Allah has made as a place of *sajda* is that ground which Allah has made as a purity." (Al-Jassas, *Ahkam Al-Quran*)

Ibn Hajar referred to this point in his interpretation of "*ju'ilat li al-ardu masjidan*," when he wrote that "*masjid*" means "place of *sajda*" and "place of *sajda*" does not refer to a specific place. (*Fath Al-Bari*)

The author says, "When he (Ibn Hajar) defines "*masjid*" as "place of *sajda*," this is not a metaphorical meaning, it is the literal meaning of the word.

In his interpretation of the *hadith*, Al-Qastallani alludes to this definition when he says, "*Masjid* means the place of *sajda*." On the subject of *tayammum*, he interprets this *hadith* thus, "Malik and Abu Hanifa have cited this *hadith* as evidence that *tayammum* is permissible on all parts of the earth, but in the *hadith* of Hudhaifa, which has been narrated in *Sahih Muslim*, it has come, 'All of the earth has been made as a place of *sajda* and its soil has been made as a purifier for us whenever we do not have access to water.' In this *hadith*, "*ard*" has a specific meaning (soil), not a general meaning (Earth). Being a "purifier" is a quality of the soil.

In the book of Baihaqi, regarding the *hadith* of Abu Amama, it says, "Whenever the prayer time arrives for a person of my *umma* and he cannot find water, he can find the ground as a purifier and a place of *sajda*." In the *hadith* of Ahmad it says, "So, the soil is with him as his purifier and his place of *sajda*."

Bahr Ar-Ra'iq, after narrating the *hadith* that we are discussing, "*Ju'ilat li al-ard masjidan was tuhuran*," uses as evidence the above-mentioned *hadith* to show that the entire earth can be used for *tayammum*. He says, "The word 'the' in front of the word 'ground' (*al-ard* in Arabic) denotes the genus and nothing is excepted or excluded from it. Thus, as the entire '*ard*' is a place of *sajda*, the entire '*ard*' is a purifier." This was a summary of Bahr Ar-Ra'iq's arguments on the subject.

In the book *Al-Mu'tasar*, it says, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said, 'Tonight five things were granted to me which have never been granted to anyone before me. I have been sent to all people, ...and the earth has been made a place of *sajda* and purification for me so that wherever and whenever the time of prayer comes, I could make *tayammum* and pray. This issue was difficult for those who came before me. So, they would pray in their churches and temples.'"

The author of *Al-Mu'tasar*, using this *hadith* as evidence, proves that the ground which is a place of *sajda* is also a place of purification.

That which was said about a “*masjid*” being a “place of *sajda*” and the same thing that is a “purifier” is also a *masjid* is validated by the previously mentioned *hadith*, “So, wherever a man from my nation finds himself at the time of prayer, there is his place of *sajda* and purification...” This *hadith* uses the word “*masjid*,” not as a “place of prayer,” but as “a place of *sajda*.” To paraphrase, “in whichever time and place he finds himself, he can pray if he wants to.” Therefore, the meaning of the *hadith* becomes, “The ground (earth) has been established as a place of *sajda*. So, whenever a person stands for prayer, whatever he needs to make *sajda* upon, is present.” Additionally, it could also be understood from this *hadith* that a person is free to choose the location of his prayer.

Similarly, what has been written in *Sharh Aun Al-Ma’bud* reaffirms this meaning where it says, “The word ‘*masjid*’ means place of *sajda*, and *sajda* on the ground (earth) is not limited to any specific place. Of course, it is possible that a metaphorical meaning of the word ‘*masjid*’ is intended, meaning ‘that place which has been built for prayer.’ This metaphorical meaning could be a simile because when prayer is permissible on the whole earth, the earth becomes like a *masjid*.”

In his book, Hafidh elucidates this point when he says that the meaning of the *hadith* of *sajda* upon the ground is a literal meaning and that the other meaning is a metaphorical meaning. (*Fath Al-Bari*)

Yes, in some *hadiths* there has been some allusion to the metaphorical meaning. For example, there is the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) exhortation which was narrated by Hudhaifa, “*Ju’ilat li al-ardu masjidan wa tuhuran*,” meaning, “The earth has been made a place of *sajda* and its soil has been made a purifier for me.”

In this *hadith*, as can be seen, of all of the parts of the earth, the quality of being a purifier is attributed to the soil.

Along the lines of these *hadiths* is a *hadith* narrated from Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri, which says, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘All of the earth besides the bathrooms and the graves is a *masjid*.’” (*Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi*)

The possibility exists that putting the face directly on the ground without any barrier has been derived from the common usage and literal meaning of the word *sajda*. That which Bukhari has narrated is evidence of this. He says, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) read *sura An-Najm* and made *sajda*. All of the people in the *masjid* with him made *sadja* except for a man who had a handful of sand and pebbles and brought it up to his forehead and made *sajda*.”

Apparently, this *hadith* means that *sajda* is the act of being on the ground in a certain manner and this is why the man says that by putting the pebbles up to my forehead, I am somehow meeting the requirements of a *sajda*, not that it is an actual *sajda*. If *sajda* on other than the ground were enough, there would be no need to go to the difficulty of performing *sajda* on the ground, as there exists the possibility of performing *sajda* on clothing.

Therefore, in principle, *sajda* occurs when a person places his face on the ground, meaning soil, sand, rock, pebbles, *madar*, and unwearable and inedible plants. An exception is made in hot and cold weather, and when it is too crowded. In this case, prostrating upon clothing and the like has been permitted. In the future, we will discuss this further. This is what the jurists have claimed.

Hadiths Regarding Cooling Pebbles

1. Jabir ibn Abdullah Al-Ansari says, "I was praying the noon prayer with the Prophet (peace be upon him). I took a handful of pebbles and passed them from one hand to the other until they cooled so that I could place them on my forehead and use them during *sajda* due to the extreme heat." Ahmad has said, "Jaber said, 'I was praying the noon prayer in extreme heat with the Prophet (peace be upon him). Due to the extreme heat, I took a handful of pebbles and held them until they cooled so that I could use them for *sajda*.'" Baihaqi narrated it this way, "I was praying the noon prayer with the Prophet (peace be upon him). I took a handful of pebbles in my hand and held them until they cooled so that I could place them on the ground and prostrate upon them due to the extreme heat."
2. It has been narrated from Anas that he said, "In the intense heat, we were with the Prophet (peace be upon him). One of us took pebbles in his hand and when they cooled, he placed them on the ground and prostrated upon them." After narrating the *hadith* of Anas, Baihaqi says, "The Shaykh said, 'If prostration upon clothing connected to a person were permissible, this would be much easier than cooling pebbles in one's hand and putting them on the ground to prostrate upon.' I say, 'If prostration upon clothing were permissible, it would be much easier than cooling (pebbles) because just as prostration upon clothing connected to a person is easy, it would be just as easy to carry a cloth and lay the cloth down to prostrate upon.'" (Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam As-Saghir*)

Therefore, just as the aforementioned *hadith* points to the impermissibility of prostration upon clothing that is connected to the person, as the Shaykh understood, it also points to the impermissibility of prostration upon anything other than the ground.

3. In a *hadith*, Khabbab ibn Al-Aratt says, "We complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the intensity of the heat and how it was hurting our hands and foreheads during *sajda*, but he did not take any action based on our complaints."

In the words of Muslim, it has come, “Khabbab said, ‘We came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and complained about the heat, but he did not do anything related to our complaint.’”

The book, *Al-Bidaya wan-Nihaya* narrates the aforementioned *hadith* from Ahmad and Baihaqi and interprets it thus, “That which I understand from the *hadith* is that the second *hadith* is shorter than the first one, and secondly, it is unlikely that the Muslims, who had to endure being dragged over hot sand by the idolaters, having only their hands to protect their faces, would complain to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Think about it.”

The aforementioned *hadith* has been narrated in other words thus, “We complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the praying in the intense heat, but he did not pay any attention to our complaint.” (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shaybah)

4. Ibn Mas’ud narrates, “We complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the burning heat, but he did not pay attention to our complaint.” Many other *hadiths* with this same meaning have been narrated in other books. The point is that it was more than just Khabbab, Jaber, and Ibn Mas’ud who complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was a large group of the Companions. In at least two of the *hadiths*, the phrase appears, “We complained..., but he did not pay attention to *our* complaint.” The verb is plural. It shows that many of the Companions complained.

In his book, *An-Nihaya*, Ibn Kathir, in the section on the word “complained,” after narrating the *hadith* of Khabbab, he writes, “The jurists narrate this *hadith* in the chapter on *sajda* because the Companions used to use their turbans to protect their faces from the heat of the ground, but they were prohibited from doing so. When they complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not allow them to pray on the edges of their clothing.

In his notes on *As-Sunan* of An-Nisa’i, after quoting what has been mentioned in *An-Nihaya*, As-Suyuti wrote, “Al-Qurtubi said, ‘It is possible that the Prophet (peace be upon him) delayed the prayer until the weather cooled before he instructed (the Companions) to cool (the pebbles).’”

The author says, “What we can take away from these *hadiths* is that the Companions complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the discomfort they were feeling in their hands and faces from the cold and the extreme heat so that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would allow them to prostrate upon clothing that was attached to them, such as their turbans, or not attached to them, such as a piece of cloth or rug woven from cotton or silk (centuries later) or... Therefore, the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) lack of action regarding their complaint, taking into consideration his reputation for generosity, could mean nothing other than the impermissibility of *sajda* upon anything besides the ground.

5. Ab al-Walid said, “I asked Ibn Umar about the story behind covering the floor of the mosque in pebbles. He said, ‘One night, it rained heavily. We came to the mosque for the morning prayer and a man had come from the outskirts of town had brought some pebbles with him in his clothing. He spread the pebbles in front of him and prayed on them. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw this, he said, ‘What a nice rug!’ This was the beginning.”

In his *Wafa al-Wafa*, As-Samhudi narrates from Ab al-Walid, “I asked Ibn Umar about the pebbles in the mosque. He said, ‘One night it rained and the ground was wet. At this time, a man came with some pebbles and spread them out at his feet. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) had finished his prayer, he said, ‘This is very nice!’”

This *hadith* shows that the Companions were committed to praying on soil and mud, even in the rain, and would not prostrate upon any other thing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was also committed to this action. This affair reveals the impermissibility of *sajda* upon anything other than the ground. As-Samhudi narrates that it was not until the time of the Caliphate of Umar, that the floor of the mosque was covered in pebbles.

6. Hashem ibn Al-Hakam narrated, “I said to Abu Abdullah Ja’far ibn Muhammad As-Sadiq (peace be upon him), inform me about what it is permissible to make *sajda* upon and what is not permissible. He said, ‘*Sajda* is only permissible upon the ground or that which grows upon the ground except that which is edible or wearable.’ I said, ‘May I be sacrificed for you! What is the reason for this?’ He said, ‘Because *sajda* is humility before Allah, the Almighty. It is not proper that edibles and wearables be prostrated upon. The children of the *dunya* (material world) are the servants of that which they eat and wear. The person making *sajda*, is worshipping Allah in his *sajda*. Therefore, it is not proper for this person in a state of *sajda* to put his forehead on the idol of the children of the *dunya*, who have been deceived by it. At any rate, *sajda* upon the ground is better and it is the best way to show humility and submission to Allah, the Almighty.” (This *hadith* has been narrated in a number of sources, including *Bihar al-Anwar*.)

Hadiths which Point to Getting Soil on the Forehead and Placing the Forehead Directly on the Ground

1. Abdur Razzaq narrates from Khaled Al-Junhi that he said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw Suhaib prostrating, but it looked as if he were avoiding the soil. So, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him, 'Tarrib wajhaka ya Suhaib!' (Get soil on your face, Oh Suhaib!)" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abdur Razzaq)

The narrator does not describe the method by which Suhaib was avoiding the soil. He does not say whether or not Suhaib was using his turban, a cloth, clothing or something else to avoid putting his face on the soil. He only narrates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Suhaib to put his forehead upon the soil and get soil on his face. An order denotes the obligatory nature of something. Even if Suhaib were avoiding the soil by making *sajda* upon a palm fiber rug, a *khumra*, or smooth rock, this would change the significance of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) order from obligatory to *mustahab*. The reasoning behind this, as we will discuss later, is that *sajda* upon other than soil, as long as it is from the ground, is permissible.

2. It is narrated from Umm Salama (*Umm al-Mu'minin*) (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a servant of ours named Aflah blowing on the ground before *sajda* to get the dust out of the way. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'Ya Aflah! Tarrib!' ('Oh Aflah! Get soil on your face!')" (*Kanz al-Ummal*)
3. It is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Oh Rabah! Get soil on your face!" (*Kanz al-Ummal*). In the book, *Al-Isaba*, it is written, "Umm Salama (may Allah be pleased with her) said, 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) was passing by our servant, named Rabah, while he was praying and he blew at the ground (to get the dust out of the way). The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him, 'Get soil on your face.'"

In another narration, it is written, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'Oh Rabah! Do you not know that whoever blows has spoken?'" (*Usd al-ghabah fi marifat al-Sahabah*)

If the place of *sajda* is part of the ground, these two *hadiths* point to it being better to get soil on one's face during *sajda*. Otherwise, the order given in this *hadith* has the meaning that *sajda* upon soil is obligatory according to the rule that anything that is ordered becomes obligatory. Of course, this is not taking into account the invalidation or not of the prayer by blowing on the ground, as was mentioned in the *hadith*.

4. It is narrated from *Umm al-Mu'minin*, Umm Salama (may Allah be pleased with her) that

the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Get soil on your face for Allah.” (*Kanz al-Ummal*)

This *hadith* is an unconditional order to put the face onto soil and shows that this is an obligatory act except in the case that there is a reason, such as necessity (emergency) that in which it would not be obligatory or if it is an instance when one is prostrating upon one of the permissible things, such as plants or things which are part of the ground.

5. It is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told Ma’adh, “Rub your face in the soil.” (Ershad As-Sari)
6. “It is necessary for the person who is saying his prayers, having placed his face on the ground, to rub it in the soil, for truly this is a show of humility for Allah, the Almighty.” (*Da’aim Al-Islam*)
7. Abu Salih said, “I entered the presence of *Umm al-Mu’minin*, Umm Salama (may Allah be pleased with her) and after me, a son of one of her brothers entered and prayed two *rakats* in her house. During *sajda* he blew at the ground. Then, Umm Salama said, ‘Son of my brother! Do not blow. Truly, I heard the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) say to his servant, named Yasar, who blew, ‘Put your face in the soil for Allah.’” (*Musnad of Imam Ahmed*)

The Hadith of Sajda Upon Part of the Turban

1. It has been narrated from Commander of the Faithful, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) that he said, “Whenever one of you prays, he should remove the turban from his face,” meaning he should not prostrate upon part of his turban. (*As-Sunan Al-Kubra* of Baihaqi and other sources)
2. It has been narrated that whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) made *sajda*, he would move his turban away from his forehead. (*At-Tabaqat*)

3. Salih Ibn Khaiwan As-Saba'i narrated the following, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man prostrating next to him while the man's turban was covering his forehead. The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) moved the turban away from the man's forehead." (*As-Sunan Al-Kubra* of Baihaqi and other sources)
4. It has been narrated from Ayyad Ibn Abdullah Al-Quraishi that he said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saw a man prostrating upon part of his turban. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) gestured to the man to move his turban away from his forehead." (*As-Sunan Al-Kubra* of Baihaqi and other sources)

In the book, *Al-Isaba*, it is written, "A man was prostrating on his turban next to the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) moved the man's turban away from his forehead.

5. It is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he prohibited the people from prostrating upon their clothing, part of their turbans, and their sleeves. (Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*)

The author says, "It could be understood from the prohibition of prostrating upon part of the turban that it was prohibited because it is a piece of clothing that is attached to the person and moves with the person when the person moves. However, there is no solid evidence for this. It is purely a claim without evidence. The general nature of the *hadith* is not changed because of a mere claim.

Also, nothing has specified that the turban is considered a piece of clothing that is attached to the person and moves with the person when the person moves. This is a condition that exists in our minds and has no external validity.

It is sometimes said that the connection of the turban to the forehead prevents *sajda* by common definition (*urf*), and similarly, it is said that when the turban, wood, pebbles, rocks, or soil stick to the forehead during *sajda*, "putting the forehead on the ground" will not have occurred. This is a statement without solid evidence, as is clear. The fact that putting the forehead on the ground is *sajda* is a self-evident case that does not need to be proven. When a person prostrates and sand or soil is stuck to his forehead, there is no need to wipe it off for it to be said that *sajda* occurred.

Rather, there are many *hadiths* in which wiping the face during prayer to get rid of soil, sand, or pebbles which have stuck to the face has been prohibited. Therefore, if these things being stuck or connected to

the forehead were a barrier to the correctness of the *sajda*, there would have been an order to remove them from the forehead, not a prohibition on wiping the face during prayer.

Hadiths Which Show the Necessity of Placing the Forehead on the Ground

1. The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said, “When one of you is praying, he must place his forehead and his nose on the ground so that the arrogance comes out of him.” (*An-Nihaya* of Ibn Athir)

“*Man argham Allahu anfahu*,” means, “He who God has rubbed his nose in soil.” The original meaning is the same meaning that has been mentioned, except that afterwards, (the person whose nose was rubbed in soil) is powerless to get revenge and is forced to obey. Therefore, the meaning of “*yakhruja minhur raghm*” (“so that the arrogance comes out of him”) in the words of the *hadith* is that the person's submission and humility be made apparent.

2. It has been narrated that Ibn Abbas said, “Whenever you make *sajda*, touch your nose to the ground.” It has also been narrated that he said, “The prayer of one who does not touch his nose to the ground is not a prayer.” (*Al-Musannaf* and *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* of Baihaqi)
3. Ibn Abbas said, “The prayer of one who does not press his nose and forehead against the ground in *sajda* is not correct.” (*Kanz al-Ummal* and others)

The significance of the first of the two *hadiths* of Ibn Abbas is that primarily, it is obligatory to place the forehead on the ground during *sajda*. Placing the nose on the ground during *sajda* shows that it is obligatory to place the forehead on the ground because primarily, *sajda* means to place the forehead on the ground. This is similar to the meaning of the verse of the Quran, “**Say not to them, ‘Uff’**” (***Quran 17:23***). Primarily, it is not permissible to bother, hit, or insult one's parents. (Saying “uff” to one's parents is the least grave offense. So, from the verse it can be deduced that anything more grave is impermissible.) In the second *hadith*, Ibn Abbas directly stated the ruling of putting the forehead on the ground by saying that not putting the nose and the forehead on the ground (during *sajda*) leads to the invalidity of the prayer.

4. It is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Whenever you make *sajda*, place your forehead and nose completely on the ground.” (*Ahkam al-Quran*, Al-Jassas)
5. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told Abu Dharr, “The earth is a *masjid* for you. So, whenever the time of prayer arrives, pray.” (An-Nisa’i)
6. It is narrated from Rafa’at Ibn Rafi’, “Then, he says, ‘Allahu akbar,’ makes *sajda* and places his forehead upon the ground until the muscles relax.” (*Al-Sunan Al-Kubra* of Baihaqi)
7. It is narrated from Ibn Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Whenever you make *sajda*, place your forehead and your nose on the ground.” (*Ahkam al-Quran*, Al-Jassas)
8. It is narrated that Salman Al-Farsi said, “Touch the ground because it is nice to you.” (*Kanz al-Ummal*). Allama Majlisi narrates from Sayyid Ar-Radi in the book *Al-Majazat An-Nabawiya* after narrating and explaining the *hadith*, “These words have two possible explanations. One is that the intended meaning is *tayammum* on the ground if the need should arise (any situation requiring *wudu*). The other possible intended meaning is that the forehead must be placed directly on the ground during *sajda* without any barrier in such a way that soil gets on the person’s face.

It is also possible that the order in this *hadith* is a disciplinary order, not an obligatory order because it is permissible to make *sajda* upon other than the ground, such as a *khumra* or a palm fiber rug. It is preferable for the forehead to make direct contact with the ground during *sajda*. It has been narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed on a *khumra*. A *khumra* is a small mat woven from palm stems and leaves.”

Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi narrated this *hadith* in the chapter on *sajda*, even though the *hadith* has a general meaning. There is a *hadith* in *Bihar al-Anwar* narrated from *Da’aim Al-Islam* that says, “Ali (peace be upon him) said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘The ground is nice to you. During your life, you make *tayammum* with it, pray upon it, and it will hold you after your life is over. The ground is one of the blessings of God, to whom belongs all praise. So, the best thing that a person can make *sajda* upon is the clean ground.’”

9. "Whoever does not place his nose on the same ground that his forehead is upon, his prayer is not accepted." (*Kanz al-Ummal*)
10. It has been narrated from Umm Atiyya, "Whoever's nose does not reach the ground, his prayer is not accepted." (*Kanz al-Ummal*)
11. It has been narrated from Ikrima, "The prayer of one whose nose does not touch the same ground that his forehead touches is not a prayer." (*Kanz al-Ummal*)
12. It has been narrated from Ikrima, "God will not accept the prayer of one whose nose does not reach the same ground that his forehead reaches." (*Kanz al-Ummal*)
13. It has been narrated from Ibn Abbas, "Whenever you pray, press your nose against the ground." (*Kanz al-Ummal*)
14. "Make *sajda* upon the ground or that which grows from the ground." (*Bihar al-Anwar*)
15. It has been narrated from Umm Atiyya that she said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said, 'Truly God will not accept the prayer of one whose nose does not reach the ground.'" (*Majma' Az-Zawa'id*)
16. "Whoever does not place his nose and forehead during prayer, has not prayed." (Ad-Daraqutni)
17. "Whoever does not place his nose upon the ground, has not prayed." (Ad-Daraqutni)
18. "He whose nose does not reach the same ground that his forehead has reached, has not prayed." (Ad-Daraqutni)

The Hadiths of A'isha and Others Regarding the Actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

1. It has been narrated from A'isha that she said, "I never saw the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) protect his face with anything." (meaning, during *sajda*) (*Al-Musannaf* and others) It could be understood from this *hadith* that the Prophet's (peace be upon him) continuous action was in this manner and this shows that this action is obligatory because if it was only recommended, there would be an instance or several instances when the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not perform the action in this way to show that it is not obligatory, or he would have directly stated as much. And in the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) is a good example for us. We must take that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) has brought and act according to it. Even if the Prophet (peace be upon him) shows us our duties by his actions because his actions are a proof unto us just as his words are and following them is obligatory.
2. It is narrated from Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri that he said, "I saw mud on the nose of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from *sajda* as it had rained the night before (and the ground was muddy)." (*Al-Musannaf* and others). A version of this *hadith* was narrated by Al-Bukhari as follows, "I saw the mark of water and mud on the Messenger of God's (peace be upon him) forehead and the tip of his nose." This *hadith*, like the *hadith* of A'isha, shows the Prophet's (peace be upon him) attention to making *sajda* on the ground and touching his face to the ground, even in water and mud.
3. It is narrated that Wael said, "I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he made *sajda*, he put his forehead and his nose upon the ground." (*Ahkam Al-Quran* of Al-Jassas)
4. It is narrated that Ibn Abbas said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) made *sajda* upon a rock. (Baihaqi, *As-Sunan Al-Kubra*)
5. It is narrated that Wael said, "I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) prostrating upon the ground, putting his forehead and nose upon the ground." (*Musnad* of

Ahmed). In another *hadith*, it has been narrated that he said, “I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) place his forehead and his nose upon the ground.”

6. Ibn Abbas said, “One morning when the weather was cold, I saw the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) praying in a white cloak, protecting his hands from the cold ground with the cloak.” (Baihaqi, *As-Sunan Al-Kubra*)
7. It has also been narrated, “I saw the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) in *sajda* on a rainy day, protecting his hands from the mud with a cloak spread on the ground.” (*Siratuna* from Ahmad)
8. It is narrated from Thabit Ibn Samit that he said, “Truly the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) was praying in the tribe of Bani Abd al-Ash-hal wearing a cloak which was wrapped around him and he placed his hands upon the cloak so that he could protect himself from the cold pebbles.” (Ibn Majah)
9. It has been narrated that Abdullah Ibn Abd al-Rahman said, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed among us in the mosque of Bani Abd al-Ash-hal. Then, I witnessed him placing his hands upon his clothing.” (Ibn Majah). The *hadiths* narrated here by the great scholar and interpreter of Quran, Ibn Abbas, and also Abu Sa'id, Wa'el, Thabit, and Abdullah ibn Abd al-Rahman all show the actions and *seerah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding *sajda*.

As was seen, in some of the *hadiths* it was shown that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to make *sajda* in mud without protecting his face. In others it has come that the Prophet (peace be upon him) protected his hands by putting something under them, at the same time doing nothing to protect his face from the cold, the water, or the mud.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned *hadiths* and the attention to detail by the narrators of these *hadiths* in presenting the actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as far as protecting his hands from the weather with his cloak and also taking into consideration the fact that in these *hadiths* there is no mention of the Prophet having protected his forehead and none of the *hadiths* showed anything contrary to this, it is understood that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not protect his forehead with anything. That is why none of the narrators were able to explain what the Prophet (peace

be upon him) used to protect his forehead. It also shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was bound by duty to place his forehead directly on the ground and that this was to emphasize the obligatory nature of doing so.

10. It has been narrated that Abu Huraira said, "On a rainy day, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) made *sajda* in such a way that I saw the mark of it on his forehead and the tip of his nose. (*Majma Az-Zawa'id*)

From the collection of *hadiths* which have been mentioned we understand that the *hadiths* order us towards one of the following three things:

1. They order us to touch the ground, which apparently is an order to touch the ground without a barrier during *tayammum* and *sajda*, just as has been directly mentioned in some *hadiths*.
2. They order us to make *sajda* upon the ground. It is understood from these *hadiths* that touching the ground must be done directly and without any barriers.
3. They order us to place and touch our noses on the ground, from which it can be understood that the ruling for the nose follows the ruling for the forehead during *sajda*.

The Hadiths of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them)

1. It has been narrated from Abu Abdullah, Ja'far Ibn Muhammad (peace be upon him) that he said, "Only make *sajda* upon the ground or that which has grown from the ground except cotton." (*Al-Kafi*)
2. It has been narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said, "My father asked for a *khumra* (a small mat made of date palm fiber) and it took me a while to bring it. In the meantime, he took a handful of pebbles, put them on his rug and made *sajda* upon them." (*Al-Kafi*)

3. It has been narrated from Imam As-Sadiq or Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon them) that he said, "Standing in prayer upon something that has been woven from hair or wool is not a problem as long as *sajda* is performed on the ground. If the rug is woven from plant material standing in prayer and performing *sajda* upon it are both without any problem."
(*Al-Kafi*)
4. It has been narrated from Imam As-Sadiq or Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon them) that he said, "My father, Ali Ibn Al-Husayn (peace be upon them) used to pray upon a *khumra* in such a manner that he would put the *khumra* on a rug and prostrate upon the *khumra*. If there was no *khumra* present, he would place a handful of pebbles on his *tinfisa* and prostrate upon it." (*Al-Kafi*)
5. Abd al-Rahman Ibn Abu Abdullah narrates that Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him), speaking about a man who makes *sajda* while his turban gets in the way of his forehead touching the ground, said, "This action will not be enough for him until his forehead touches the ground." (*Al-Kafi*)
6. It has been narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said, "*Sajda* is permissible upon that which grows on the ground except wearables and edibles."
(*Wasa'il*)
7. It has been narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said, "*Sajda* is only correct upon the ground and that which has grown from the ground except edible plants and cotton." (*Wasa'il*)
8. It has been narrated from Imam As-Sadiq or Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon them) that he said, "Standing and praying upon something that has been woven from hair or wool is permissible, as long as prostration occurs on the ground. So, if the rug is woven from plant fibers, standing and praying and even prostrating upon them is permissible."
(*Wasa'il*)
9. It is narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) by Al-Halabi who said, "I asked

him about a man who prays on hair, a rug, or a *tinfisa*. He said, ‘Do not prostrate upon them. If you stand on them and prostrate upon the ground, no problem. If you put down a rug woven from palm fiber and prostrated upon that, there is no problem.’ (*Wasa’i*)

It is not hidden from anyone who has the slightest familiarity with the books of the Shi’a and the *hadiths* of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) that the *hadiths* of the Imams (peace be upon them) are narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) by a single chain of narrators, which is that the Imam from whom a particular *hadith* is being narrated is narrating from his father, who narrates from his fathers until the chain reaches the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). For example, Imam As-Sadiq, Ja’far Ibn Muhammad (peace be upon them) narrates from his father, Muhammad Ibn Ali, Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him), who narrates from his father, Ali Ibn Al-Husayn, Imam As-Sajjad (peace be upon him), who narrates from his father, Husayn Ibn Ali, Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), who narrates from his father Ali Ibn Abi-Talib (peace be upon him), who narrates from the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). Indeed, the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) themselves have explicitly stated this on multiple occasions.

Therefore, there is no room to doubt about the chain of narrators or to say that these *hadiths* are unreliable due to having a broken chain of narration.

Also, the Imams (peace be upon them) have explicitly mentioned that it is necessary to make *sajda* on the ground and its parts, or upon plants that grow from the ground except for edibles and wearables, and they have explicitly mentioned that *sajda* done upon anything other than the ground or plants that have grown from the ground is invalid. This ruling is not a personal opinion on their part, rather it is based on a correct and explicit *hadith* that has been narrated from the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are like the Ark of Noah (peace be upon him). Whoever boards it is saved, and whoever does not, is drowned.

10. It has been narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said, “*Sajda* upon the ground is an obligation, and *sajda* upon *khumra* is *sunnah*.” (*Al-Kafi* and others) The author says, “The above-mentioned *hadith* was narrated in *Bihar al-Anwar* as follows, ‘*Sajda* upon the ground is an obligation, and upon other than it, *sunnah*.’” Apparently, this *hadith* is saying that *sajda* on the ground has been made obligatory by God Almighty and *sajda* on other than the ground (and on *khumra*) is a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him). It means, originally, that which was made obligatory as far as *sajda* is concerned is *sajda* upon the ground, but *sajda* upon plant material and *khumra* (which is itself plant material because a *khumra* is a small mat woven from date palm leaves and branches) is actually a permission from God and something to make things easier for the

Muslims that was spoken and clarified by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

In other words, including plants of the ground with the ground in the issue of *sajda* is *sunnah*. The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Companions (may God be pleased with them) were bound by duty to make *sajda* upon the ground and parts of the ground such as rock, pebbles, sand, and soil, as previously mentioned, and the fact that *sajda* upon plants and *khumra* was subsequently allowed, bears witness to this meaning.

In *An-Nihaya*, Ibn Athir writes about the *sunnah*, “In Islamic Law, whenever the word *sunnah* is used as a general term, its meaning is that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered, prohibited, or encouraged through his words or actions. Of course, this is regarding that which has not been explicitly mentioned in the Quran. It is for this reason that it is said that in Islamic Law, two things are considered proof, the Book, and the *Sunnah*, meaning the Quran and the *hadith*.”

Therefore, it can be understood from the aforementioned *hadith* that in the Book of God, *sajda* upon the ground has been shown, even though there is apparently nothing which explicitly mentions that *sajda* upon the ground is obligatory, unless it is said, as was mentioned earlier, that “placing the forehead on the ground” can be understood from the word *sajda*.

It could also be said that *sajda* means humility. This humility is shown through lowliness before the Lord and worship of God. This *sajda* refers in general to humans, animals, and inanimate objects and is of two types:

1. Voluntary *sajda*, which is specific to human beings. (Or, according to Quranic verse, it is specific to all creation.) It is the voluntary nature of this *sajda* that allows reward to be given for performing it. According to the verse of the Quran, “***prostrate and worship***” (***Quran 53:62***) it is a duty for human beings to perform *sajda*.
2. Mandatory *sajda*, which is common amongst humans, animals, and plants. This meaning is taken from the verse of the Quran,

“All that is in the heavens and the earth prostrates itself, whether willingly or by force, before Allah; and so do their shadows in the morning and in the evening.” (Quran 13:15)

The extreme demonstration of humility before Almighty God is to put one’s forehead upon the ground. Therefore, when we see a general order in the Quran to make *sajda*, we understand the complete implementation of that order to be that it is obligatory to make *sajda*. The fact that it suffices to make

sajda upon plants that grow from the ground is a permission that has been given to us by the words and actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to make things easier for the Muslims.

There is a third explanation of this noble *hadith* and that is that the reward of *sajda* upon the ground, is the reward of an obligatory act, and the reward of *sajda* upon plants, is the reward of the *sunnah*. Or, it could be said that “the ground,” means “the ground and that which grows upon it.” The meaning of “other than the ground” could be a *khumra*, a *lawh*, or a *kharita* containing the dust from around the tomb of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) for making *sajda* upon. Although, this is not likely, despite the fact that this interpretation is supported by a *hadith* in *Al-Kafi*, which says, “Prostration upon the ground is an obligation, and upon *khumra*, it is a *sunnah*.”

Texts and Hadiths Which Have Been Narrated by the Companions and the Tabi'een or the Marfu' Hadiths

1. It has been narrated from Abi Umayya that Abu Bakr prayed or prostrated upon the ground, while pressing his forehead against the ground. (*Al-Musannaf* and others)
2. It has been narrated from Abi Ubayda that Ibn Mas'ud would not prostrate (or he said pray) on anything other than the ground. (*Al-Musannaf* and others)
3. It has been narrated from Abdullah Ibn Umar that he did not like to make *sajda* upon his turban unless he moved it away from his forehead. (*Al-Musannaf* and others)
4. Masruq Ibn Ajda', one the companions of Ibn Mas'ud, would take a brick with him to prostrate upon when voyaging on a ship. (*Al-Musannaf* and others)
5. It has been narrated that when Ubada Ibn Samet stood for prayer, he would move his turban away from his forehead. (Baihaqi, *As-Sunan Al-Kubra*)
6. Ibn Ayina said, “I heard Razin, the servant of Ibn Abbas, say, ‘Ali Ibn Abdullah Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) wrote to me asking me to send him a stone from the stones of Marwa to make *sajda* upon.’” (*Al-Azraqi, Akhbar Makkah*) The above *hadith* shows that Ali Ibn Abdullah Ibn Abbas was duty bound to prostrate upon stone. Also, it

shows that he sought blessings from a stone of Marwa. (There will be more on this subject later.)

7. It has been narrated that Ibrahim used to pray on a palm fiber mat and prostrate upon the ground. (*Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi*)
8. It has been narrated that Abdullah Ibn Umar used to make *sajda*, he would put his hands on the same surface that he put his face on. Nafi' said, "I saw him on a very cold day, taking his hands out of his *burnis* to put them on the pebbles." (Baihaqi, *As-Sunan Al-Kubra*, and Malik, *Al-Muwatta'*)
9. It has been narrated from Umar that he said, "If any of you pray in the heat, let him prostrate upon the edge of his clothing." (*Kanz al-Ummal*)
10. It has been narrated from Umar that he said, "If any of you is unable to prostrate upon the ground in the heat or the cold, let him prostrate upon the edge of his clothing." (*Kanz al-Ummal*)
11. It has been narrated from Malik Ibn 'Ameer that he said, "A person who saw Hudhaifa narrated this to me, 'Hudhaifa was ill and they used to bring him a pillow with a piece of wood on it for him to prostrate upon.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba)

The Second Group of Arguments in Favor of the Obligatory

Nature of Sajda Upon the Ground Sajda in a State of Necessity

The Divine Legislator has, in cases of necessity, allowed *sajda* upon other than the ground and that which grows from the ground besides food and clothing, such as cotton and wool. In cases of necessity and emergency, forbidden actions are sometimes allowed. As God says in the Quran,

"God does not place a burden on a soul greater than that which it can bear" (Quran 2:286).

Also,

“God does not burden any human being beyond the means that He has bestowed upon him” (Quran 65:7).

Also,

“And he has not laid upon you any hardship in religion” (Quran 22:78).

It has come in *Al-Wasa'il*, “Of all things over which God has power, the first is accepting (a valid) excuse.”

It is clear that the rulings of necessity are taken into consideration based on the extent of the necessity, meaning enough to take care of the need. Whenever the necessity is taken care of, there is no longer any need for the emergency ruling to be in effect and it is negated. This is why it is not permissible to use an emergency ruling in the case that there is no necessity.

At any rate, if one is unable to find ground that contains rock, sand, pebbles, gravel or the like, and if one is also unable to find plants that are not edible or wearable, it is permissible to prostrate upon clothing, whether it be attached to the body or not. However, for an emergency of this type to exist, it is necessary that it not be possible to cool pebbles or protect from heat or cold. In addition to the general rules that have been mentioned, there are multiple *hadiths* that we will bring to the reader's attention:

1. It has been narrated from Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, “Whenever one of you is unable to tolerate the heat or the cold, let him prostrate upon his clothing.” (*Kanz al-Ummal* and others)
2. Anas said, “We were praying with the Prophet (peace be upon him) while one of us was prostrating upon his clothing.” (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*)

With different wording, “We were praying with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and one of us used part of his clothing for *sajda* due to the intense heat.” Hasan Al-Basri said, “A group of people used to prostrate upon their turbans and their nightcaps while their hands were in their sleeves.” (Bukhari narrated this *hadith* in the section on “*sajda* upon clothing in extreme heat”)

In his explanation of the *hadith* of Anas, Ibn Hajar said, “The *hadith* alludes to the point that the principle in *sajda* is to prostrate upon the ground without any barrier. Prostration upon anything other than the ground is contingent upon inability.” (*Fat-h Al-Bari*)

Bukhari, Nisa'i, Darimi, and Ibn Majah all have sections in their books of *hadith* under the name, “permissibility of *sajda* upon clothing in hot or cold weather.” It could also be understood from the words

of the Companions, *tabi'een*, and the jurists that they had come to the same understanding, as we had mentioned previously.

In the words of Abu Awanah and *Taysir Al-Wusul* it has come, “We were with the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) on a hot day. None of us was able to put his forehead on the ground. So, we spread our clothing on the ground and prostrated upon that.”

With different wording, “When we were praying with the Prophet (peace be upon him), we prostrated upon our clothing due to fear of heat.” (*Musnad As-Sarraj*)

In the wording of Muslim, “In the extreme heat, we were praying with the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). Each one of us who was unable to put his forehead on the ground due to the extreme heat would spread his clothing on the ground and prostrate upon that.”

In the wording of *Siratina* it has come, “We were praying with the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). Each one of us who was unable to put his forehead on the ground due to the intense heat would spread out his clothing on the ground and prostrate upon that.”

In the wording of Bukhari, the *hadith* of Anas has come thus, “Whenever we prayed the noon prayer behind the Prophet (peace be upon him) we would prostrate upon our clothing to protect against the heat.”

The esteemed reader may refer to the following reference books which have narrated the *hadith* of Anas with similar wording: *As-Sunan Al-Kubra* of Baihaqi, *Kanz al-Ummal*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Siratina*, *Sahih Bukhari*, *Sunan An-Nisa'i*, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, *Sunan Ad-Darimi*, *Sunan Abi-Dawud*, *Sharh Awn Al-Ma'bud*, *Musnad of Ahmad*, *Muntakhab Kanz al-Ummal fi Hashiat Al-Musnad*, *Sharh Al-Ahwadhi*, *Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, *Musnad of Abi Awanah*, and *Taysir Al-Wusul*. (Translator's note: The original text included references to the volume and page numbers in the Arabic texts of each of the reference works mentioned above.)

There are two main reasons for our special attention to this *hadith*. First, the compilers of *hadith* have given special attention and importance to this *hadith*. Second, this *hadith* shows the permissibility of prostration upon clothing in a case of necessity or emergency and the impermissibility of prostration upon clothing in all other circumstances, as the interpreters and narrators of *hadith* have understood. It is hoped that in the discussions to come, we will mention this *hadith* again and give some explanation surrounding it.

Indeed, the door is open to discussion regarding what constitutes “necessity” and “emergency.” Anas said that he (or the Companions, as Hasan Al-Basri narrated) prostrated upon clothing to avoid the heat at a time when it was possible to cool pebbles in one's hand, as Jaber had done and that Anas had narrated that he himself had done. Therefore, keeping this point in mind, is this considered necessity and does this constitute an emergency so that prostrating upon clothing becomes permissible? This is

only the case if we say that a small hardship and a little difficulty that is bearable is enough to make *sajda* upon clothing permissible. Taking this position and being bound by it is not unproblematic.

How could one consider small hardship a reason for allowing something that was prohibited, especially when the great narrators of *hadith*, as has been narrated from Ibn Abbas, Thabit, and Abdullah Ibn Abd al-Rahman, said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) only put his hands, and not his face on his clothing during *sajda* to protect them from the cold and the heat?

Therefore, in determining the extent and limit to which necessity and emergency apply, maybe they did *ijtihad* and were mistaken in their conclusion.

3. It is narrated by Ayina, the reed seller, that he said to Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him), "I enter the mosque on a day of intense heat and I do not wish to pray upon the hot gravel. So, I spread out my clothing and prostrate upon it. The Imam answered, "Yes. There is no problem with that." (*Wasa'il*)
4. It is narrated that Qasim Ibn Fudayl said, "I said to Imam Ar-Rida (peace be upon him), 'May I be sacrificed for you! Because of being bothered by the heat and cold, a man prostrates upon his sleeve.' The Imam responded, 'There is no problem with that.'" (*Wasa'il*)
5. It is narrated by Abu Basir from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him), "I asked the Imam, 'I am on a journey and the time of prayer arrives while I am afraid for my face because of the burning heat. What is my duty with respect to prostration?' The Imam answered, 'Prostrate upon a part of your clothing.' I told the Imam, 'My clothing is not of a size that I can prostrate upon a part of it.' The Imam answered, 'Prostrate upon the back of your hand because this is one of the places of *sajda*.'" (*Wasa'il*)
6. Abu Basir said, "I asked Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him), 'May I be sacrificed for you! A man is travelling and, on the road, bandits make off with his belongings so that he is naked and the only clothing he has left is a pair of pants that he is wearing. In this state, he has nothing to prostrate upon and he is afraid of burning his face on the hot ground.' The Imam answered, 'He may prostrate upon his hand, for truly it is one of the places of *sajda*.'" (*Wasa'il*)

7. It is narrated that Abu Basir asked Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about a man who is praying in intense heat and is worried about his forehead in the burning heat. The Imam answered, "Let him put his clothing under his forehead." (*Wasa'il*)
8. Abdullah Ibn Ja'far narrates from his brother, Imam Al-Kadhim (peace be upon him), "I asked him about a man who is praying and the ground is hurting him in a way that he is unable to prostrate upon the ground. Is he able to put his clothing, which is made of cotton, under his forehead. The Imam answered, 'As long as he is in a state of distress, there is no problem.'" (*Wasa'il*)
9. It is narrated from Ammar As-Sabati that he said, "I asked Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him), 'Is it permissible for one to pray on snow?' He answered, 'No. If one could not find the ground, then one must spread out his clothing and pray upon it.'" (*Wasa'il*)
10. It has come in *Tuhaf al-Uqul*, "Prayer is impermissible upon anything that is wearable, drinkable, or edible that is considered food or consumable. *Sajda* upon such items is not permissible except plants that are not edible, or unripe. Once they are ripe, they can only be used in prayer in cases of necessity."
11. Ali Ibn Yaqtin said, "I asked Imam Al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) about a man who prays on rugs and skins. He said, 'As long as he is practicing *taqiyya* there is no problem.'" (*Wasa'il*)
12. Abu Basir said, "I asked Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about a man who prays on skins and the Imam responded, 'If it is in a state of *taqiyya*, there is no problem.'" (*Wasa'il*). From these *hadiths* which have been narrated from *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) it becomes apparent that during their time, it had become customary to prostrate upon clothing and skins under normal conditions. This had become an identifier of *Ahl us-Sunnah*, just as *Ahl al-Bayt* had become identified with *sajda* upon the ground to the point that they allowed their followers to prostrate upon rugs and skins in *taqiyya* in order to save the lives of their friends and followers. Some of the Shi'ite jurists have some interesting discussions on this subject that are not without benefit:

Ali Ibn Tawus in his book, *At-Tara'if*, writes, "It is interesting that a group of those who follow the four schools (of *Sunni* jurisprudence) deny a person who prostrates upon the ground and gets soil on his forehead, while they have narrated in their *Sihah* from their Prophet (peace be upon him) the opposite of what they are denying and attributing to lies. In his *Sahih*, Muslim, with his chain of narrators, narrates from Abu Hurairah, "Abu Jahl asked, 'Does Muhammad [peace be upon him] put his face on the soil amongst you?' It was said, 'Yes.' Then Abu Jahl said, 'I swear by Lot and Uzza! If I see him doing this, I will put my foot on his neck and rub his face in the dirt.'" Abu Hurairah continues, "He saw Muhammad (peace be upon him) doing this, and Abu Jahl intended to do what he said he would do. However, the angels came in between them."

Sayyid Ibn Tawus writes, "Is getting soil on one's forehead, as they say, *bid'ah*? Do you not see that this is the *sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that promises and threats would not keep him away from? Do you not see that the denial of getting soil on one's forehead is the *bid'ah* of Abu Jahl? So, how did the *sunnah* of their prophet become *bid'ah*, and the *bid'ah* of his faithless enemy become *sunnah*? This is a strange belief that is not consistent with those who possess a truthful outlook."

Is there anything better than soil on which to make *sajda* to show humility before the greatness of God? Therefore, it is appropriate that in order to show humility and servitude to the Creator, the servant of God place his face on the soil or other parts of the ground in prostration as Allamah Amini (may God have mercy on him) has said, "*Sajda* is nothing more than the extreme humility before the greatness of God. On this basis, that which is appropriate for the one offering prayers is to choose the ground as his place of prostration before God, and to rub his face in the soil and place his nose in the soil, until the one offering prayers contacts the low substance from which he was created, to which he will return, and from which he will be resurrected so that he learns that his substance is worthless compared to the greatness of the Creator, that he might keep this in mind and attain humility in his soul and a meekness of ego, that this might push him towards servitude and worship of God and protect him from pride, selfishness, and egoism, and that it will make him realize that he nothing more than a worthless creature, created from clay. These secrets will never be found in carpets woven from wool and silk and things of this nature, which are items of comfort. These are things which people consider status symbols and sources of pride and arrogance which prevent one from feeling a sense of humility and servitude." (*Siratuna*)

The wisdom behind the obligatory nature of *sajda* upon the ground is explained in the *hadiths* of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), as had been mentioned earlier, such where Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, "*Sajda* is submission to God. So, *sajda* upon edibles and wearables is not acceptable because the children of this world are slaves of edibles and wearables."

This is the same wisdom behind which God, the Almighty has created mankind,

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me (51:56)".

The Third Group of Arguments in Favor of the Obligatory Nature of Sajda Upon the Ground

Steps the Companions Took to Remedy Discomfort Resulting from Heat and Cold During Sajda

From the topic that we covered, we understood that since the beginning of its legislation, *sajda* meant “placing the forehead on the ground.” This certainly created difficulties for the Muslims in the warmth and the cold.

Bearing witness to this are numerous *hadiths*, many of which were narrated in the previous discussions. There, it was pointed out that the Muslims complained of their difficulties and hardships to the Prophet (peace be upon him), but he did not take any action regarding their complaints. They were not given permission to prostrate upon anything other than the ground. Because of this, they had to remedy their problems and discomfort in another way until God had mercy upon them and allowed them to prostrate upon plants except for edibles and wearables so that things would be easier for them. Now we will discuss some of these ways and the relevant *hadiths*.

The First Way

As mentioned earlier, one of the things that the Companions did was to move pebbles from hand to hand until they cooled. Then, they would put the cooled pebbles on the ground and prostrate upon them.

The Second Way

Sometimes they would move the pebbles on the surface out of the way in order to expose the cooler pebbles underneath and then prostrate upon the cooler pebbles, or they would use pebbles that were not exposed to direct sunlight. This has been alluded to in some *hadiths*, and it has been prohibited to move the pebbles around too much. We will mention some of these *hadiths*:

1. The following is narrated from Abu Dharr, “Don’t swipe the ground more than once, and if you have patience, this patience is better for you than one hundred black-eyed camels.” (Abd al-Razzaq, *Al-Musannaf* and Baihaqi, *As-Sunan*)
2. It has been narrated from Abu Dharr, “I asked the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) about everything, even about touching and moving pebbles. He said, ‘There is no problem doing it one time.’” (*Tanwir Al-Hawalik* and *Al-Musannaf* of Abd al-Razzaq)

3. It has been narrated from Abdullah Ibn Ayyash Ibn Abi Rabi'ah, "Abu Dharr was passing by while I was saying my prayers. He said, 'Do not wipe the ground more than once.'" (*Tanwir Al-Hawalik* and *Al-Musannaf* of Abd al-Razzaq)
4. Abdullah Ibn Zayd used to spread out the pebbles one time when he wanted to prostrate. (*Tanwir Al-Hawalik* and *Al-Musannaf* of Abd al-Razzaq)
5. During the prayer, the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard someone moving pebbles. After the prayer, he asked, "Who was moving pebbles during the prayer?" The person who was moving the pebbles made himself known. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "This was your benefit from the prayer." (*Muntakhab Kanz al-Ummal*, *Al-Musannaf*)
6. Ibn Jarir said, "I told Ata, 'They are very intent upon moving the pebbles around, but they are not very intent upon touching their faces to the soil.' He said, 'Yes. You must fear God.'" (*Tanwir Al-Hawalik* and *Al-Musannaf* of Abd al-Razzaq)
7. It is narrated from Mu'ayqib, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned touching pebbles in the mosque. He said, 'If you have to, do it once.'" (*Sahih Muslim*)
8. It has been narrated from Abu Dharr (may God have mercy on him) that he said, "When the congregational prayer has already started, join it and begin praying with the congregation. When the prayer leader says the *salam* (the prayer is over) finish what is left and only touch the soil once. For me, being patient (and refraining from touching the soil) is more loved than one hundred black-eyed camels." (*Tanwir Al-Hawalik* and others)
9. It is narrated that Jaber Ibn Abdullah said, "I asked the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) about touching the pebbles. He answered, 'Only once, and if you refrain from touching the pebbles, it is better than one hundred black-eyed camels.'" (*Tanwir Al-Hawalik* and *Musnad* of Ahmed)
10. It has been narrated from Abu Dharr (may God have mercy on him) that the Prophet

(peace be upon him) said, “Whenever one of you stands in prayer, the mercy of God faces him. So, he must not move the pebbles.” (*Tanwir Al-Hawalik*)

From all of the *hadiths* that have been mentioned here, and the *hadiths* which were omitted from our discussion in the interests of brevity, it becomes apparent that the Companions would touch the pebbles to wipe dirt and dust off of their hands. Also, they may have done this to level the surface of the pebbles before prostration, or they may have done it to bring cooler pebbles up from under the surface.

In multiple *hadiths*, blowing on the place of *sajda* has been prohibited, while touching (moving) pebbles in the place of *sajda* once has been allowed.

A *hadith* has been narrated from Abu Hurairah regarding leveling the pebbles in the place of *sajda* by hand, “Whenever one of you has stood for prayer, he should level the place of *sajda* and he should not wait until the time of *sajda* to blow upon it. For one of you to prostrate upon a hot stone is better than to prostrate upon a place that has been blown upon.” (*Kanz al-Ummal* and *Al-Wasa'il*)

However, in the *hadith* it has been prohibited to touch and move the pebbles, even though this prohibition does not make it *haram*, it makes it *makruh*.

From what has been explained until now, it becomes clear that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions prostrated upon the ground, and either tolerated the difficulties and discomforts as a result of the heat and the cold or remediated them by moving pebbles around in the place of prostration.

The Third Way

Another way to remedy the problem of prostrating upon the ground in heat and cold was to delay the noon prayer until a little later when the shadows were longer and the weather was not as hot and the ground had cooled somewhat.

The great memorizers of *hadiths* recorded many *hadiths* on this subject in their books. We will mention as many as the summary nature of this book will allow. We will understand two points from these *hadiths*:

1. The impermissibility of *sajda* on other than the ground.
2. Clarification of the meaning of necessity to the effect that whenever *sajda* upon the ground is possible, even if only by delaying the prayer until the ground cools, it is not permissible to prostrate upon anything other than the ground.

Cooling, *ibrad* in Arabic, means breaking the intensity of the heat. As Ibn Al-Athir wrote in *An-Nihaya*, “But in another *hadith* that says, ‘Cool the noon prayer,’ the meaning of ‘cool’ is breaking the intensity of the heat, waiting until past its peak, and entering into cool weather.”

In explaining the meaning of the *hadith*, it has been said, “Pray the noon prayer at the beginning of the time that the weather begins to cool off.” It has also been said that the *ibrad* means “hurrying” and the meaning of the *hadith* is that one should hurry and finish his prayer faster to avoid the heat. After narrating the *hadith*, As-Sadouq, may God have mercy on him, said, “The writer of this book says the meaning of this *hadith* is “Hurry, hurry,” and *ibrad* is taken from the word *tabrid*.” Ibn Al-Athir has alluded to this, as mentioned.

Therefore, according to what has been mentioned, *ibrad* has two meanings:

1. Delaying the prayer until the weather cools.
2. Hurrying the prayer, which, in turn, has two forms:
 1. That the voluntary prayers (*nawafil*) be prayed quickly or summarily, or that they be prayed somewhat before the noon prayer or somewhat after the noon prayer.
 2. By omitting the recommended acts of the noon prayer, the prayer is shortened.

The first meaning of *ibrad* that was “delaying the prayer until the weather cools” is confirmed by the *hadith* of Zurara.

Abdullah Ibn Bakir said that Zurara was in the presence of Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) and said, “You have said that the time of the noon and afternoon prayers are when the length of the shadow is one cubit and two cubits, respectively. Then you said, ‘In the summer, perform *ibrad*.’ How is *ibrad* performed?”

Then, Zurara opened his notebook to record the answer of the Imam, but the Imam did not say anything. Zurara closed his notebook and said, “Truly we have a duty to ask you and you are more aware of your duty than anyone else.” Then, Zurara left and Abu Basir entered the presence of the Imam (peace be upon him). Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, “Zurara asked me about something and I did not answer him. For this reason, he became upset and left. So, go and be my messenger to him and tell him, “In the summer, pray the noon prayer when your shadow is as long as you, and pray the afternoon

prayer when your shadow is twice as long as you.”

Zurara prayed this way in the summer, and it was not known for any of the companions of the Imam (peace be upon him) to pray this way except for Ibn Bakir. (*Wasa'il*)

The apparent meaning of the *hadith* of Ibn Abbas endorses this idea. In his remonstrance of the *khawarij*, “When the *khawarij* had gathered to rise up against Imam Ali (peace be upon him), one after another, the people came to the Imam and said, ‘The *khawarij* wish to rise up against you.’ The Imam replied, ‘Let them rise up.’ One day, I said to the Imam, ‘*Abrid As-Salat...*’ (‘Delay the prayer until I go talk to them and return.’)” (*Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm* and others)

That which has been narrated by Bukhari and Abu Awana in his *Musnad* from Abu Dharr (may God have mercy on him) is evidence for this meaning. Abu Dharr said, “On a journey, we were with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the *muezzin* wanted to recite the call to prayers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, ‘*Abrid.*’ The *muezzin* tried to recite the call to prayers a second time, and the Prophet said, a second time, ‘*Abrid,*’ until we were able to see the shadows of the hills.”

At any rate, we would like to direct the reader’s attention to some *hadiths* on this topic:

1. It has been narrated from Ibn Umar, “Whenever the heat is intense, wait to pray until the weather cools off, for truly the intense heat is a breeze from the hellfire.” (Bukhari and others)
2. Abu Dharr said, “The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) *muezzin* was reciting the call to the noon prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘*Abrid! Abrid!*’ or ‘Wait until the weather cools.’” (Bukhari and others)
3. It has been narrated from Abu Sa’id, “Wait until the weather cools before praying the noon prayer, for truly the intense heat is a breeze from the hellfire.” In similar wording, it has been narrated from Abu Huraira, “Whenever the heat becomes intense, delay the noon prayer, for the intense heat is a breeze from the hellfire.” (Baihaqi and others)
4. In a *hadith* narrated from Akrama Ibn Khaled, Umar said to Abu Mahdhura (who recited the call to prayer in Mecca), “Oh People of Tuhama! Truly your land is very warm. So, wait until the weather cools.” Then, he said for a second time, “Wait until the weather cools.” (He repeated this phrase two or three times.) Then he said, “Recite the call to

prayer after that. Say the second call to prayer and I will come.” (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd al-Razzaq and others)

5. “If it is a warm day, wait until the weather cools before offering (noon) prayers. Truly the intensity of the heat is from the breeze of the hellfire.” (*Sahih Muslim*)

Allamah Majlisi (may God have mercy on him) has a discussion on the meaning of *ibrad* that covers what we have mentioned. Therefore, we will refrain from quoting it here. Curious readers may refer to *Bihar al-Anwar*.

At any rate, from the discussion, it has become clear that *ibrad* was a method used by the Companions to flee the heat, as far as *sajda* was concerned, and in other circumstances. It has also become clear that as long as the possibility of performing *sajda* upon soil and the ground exists, *sajda* upon anything other than the ground and plants is not permissible, as was alluded to in the *hadiths* that have been mentioned.

¹. Translator’s note: The following hadith is shown in Arabic script due to its length. The Arabic was included in the Farsi version. So, I have chosen to include it here. 

[1] [1]

SHARES

The Second Period: Sajda Upon the Plants of the Earth

From all the clear evidence that has been presented here, including the sayings, actions, direct and indirect statements of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the actions and traditions of the Companions (may God be pleased with them) and their opinions and the opinions of the jurists, it becomes known that in the beginning of its legislation, *sajda* was performed on the ground except in cases of necessity and emergency.

There is another group of arguments based on solid evidence from which it can be understood that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) allowed *sajda* upon inedible and non-wearable plants in later times. In other words, on the issue of *sajda*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) considered the plants that

grow upon the ground to be part of the ground. It was in this manner that the issue of *sajda* became easy and the problems that were making things difficult for the Muslims were lifted. Above this, it was allowed for the Muslims to weave something out of plant fiber called a *khumra* that they kept with them at home and in the mosque.

A *khumra* was woven from the stems and leaves the date palm and was the size of one's face. It was kept in homes and in the mosque so that people could prostrate upon it. The practice of keeping a *khumra* slowly spread and became popular.

Even though there are many *hadiths* on this subject, we will only narrate some of them here, as many as we are able to, and we will leave collecting of all the *hadiths* on the subject for another time. Here are the *hadiths*:

1. It has been narrated that Anas Ibn Malik said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to pray upon *khumra*." (Baihaqi, *As-Sunan Al-Kubra*, *Al-Musannaf* of Abd al-Razzaq, and others)
2. It has been narrated that Ibn Abbas said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray upon *khumra*." (Baihaqi, *As-Sunan Al-Kubra* and others)
3. It has been narrated that Ibn Umar said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray upon *khumra*." (*Musnad* of Ahmed and others)
4. It has been narrated that Aisha said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray upon *khumra*." (*Musnad* of Ahmed and others)
5. It has been narrated that Umm Salama said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to pray upon *khumra*." (*Musnad* of Ahmed and others)
6. It has been narrated that Maimuna said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to pray upon *khumra*." (*Musnad* of Ahmed and others)
7. It has been narrated from Umm Aiman that she said, "The Messenger of God (peace be

upon him) said to me, 'Bring me my *khumra* from the mosque.' I answered, 'I am menstruating.' He replied, 'Your menstruation is not in your hand.'" (*Al-Isabah* of Al-Asqalani)

8. It has been narrated that Abu Qalabah said, "I entered the home of Umm Salama. I asked the daughter of her son about the Prophet's (peace be upon him) place of prayer. She showed me the place where he prayed and there was a *khumra* upon it. I wanted to remove it, and she said, 'Truly the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray upon a *khumra*.'" (*At-Tabiqat*)

9. It has been narrated from Umm Salim about the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he used to visit her at the time of the afternoon nap and she would lay a skin out for him to sleep upon. He would sweat a great deal and she would save his sweat in a perfume bottle. Umm Salim said, "He used to pray upon a *khumra*." (*Musnad* of Ahmed and others)

In the words of Ahmed, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) would go to the home of Umm Salim and she would bring him a skin to sleep on. Umm Salim would collect the Prophet's (peace be upon him) perspiration and add it to her perfume. Also, she would spread out a *khumra* for him and he would pray on it." (*Musnad* of Ahmed)

10. It has been narrated from Aisha that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to her, "Bring me a *khumra*." She said, "I am menstruating." He said, "Truly not in your hand." (*Sahih Muslim* and others)

In other wording it is narrated from her that she said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said to me, 'Bring me a *khumra*.' I said, 'I am menstruating.' He said, 'Bring it. Truly the menstruation of a woman is not in her hand and her tongue.'" (*Sahih Muslim* and others)

In another narration it has come, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) told Aisha, 'Bring me a *khumra* from the mosque.' Aisha replied, 'I am menstruating.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, 'Is your menstruation in your hand?'" (*Sahih Muslim* and others)

11. It is narrated from Aisha that she said, "One day the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon

him) was in the mosque when he said to a girl, 'Bring me a *khumra*.' She replied, 'I am menstruating.' He said, 'Her menstruation is not in her hand.'" Aisha said, "He wanted to spread it out and pray on it." (*Sahih Muslim* and others)

12. It is narrated from Aisha that she said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said, 'Bring me a *khumra* from the mosque.' I replied, 'I am menstruating.' He said, 'Your menstruation is not in your hand.'" (*Sahih Muslim* and others)
13. Maimuna, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) was praying and I was next to him. Sometimes his clothing would touch me when he prostrated and he prayed upon a *khumra*." (*Sahih Muslim* and others)
14. Also narrated from Maimuna, "One of us (wives) would take the *khumra* to the mosque and spread it out while she was menstruating." (*Sunan An-Nisa'i*)
15. It is also narrated from Maimuna that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) would enter her home while she was menstruating. Then she would spread out the *khumra* in the place of prayer and the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) would pray in her house on the *khumra*. (*Al-Musannaf* of Abdur Razzaq) (This was the summary of a long *hadith*.)
16. It is also narrated from Maimuna, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) would rest his head in the lap of one of us (his wives) and recite Quran while she was menstruating. Or, one of us would take his *khumra* to the mosque and spread it out while she was menstruating." (*Sunan An-Nisa'i*)
17. It was narrated from Uthman Ibn Hunaif that he said, "Oh *Jaria*! Bring me my *khumra*." She said, "I am not praying (due to menstruation)." He said, "Truly your menstruation is not in your hand." (*At-Tabiqat*)
18. It was narrated that Ibn Umar would pray on a *khumra* that had the rug of his house under

it when he was not praying in the mosque. He would stand on it and prostrate upon it. (*Al-Musannaf* of Abdur Razzaq)

19. It has been narrated about Ibn Umar that his servant women would wash his feet while they were menstruating and bring him his *khumra*. (*Al-Musannaf* of Abdur Razzaq and others)
20. Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz would pray on a *khumra*. (*At-Tabiqat*)
21. Some of the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) would pour water for him during ablution and bring him his *khumra* while they were menstruating. (*At-Tahdhib* and others)
22. There is no problem with a menstruating woman to pour water for someone performing ablution and to bring him his *khumra*. (*Man La Yahduruh al-Faqih*)
23. About Ibn Umar, it has been said that he prayed upon a *khumra*. (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shaybah)
24. It has been narrated from Abu Dharr that he also prayed upon a *khumra*. (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shaybah)
25. It has been narrated from Ibn Umar that he said to his servant woman, "Bring me a *khumra* from the mosque." The servant woman responded, "I am menstruating." Then, Ibn Umar said, "Your menstruation is not in your hand." (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shaybah)

The aforementioned *hadiths* have also been narrated in the books *Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*, *Al-Mahasin* of Al-Barqi, and *Bihar al-Anwar*.

In *Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*, Shaykh Hurr Al-Amili compiled the *hadiths* which show that it is permissible to prostrate upon a *khumra*. Many of them have already been mentioned.

He narrates from the book *Al-Kafi* that it was narrated about Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) that the Imam was asked about praying upon a *khumra* that was woven in Medina. The Imam replied, "Pray upon what has been made of fiber in it, and do not pray upon what has been made of leather in it."

It has been narrated about Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far (peace be upon him) that he said, "Our followers are not needless of four things: ...a *khumra* to pray upon." (*Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)

According to the lexicographers and *hadith* commentators, *khumra* is a small rug the size of a person's face woven from the leaves of date palms. Here are some examples of what the lexicographers and *hadith* commentators have to say about *khumra*:

In *Lisan Al-Arab* it is written that a *khumra* is a small rug or carpet that is woven from the branches and leaves of the date palm and is held together with strings.

It has been said that a *khumra* is a rug smaller than the place of prayer.

It has also been said that a *khumra* is a small rug which is prostrated upon.

In a *hadith*, it has been narrated that "the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to prostrate upon *khumra*." (Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummal*) A *khumra* is a small rug woven from the branches and leaves of the date palm and is large enough to prostrate upon.

Zajjaj (the grammarian) said, "It is called a *khumra* because it is just big enough to cover the face from the ground."

In a *hadith* from Umm Salama it has been narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to her, while she was menstruating, "Bring me a *khumra*."

This *khumra* is a rug or something that has been woven from the branches and leaves of plants or something like that and it is of a size that the person saying prayers could put his face upon it while prostrating.

Then, Zajjaj adds, "*Khumra* is that which is this size and is named *khumra* because its strings are covered with branches and leaves of the date palm."

Ibn Athir said, "*Khumra* has been mentioned many times in the *hadiths* and it has been interpreted in this manner.

It has been narrated from Ibn Abbas in the *Sunan* of Abi Dawood that he said, "A mouse came carrying a burning wick and dropped it between the Prophet's (peace be upon him) hands on the *khumra* he was sitting on. It burned a part of it the size of a *dirham* (coin)." Abu Dawood said, "This usage of the word *khumra* is direct in referring to a rug larger than its kind." (Meaning, a *khumra* is a rug the size of one's face.)

In *An-Nihaya*, Ibn Athir said, “In the *hadith* of Umm Salama (“He said to her while she was menstruating, ‘Bring me the *khumra*.’”), a *khumra* is a rug woven of the branches and leaves of plants and is large enough for the one saying his prayers to put his face upon during prostration. *Khumra* is that which is just this size, and any other size is not called a *khumra*. It is called a *khumra* because its strings are covered with leaves and branches. The word “*khumra*” has been repeated in many *hadiths*.” (Ibn Athir repeats that which was mentioned in *Lisan Al-Arab*.)

It has come in *Al-Qamus*, “A *khumra* is a small rug made from the branches and leaves of the date palm.”

As-Suyuti and An-Nawawi went only as far as Ibn Kathir and said, “A number of people have said that a *khumra* is of a size that a person could place his face on it during *sajda*.” (As-Suyuti, *Tanwir al-Hawalik*, An-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*)

It has come in *Taj Al-Arus*, “A *khumra* is a small rug woven from date palm branches and leaves. It is ornamented with strings.” (Then the author repeats the words of Zajjaj.)

It has been narrated from At-Tabari and Ibn Zayd that a *khumra* is a prayer rug or a miniature prayer rug that is woven from the branches and leaves of the date palm and is ornamented with strings. (*Wafa Al-Wafa*)

Under the topic “prayer rug,” the *Encyclopedia of Islam* has a discussion about *khumra* which is worth quoting, “It is understood that at that time, the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) prayed upon a *khumra* many times. Apparently, a *khumra* is no different in material than a *hasir*. The only difference between them is in size.”

In his commentary on the *Sunan* of Ibn Majah, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Al-Alawi said, “Truly a *khumra* is only large enough for *sajda*, but a *hasir* is the size of the length and width of a person.” (*Kitab Al-Iqama*)

In the commentary on *Aun Al-Ma’bud*, it has come, “Truly a *khumra* is a small prayer rug woven from the branches and leaves of the date palm. It has been called a *khumra* because it protects the hands and face from the heat and cold of the ground. If it is large, it is called a *hasir*.”

Similar words have come in *Irshad As-Sari*, the commentary of Al-Ahwadhi on the *Jami’* of Tirmidhi, *Fath Al-Bari*, and the *Hashia* of Tirmidhi.

In the footnotes of his work, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Allama Majlisi (may God have mercy on him) writes, “A *khumra* is a small rug woven from the branches and leaves of the date palm and is ornamented with strings. The original use for the *khumra* was to protect the lids of clay pots and dishes. These *khumras* were woven from plants that grew on the ground and were easily accessible. For this reason, the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used them as a place of *sajda* for his forehead. It was in this

manner that *sajda* upon the ground became an obligation, and *sajda* upon a *khumra* became a *sunnah*. Of course, there is nothing special about being woven from the branches and leaves of the date palm that makes prostration upon a *khumra* *sunnah*. Rather, the *sunnah* encompasses anything that grows from the earth.”

The author says, what we have learned from the words of the jurists, lexicographers, and *hadith* narrators is that the *khumra* is made of the branches and leaves of the date palm and the like and it is only as large as the face. If anything, larger than this is called a *khumra*, it will be considered a metaphorical meaning, because literally, anything larger would be called a *hasir*.

As far as the initial motivation behind making the *khumra* is concerned, it is worth asking, was the *khumra* something that was used for covering clay pots and dishes, and then the Prophet (peace be upon him) used it because it was something readily available, or was it invented in the first place as something to use for *sajda*?

At any rate, we were unable to find an historical argument in favor of either of the above-mentioned possibilities. Yes, that which is certain is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed the Muslims to prostrate upon *khumras* and the plants that grow on the ground, and that this took place in Medina over a long period of time, as was shown in the *hadiths* that have been mentioned.

Prayer on Hasir

One point that is for certain that must be paid attention to is that there is nothing special about the existence of the *khumra*. The *khumra* is made from plants and *sajda* upon plants is correct. It has been narrated from numerous narrators that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrated upon *hasir*.

Here are some *hadiths* on the subject:

1. It is narrated from Anas Ibn Malik that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) prayed upon *hasir*. (*Al-Musannaf* of Abdur Razzaq)
2. Anas said, “The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) was the most well-mannered of the people. He was in our house at the time of prayer and he ordered that the rug that was covering the floor of our home be washed so that we could pray upon it. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood on that same rug and prayed, and we prayed behind him. He led a congregational prayer for us.” Their rug was made of palm fibers. (*Sahih Muslim* and others)

3. It is also narrated from Anas that his grandmother, Malika, invited the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) for some food that she had made. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ate some of it and said, "Stand, so that I may pray with you." Anas said, "I stood up on our *hasir* which had blackened due to the long time since we had last washed it. So, I washed it with water and the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) stood upon it and prayed with us." (*Sahih Muslim* and others)
4. In another *hadith* from Anas, it is narrated that he said, "One of my uncles had prepared a meal for the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) and said to him, 'Truly I would love that you would come eat in our home and pray in it.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted the invitation. There was a *hasir* in the home that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered a part of it to be swept and then washed with water. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed on it and we prayed with him." (*Al-Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shaybah)
5. Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri said, "I entered upon the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) and I saw him praying upon a *hasir* and prostrating upon it." (*Sahih Muslim* and others)
6. Anas Ibn Malik said, "Sometimes the Prophet (peace be upon him) would visit Umm Salim and the time for prayer would arrive and he would pray on a rug we had, which was a *hasir* which would be washed with water." (*At-Tabaqat*, and others)
7. It is narrated that Abu Sa'id said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) prayed upon a *hasir*." (*Sunan* of Ibn Majah and others)
8. It has been narrated from Anas that he said, "I was in the home of Abu Talha and I saw him praying on a rug." It was mentioned earlier that his rug was made of palm fiber. (Ibn Sa'd, *At-Tabaqat Al-Kubra*)
9. It has also been narrated from Anas that he said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed with us in the home of Umm Salim on a *hasir* which had become discolored from being walked upon. It was washed with water and he prostrated upon it." (Ibn Sa'd, *At-*

10. It has been narrated that Aisha said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) had a *hasir* that he would spread out and pray upon." (*Fath Al-Bari*)
11. It has been narrated from Yazid Al-Faqir that he said, "I witnessed Abdullah Al-Ansari praying on a *hasir* made of palm fibers." (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
12. It has been narrated that Anas said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to pray on a *hasir*." (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
13. It has been narrated that Mak-hul said, "I saw him praying on a *hasir*, and he prostrated upon it also." (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
14. It has been narrated that Thabit Ibn Abdullah said, "I saw Zayd Ibn Thabit praying on a *hasir* and prostrating upon it." (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
15. It has been narrated about Ibn Umar that he used to pray on a *hasir*. (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
16. It has been narrated from Sa'id Ibn Musayyib that he said, "It is *sunnah* to pray upon a *hasir*." (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
17. It has been narrated, "I heard that Anas used to say, 'The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to visit us. He told my brother, 'Oh Aba 'Umayr! What did you do about the sparrow?'" Anas said, 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) washed our rug with water and stood upon it for prayer.'" (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
18. It has been narrated that Abu Darda said, "It makes no difference to me to pray upon six *tinfas* that have been stacked upon each other." (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)

19. It has been narrated that Ibn Abbas said, “The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to pray upon rugs.” (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
20. It is narrated that Sa’id Ibn Khabir said, “Ibn Abbas prayed the evening prayer for us on a *tinfisā* which covered the floor of the entire house.” (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
21. It is narrated that Haitham said that Mughira said, “Someone said to Ibrahim, ‘I saw Abu Wa’il pray upon a rug.’ Ibrahim replied, ‘Abu Wa’il is better than I.’” (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*) (We have mentioned previously that the rugs in the homes at that time were *hasir*.)
22. It has been narrated that Abdullah Ibn Umayr said, “Ibn Umar used to pray on a type of *hasir*.” (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)
23. It has been narrated that Awza’i said, “I saw Ata in the *Masjid Al-Haram* praying on a white rug.” (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Al-Musannaf*)

Hadiths from Ahl Al-Bayt on this Subject

In previous discussions, *hadiths* from Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them) were mentioned regarding the permissibility of prostration upon plants. We will now narrate some more *hadiths* from them on this subject.

1. It is narrated that Muhammad Ibn Muslim narrated from Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) that he said, “There is no problem praying upon *burya* and *khasfa* and any other plant except dates.” (*Wasa’il Ash-Shi’a*)
2. It has been narrated that Husayn Ibn Abil Ala narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said, “A man was in the presence of Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) and asked him about prostration upon *burya* and *khasfa* and plants. The Imam answered, ‘Yes. There is no problem.’” (*Wasa’il Ash-Shi’a*)

3. It has been narrated that Ishaq Ibn Fudayl said, “I asked Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about *sajda* upon *hasir* and *burya* and he replied, ‘There is no problem, but *sajda* upon the ground is something I love more because the Prophet (peace be upon him) loved to put his face on the ground whenever he could. So, I love for you what the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) loved.’” (*Wasa’il Ash-Shi’a*)
4. It has been narrated that Yasir Al-Khadim said, “Ab al-Hasan (peace be upon him) passed by me while I was praying on a *hasir* woven in Tabaristan. I had put something on it to prostrate upon. He said, ‘What happened that you do not prostrate directly upon it? Is it not made of the plants of the earth?’” (*Wasa’il Ash-Shi’a*)
5. It is narrated that Hisham narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that he said, “Prostration upon the ground is the best because it shows greater humility and submission before Almighty God.” (*Wasa’il Ash-Shi’a*)
6. It has been narrated from Al-Halabi that he asked Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about praying upon rugs and hair and *tinfisas*. Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) replied, “Do not prostrate upon them. However, if you stand upon them in prayer and prostrate upon the ground, there is no problem. And, if you spread a *hasir* over them and prostrated upon the *hasir*, there is no problem.” (*Bihar al-Anwar*)
7. It has been narrated from Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) that he said, “Truly the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) prayed on *hasir*.” (*Bihar al-Anwar*) There are many *hadiths* that describe the way the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed and prostrated upon *hasir*.

Investigation Into the Words of the Hadith

It is not hidden from any contemplative human being that the phrase, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray upon carpets, *tinfisas*, *abqari* rugs, and *Tabaristan* rugs,” does not mean that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrated upon them. This is because it is possible for the person who is praying to stand on the aforementioned rugs and prostrate his forehead upon soil or a *khumra* or something of that nature. As previously mentioned in a *hadith*, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would stand on a

barda and prostrate upon the ground.

Keeping in mind that a *khumra* is the width of a person's face, the phrase, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed upon a *khumra*," means prostration upon a *khumra*. Therefore, there is no other meaning for "prayed upon a *khumra*" than "prostrated upon a *khumra*."

Abu Sa'id referred directly to this subtle difference in meaning, where he said, "I saw the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) praying on a *hasir* and prostrating upon it." Of course, sometimes "prayed upon a *hasir*" could mean "prostrated upon a *hasir*" in the proper context.

The great scholar, Sayyid Ibn Tawus (may Allah be pleased with him) has a discussion on this subject that is worth mentioning. He says, "It is surprising that Muslims deny and reject each other over the issue of prostration upon a small rug woven from date palm branches and leaves. In this regard, they are very intense and forceful, while in books that they consider to be correct and reliable, it has been mentioned that their Prophet (peace be upon him) did this. It has also been mentioned in the Quran,

"A good example has been set for you in the Messenger of God" (33:21).

One of the *hadiths* that has been narrated on this subject is the *hadith* that Al-Hamidi narrated in the book *Al-Jam Bain As-Sahihain* in the *Musnad* of Maimuna, the daughter of Al-Harith Al-Hilaliya in the third *hadith* that is agreed upon, "Maimuna, who everyone agrees is one of the good wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), said, 'I was menstruating and not praying. I was sleeping across from the place of *sajda* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was praying on his *khumra*.'"

There is another *hadith* that Al-Hamidi mentions in the same book in the *Musnad* of Umm Salama, daughter of Milhan and the mother of Anas Ibn Malik in the second *hadith* that only Muslim narrated. In this *hadith*, Umm Salama said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed upon a *khumra*." Al-Hamidi has also mentioned similar *hadiths* in the *Musnad* of Aisha and the *Musnad* of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri.

Abd al-Mahmud, the author of *At-Tara'if* wrote, "The lexicographers are unanimous in saying that a *khumra* is a small rug made of leaves and branches of the date palm."

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SHARES

The Third Period: The Opinions and Rulings of

the Companions and Tabi'een Regarding the Permissibility of Prostration upon Any Type of Clothing

In previous discussions, quoting the words of some of the Companions and *Tabi'een*, the permissibility of prostration upon clothing was attributed to Anas Ibn Malik, Abu Hurairah, Mughira Ibn Shu'bah, Mak-houl, Hasan Al-Basri, Sharih, and Abd al-Rahman Ibn Yazid. In those discussions, we narrated some sayings from those Companions and *Tabi'een* on the subject. In addition to those sayings, they narrated some *hadiths* as evidence. Therefore, we see it necessary to continue the discussion and investigate their evidence on this subject. We must cite the *hadiths* that their jurists have submitted to and according to which they have issued rulings.

1. It has been narrated that Abu Huraira said, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) would prostrate upon the edge of his turban." (*Kenz al-Ummal*)
2. It has been narrated that Ibn Abbas said, "Indeed the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed in a garment which he used the excess cloth of the garment to protect from the heat of the ground and its coldness." (*Sharh* of Al-Ahwadhi)
3. It has been narrated that Mughira Ibn Shu'bah said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to pray upon *hasir* and tanned hides." (*Sunan* of Abu Dawud and others)

In different wording, it has come that the Prophet (peace be upon him) "had a skin loved that he should have a tanned skin to pray upon." (Allamah Amini, in his book *Siratuna* has a discussion about the chain of narration of this *hadith* in which he describes it as weak.)

4. It has been narrated according to Ja'far Ibn Umar or another person that the Prophet (peace be upon him), in a room with a wet floor, spread out an animal skin and prayed upon it. (*Al-Musannaf*)
5. It has been narrated that Anas Ibn Malik said, "We were praying with the Messenger of

God (peace be upon him) and one of us was prostrating upon his clothing.” (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*)

6. It has been narrated that Ibn Abbas prayed upon a *tinfisa* or a rug that was covering the floor of his house. (*Al-Musannaf*)
7. When Ibn Abbas was in Basra, he would pray on his rug. Then, he would say to his companions, “Indeed, the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) prayed upon his rug.” (*Sunan* of Ibn Majah)
8. It has been narrated that Abu Wa’el said, “Ibn Mas’ud prayed upon woolen cloth.” (*Al-Musannaf*)
9. It has been narrated that Abdullah Ibn Amer said, “I saw Umar Ibn Al-Khattab praying upon an *abqari*.” (*Al-Musannaf*)
10. It has been narrated that Jabir said, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrated upon the edge of his turban.” (*Sharh* of Al-Ahwadhi)
11. It has been narrated that Ibn Abbas said, “I saw the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) praying and he made *sajda* upon his clothing.” (*Siratuna*)
12. It has been narrated that Sa’id Ibn Jubair said, “While wearing his cloak with the right edge over his left shoulder and the left edge over his right shoulder, Ibn Abbas led a congregational prayer on a *tinfisa* that covered the floor of the entire house.” (*Al-Musannaf*)
13. It is narrated that Amer said, “I prayed with Ibn Abbas in his house upon woolen cloth, and he prostrated upon that cloth.” (*Al-Musannaf*)

14. It is narrated that Bakr Ibn Wa'el said, "I saw Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) praying upon woolen cloth and he prostrated upon it." (*Al-Musannaf*)
15. It has been narrated that Isa Ibn Sinan said, "I saw Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz praying on woolen cloth." (*Al-Musannaf*)
16. It has been narrated that Jaber prayed on woolen cloth. (*Al-Musannaf*)
17. It has been narrated that Abu Darda' prayed upon woolen cloth and prostrated on it. (*Al-Musannaf*)
18. It has been narrated that Ibrahim said, "Aswad and his companions did not like praying upon *tinfisas*, woolen cloths, and *fara'* (a large garment worn over other clothing)." (*Al-Musannaf*)
19. It has been narrated that Shaqiq said, "We prayed with Ibn Mas'ud upon woolen cloth and he prostrated upon it." (*Al-Musannaf*)

That which has been mentioned is a part of what those who say it is permissible to prostrate upon clothing have used as arguments for their viewpoint, which was accessible to us. However, that which can be surmised by contemplating the evidence and paying attention to the action and *seerah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Companions is that these arguments are unreliable due to their obvious weaknesses, which can be explained as follows:

- A. These arguments, if we assume their completeness as far as authenticity and topicality, not taking into consideration their shortcomings in this regard, cannot stand up to the *hadiths* which are *mutawatir* and point to the fact that permissibility in *sajda* is limited to *sajda* upon the ground. An example would be the *hadith* in which the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said, "The ground has been made as a place of *sajda* and a purifier for me."

Also, there is that which was mentioned of the *seerah* of Prophet (peace be upon him) and his

Companions that their *seerah* continuously involved prostration upon the ground. Furthermore, it has been said that it is only permissible to prostrate upon clothing in cases of necessity and emergency and that the permissibility of prostration upon clothing exclusively exists in these cases.

- B. The agreement of the great jurists such as Al-Bukhari, Ad-Darimi, Ibn Majah, An-Nakha'i, As-Salmani, Salih Ibn Khaiwan, Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz, Urwa Ibn Zubayr, Al-Imam Ash-Shafi'i, Ash-Shawkani, Ibn Hajar, Al-Imam Malik, and many of the great Companions was that the permissibility of prostration upon anything other than the ground and plants was limited to cases of necessity and emergency. This was made clear in their words which we have narrated in great detail.

It is difficult to believe that Anas Ibn Malik was of the opinion that prostration upon clothing was unconditionally permissible when he was one of the narrators of the "*hadith* of necessity," and the *hadith*, "We complained to the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the intense heat, but he did not do anything about it." Similarly, could Ibn Mas'ud be associated with believing in the unconditional permissibility of *sajda* upon clothing when he only believed *sajda* to be permissible upon the ground?

- C. Baihaqi denied the *hadith* "*sajda* on the edge of the turban" where he wrote, "The Shaykh has said that none of the *hadiths* saying that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) prostrated upon the edge of his turban can be proven correct. The words of Hasan Al-Basri, who narrated from the Companions of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) are the most correct statement on this subject. (*As-Sunan Al-Kubra*)

Mak-houl has interpreted the *hadith* of Hasan Al-Basri as meaning "in case of emergency." It is narrated that Ibn Rashed said, "I saw Mak-houl prostrating upon his turban. Then, I said to him, 'Why are you prostrating upon your turban?' He said, 'Due to the cold, I am afraid for my eyes.'" (*Al-Musannaf* of Abd al-Razzaq)

Furthermore, this *hadith* has been narrated by Abu Hurairah, whose condition is well known. (See the book *Abu Hurairah* by Allama Sharaf Ad-Deen, the book *Shaykh Al-Mudhira*, and the book *Abu Hurairah fit-Tayar*.) Also, the narrator after Abu Hurairah is Abdullah, who, as we shall soon discuss, is weak and unreliable.

In addition to all of these faults, there is the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) directly forbade prostration upon part of the turban, as has been previously mentioned.

The author of *Al-Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) wal Madhahib Al-Arba'ah* ("Imam As-Sadiq

(peace be upon him) and the Four Schools”) writes about prostration upon part of the turban, “Shi’as believe that it is not permissible and Shafi’i has agreed with them. Ahmed, according to one of two statements about him, agrees with this opinion. The reason for the statement that he does not believe in the permissibility of prostration upon the turban could be that it was not proven that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ever did so, as well as the fact that he repeatedly forbade it.”

Yes, Abdullah Ibn Muhriz narrated from Abu Hurairah that, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrated upon part of his turban.” However, this is not a correct statement because the *hadith* of Abdullah is not reliable, as Ibn Hajar, Abu Hatam, and Ad-Daraqutni have stated.

Al-Bukhari said, “The *hadiths* of Abdullah are not acceptable. He was a government judge. The scholars of *hadith* narrators have not shown that he had heard any *hadith* from Abu Hurairah.

Hafidh Ibn Hajar said, “Prostration upon part of the turban by the Prophet (peace be upon him) has not been narrated. This action by the Prophet has not been proven by a single correct *hadith*.” (Az-Zarqani, *Sharh Al-Mawahib*)

An-Nawawi said, “The agreement of the scholars is that the forehead must touch the ground without any barrier. That which has been narrated regarding the Prophet (peace be upon him) prostrating upon part of his turban is not correct.”

Baihaqi said, “There is nothing in this regard and it is unproven.”

Here is the argument for the permissibility of prostration upon part of the turban: In comparing the forehead to the other body parts involved in prostration, it is clear that it is not obligatory for the other body parts to directly touch the ground. In this respect, it is not obligatory for the forehead to directly touch the ground. Therefore, prostration upon part of the turban is permissible. This argument is problematic and invalid. Having the other body parts (as opposed to the forehead) directly touch the ground would require effort and, in some cases, hardship. Therefore, such a comparison would not be correct.

At any rate, this *hadith* is unacceptable in the view of the scholars and researchers.

As far as the *hadith* of Ibn Abbas, which says, “I prostrated on part of my turban,” is concerned, it is in the context of his saying, “The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) protected himself from the cold and the heat with extra clothing,” that we understand it was a case of necessity and emergency.

The other *hadith* of Ibn Abbas, “I saw the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) prostrating upon his clothing while praying,” even though it is general in meaning, taken in the context of the first *hadith*, can be taken to mean that it was a case of emergency.

The *hadith* of Mughira Ibn Shu’ba is not reliable due to the weakness of the narrator and the content. Mughira is he who the old and young scholars know about, but with all these objections, it must be

recognized that he is not talking about prostrating upon skin. To say that one prays upon skin is a general statement that could mean either that one prostrates upon skin or that one places some soil, a *khumra*, a stone, or... and prostrates upon that.

In the earlier discussions, it was narrated from Ibrahim An-Nakha'i that he stood on a *barda* and prostrated upon the ground. It was narrated from Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz and others that they would put something on their rugs and *tinfisas* and prostrate upon that.

At any rate, praying on a surface and prostrating upon the same surface are not necessarily one and the same unless that surface is only large enough for the face of the one saying his prayers to fit on it. With this in mind, we can interpret the *hadith*, "The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed upon a *khumra*," as meaning "prostrated upon a *khumra*." This is because, given the small size of a *khumra*, standing and praying upon one is not possible.

What we just mentioned is relevant regarding the *hadith* of Ja'far Ibn Umar, where there was a reference to praying upon an animal skin. Also, this narrator is not well known.

As far as the *hadith* of Anas, which said, "We were with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and one of us prayed upon his clothing," in the context of that which Bukhari narrated from Anas after mentioning this *hadith*, could have been considered a sort of emergency. Here is what Bukhari narrated from Anas, "We were praying with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and one of us placed his clothing on the ground where he was to make *sajda* due to the severe heat." Clearly, this *hadith* explains the first one, keeping in mind that the first one was general in meaning, and the second one was specific. As mentioned previously, Bukhari considered the *hadith* of Hasan Al-Basri about the Companions prostrating upon their turbans to be in case of emergency.

As far as the *hadith* of Ibn Abbas, which said, "The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) prayed upon his carpet," is open to the same objection that to say one prays upon something is a more general statement than to say that one is prostrating upon something. This objection is valid in the case of the *hadith* of Ibn Abbas as well as the following *hadiths*:

1. The *hadith* which said, "Ibn Abbas prayed upon a *tinfisa* or that rug which covered the floor of his house."
2. The *hadith* which said that Ibn Mas'ud prayed upon woolen cloth.
3. The *hadith* which said that Umar Ibn Al-Khattab prayed upon an *abqari*.

The fourth objection to be made is that praying and prostrating upon a rug does not in itself mean that it is permissible to prostrate upon clothing. In the previous discussions, it was directly mentioned that rugs at that time were woven from date palm fiber and a “rug” would be the same as a *hasir*. Also, we knew that prostrating upon plants is without objection.

The writer of the Encyclopedia of Islam paid attention to this point where it was written, “Indeed, prayer took place on rugs,” and this is found in the following references: *Jami’ At-Tirmidhi (Kitab As-Salat)*, *Sunan Ibn Majah (Kitab Iqamat As-Salat)*, and *Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal*. In the last reference, it mentions that rugs were woven from date palm fibers. Tirmidhi adds, “Many of the great jurists allow prayer upon rugs and *tinfisas*. In those times, rugs were woven from date palm branches and leaves, and people prayed upon them. This type of rug was known as a *hasir*.”

An-Nawawi has an addendum to this *hadith*, saying, “All of the scholars have declared the permissibility of prayer upon that which grows from the ground.” (Encyclopedia of Islam)

Anas Ibn Malik directly mentioned this issue in a *hadith* in which he said, “Indeed, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to visit Umm Salim. Sometimes, when the time of prayer arrived, he would pray on our rug and that rug was a *hasir*.”

In his explanation of the *hadith* of Anas, “The Messenger of God (peace be upon him) used to come and go from our home to the extent that he used to say [jokingly] to my little brother, ‘Oh Aba Umayr! What happened to the bird?’ and he would pray on our rug which we had washed with water,” Al-Ahwadhi wrote, “As-Suyuti has said that in his *Sunan*, Abu Dawud interprets ‘rug’ as *hasir*.” (*Sharh Al-Ahwadhi*)

Al-Ahwadhi continues, “In his *Sunan*, Abu Dawud narrated this *hadith* (the second *hadith*) from Anas Ibn Malik and said, ‘Al-Iraqi writes in the *Sharh* of At-Tirmidhi, ‘The writer (At-Tirmidhi) differentiates between the two *hadiths* of Anas on the subject of prayer upon *hasir* and opens a separate subject for each *hadith*. In his *Sunan*, Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates a *hadith* which shows that the intended meaning of ‘rug’ is a *hasir*. Here is the *hadith*, ‘Sometimes the Prophet (peace be upon him) would pray upon our rug, which was a *hasir*, after washing it with water.’”

Then, Al-Iraqi continues as follows, “Therefore, it became clear that the meaning which Anas had intended when he said, ‘rug,’ was a *hasir*. There is no doubt that an example of a rug is a *hasir*.” He then goes on to narrate the *hadith* of Ibn Abbas, “The Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed upon a rug,” and describes it as “weak.”

Maybe the intended meaning of *tinfisa*, *barda*, *abqari*, *fahl*, *wata*, *darnuk*, and *mis-h* could be things which would be considered to be made of plant fiber.

A *tinfisa* is a rug that contains wool. In most definitions it has been said that a *tinfisa* is a rug, clothing, or a *hasir*.

A *barda* is the same as a *hasir*, as mentioned in the *Musannaf* of Abd al-Razzaq. It could also be the plant fiber that is used in weaving the *hasir*.

An *abqari* is an adorned rug or carpet. Additionally, in the book *Aqrab al-Mawarid*, it is mentioned that the word *abqar* refers to the primary roots of the reed plant. So, maybe *abqari* refers to a rug woven from reeds. It could also be a *hasir* adorned with patterns and pictures.

Our words are supported by that which was mentioned earlier about the rugs of the time being woven from date palm branches and leaves. Also, that which we have just mentioned refutes that which has been written in *An-Nihaya*, “It is the same issue which has been raised in the *hadith* of Umar, ‘Umar prostrated upon an *abqari*.’ It is said that an *abqari* is a silk rug, a rug adorned with flowers, or a thick *tinfisa*.

A *fahl* is a *hasir* which has become old or discolored. It is written in *An-Nihaya*, “A *fahl* is a *hasir* which is woven from the branches and leaves of the *fahhal* of the date palm. The *fahhal* is the male date palm. The male date palm is the tree from whose pollen, the female (fruit-bearing) date palms are fertilized. Thus, *fahl* is another word for *hasir*.

A *Mis-h* is a cloth woven from goat hair, and it might, in a metaphorical sense, be used to refer to a rug.

A *durnuk* is a fluffy curtain and its plural is *daranik*. In this regard, there is a *hadith* narrated by Ata about Ibn Abbas, “We were with him and we prayed upon a *durnuk* that covered the whole house.”

Maybe this group of scholars and jurists did not differentiate between praying on and prostrating upon clothing and rugs.

Maybe they witnessed an action or *seerah*, but they did not pay attention to the fact that this action was carried out in a case of necessity or emergency which would have made such an action permissible.

Maybe he witnessed prostration upon a *hasir*, a *khumra*, or a rug woven from date palm branches and leaves, and they compared the other things to these without taking into consideration between plants and non-plants. This is similar to Az-Zuhri, who used the permissibility of prostration upon a *khumra* as an argument in favor of the permissibility of prostration upon a *tinfisa*.

Maybe they heard that Ibn Abbas prostrated upon a rug, but they did not pay attention to the fact that at the time, rugs were woven from date palm leaves and branches.

After all of these discussions, however, the possibilities mentioned conflict with the apparent meanings of the *hadiths*. At any rate, considering the strong arguments which were mentioned earlier, we have no choice but to either interpret the *hadiths* or set them aside. Ibn Sirin wrote, “Prayer upon *tinfisa* is something new.” (Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Siratuna*)

The Fourth Period: Prayer Upon Clothing as a Slogan of the Sunnis

From what has been said, the method by which the rules surrounding *sajda* have been legislated in the beginning has become clear. It has become clear that *sajda* is a demonstration of humility, lowliness, weakness, and rubbing one's face in the ground before Almighty God in order to rid oneself of arrogance and selfishness. This went to the extent that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) would permit the Muslims to prostrate upon anything other than the ground even in the burning heat, and he did not respond to their complaints. In the end, by permitting prostration upon plants as an extension of the ground, some easing of the hardships of the Muslims took place.

All of that which we have said has been attained by solid arguments and proofs to which we must submit. Also, there are *hadiths* whose correctness has been affirmed by the sheer number of narrators (*mutawatir*) and these *hadiths* correspond to the arguments that have been demonstrated.

In addition to the fact that the *sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) corresponds to these practices, the Companions have been acting according to them according to the Quranic verse,

“What the Messenger has given you, take, and what he has forbidden you, refrain from” (59:7).

“Therefore, belief in the permissibility of prostrating upon rugs and carpets and being adamant about it, and carpeting the mosques in order to prostrate upon them, as has become customary amongst the people, is pure *bid'ah*, and a new and illegitimate action which is contrary to the *sunnah* of God and his Messenger (peace be upon him). The Quran says,

“You shall find no change in the ways of God” (35:43).

(Allama Amini, *Siratuna*)

There is a group who is on the right path, who act only according to what is in the Book (Quran), what the Trustworthy Angel has brought down, what the Prophet's (peace be upon him) *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) have announced. This is the *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) from whom God has removed any impurity, has made them a rescue ship, and has made them as leaders toward guidance and as equals to the Book (Quran) and leaders of the intelligent, and has made them leaders guiding by His order towards clear truth and the straight path.

It is worthy of shock, if you live long enough, time will show you stranger things than this, that the rulings changed in favor of permitting prostration upon silk, wool, cotton, and everything. This was an error in *ijtihad*. This current continued to the point that the issues flipped around so that what was a *sunnah* became considered a *bid'ah*, and what was a *bid'ah* was counted among the actions of the *sunnah*.

It reached a point where the followers and lovers of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) were considered non-believers for acting according to the divine *sunnah*. They have been accused of heresy and idolatry. These are the insults and humiliations we must endure in place of respect and friendship from our brothers at the two noble shrines (Mecca and Medina) when we visit. It is to God we complain, and it is His help that we seek.

Prostration Upon the Soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn ('A)

In following the Imams of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them), the Shi'a are the only ones who affirm the preferability of prostrating upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) as a way of honoring him. Following the method of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) is the same as following the method of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Therefore, it is necessary to narrate some of the *hadiths* of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) regarding honoring the soil of the Master of Martyrs, Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), and regarding the method of the Messenger of God on this subject.

The *Hadiths* of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) Regarding the Honor and Excellence of the Soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him)

1. It has been narrated that Al-Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) said, "Prostration upon the clay of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) shines light upon the seven lands, and whoever holds prayer beads made of the clay of the grave of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), he will be written as one who praises God, even if he does not praise God with the beads in his hand." (*Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)
2. It has been narrated that Al-Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) said, "Our followers are not without need of four things: a *khumra* on which to pray, a ring to put on his finger, a toothbrush (*miswak*) with which to brush his teeth, and prayer beads from the clay of the grave of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him)." (*Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)
3. It has been narrated that Mu'awiya Ibn Ammar said, "Al-Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon

him) had a small bag made of yellow fabric which held some of the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him). Whenever the time of prayer would arrive, he would pour the soil on his place of *sajda* and prostrate upon it. Then he would say, 'Indeed prostrating upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) removes the seven veils.'”
(*Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)

4. It has been narrated that Al-Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) would not prostrate on anything other than the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) to show his humility and submission before God. (*Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)
5. It was asked of Al-Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) about the two soils (meaning the soil of Hamza (peace be upon him) and the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him)) and if one is better than the other. He answered, “Prayer beads that are made from the clay of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) praise God in the hand of a person, even if the person is not praising God.” (*Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)
6. It has been narrated that Al-Himyari said, “I wrote a letter to the jurist and asked him, ‘Is it permissible to use the clay of the grave to make prayer beads and praise God with them and is there any excellence (advantage) in doing so?’ He wrote back and answered, ‘Praise God with it, for there is nothing better with which to praise God.’” (*Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)

It is clear that the meaning of “grave” in the *hadith* is the grave of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and the word “the” refers to the fact that the grave of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was well known to the followers of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) at the time. Whenever someone asked a question about “the grave,” it was clear that they were asking about the grave of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him).

7. It has been narrated that Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Ja'far Al-Himyari narrated about the Imam of our time (may God hasten his reappearance), “I wrote a letter to him asking about a clay tablet made from the clay of the grave, ‘Does this have any excellence (advantage)?’ He answered, ‘This action is permissible and has excellence.’” (*Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)

Of course, it is not unbelievable for God to grant excellence to the act of prostration upon the clay of the Master of Martyrs (peace be upon him), as he was one of the “masters of the youth of paradise,” “the light of the eye of the Messenger,” (peace be upon him) “a piece of Fatima Az-Zahra,” (peace be upon her) the son of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali Ibn Abi-Talib (peace be upon him) and one of the people of the cloak.

The intended meaning of the word, “children” in the verse of *Mubahila* (3:61) is Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and his brother.

As far as the story of *Surah Insan* (76:8–11) he was in the company of his parents. He is one of the “rescue ships” for the nation of the Messenger (peace be upon him). He is one of the Rightful Leaders and one of the twelve successors of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and a light of guidance.

A person with the slightest knowledge of *hadith* and history would know about that which has been narrated from the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) regarding Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), in a general sense, as when the Prophet (peace be upon him) talks of the excellence of all of the Imams of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them, or in a specific sense, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) speaks specifically about the excellence of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him). Therefore, there is no reason to doubt that God would grant honor and excellence to a person who prostrates upon the clay of the grave of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him).

In his book, *Al-Ard Wat-Turbat al-Husayniyyah*, Allamah Kashif Al-Ghita writes, regarding the philosophy and wisdom behind the obligatory nature of prostration upon the ground and the *mustahab* nature of prostrating upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), “And maybe the secret of why the Twelve-Imam Shi’as are committed to prostrating upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) as a *mustahab* duty, above that which has been narrated about the excellence of this act, which points to the *hadiths* which have been mentioned previously, and in addition to the fact that the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) due to its cleanliness and sanitary nature compared to other surfaces used in prostration, such as *burya*, *hasir*, and rugs, which are spread on the ground and become contaminated with dust, dirt, and hidden microbes, is cleaner and healthier than the others.

In addition to all of these cases, it might be possible to explain prostration upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) by saying that there are lofty goals at work, that every time a person places one’s forehead upon that pure clay, one is remembering the sacrifices of the Imam (peace be upon him) and his family and the select group of his companions in the path of faith, belief, God, and breaking oppression, corruption, and tyranny. As prostration is the most important pillar of the prayer, it is mentioned in a *hadith*, ‘The closest the servant gets to his Lord is during prostration.’

Therefore, it is fitting that by putting his face upon that pure clay, the one offering his prayers remember the sacrifice of those who gave their lives on the path of truth, and whose souls flew to the highest

heavens, so that the spirit of submission to God is strengthened in him so that he will see the glitzy world and its short-lived deceitful attachments as worthless. Maybe this point is the intended meaning of the *hadith* which says, 'Prostration upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) removes the seven veils.'

Therefore, the secret of ascension from soil to the Lord of lords is hidden in prostration." (Kashif Al-Ghita, *Al-Ard Wat-Turbat al-Husayniyyah*)

Allamah Amini (may God have mercy upon him) explained it well when he wrote, "The goal of Twelve-Imam Shi'ism is choosing the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) for prostration is based upon two solid principles:

The first principle: the acceptability of choosing clean soil the ritual purity of which is certain, and in this respect, it makes no difference where the soil came from. Therefore, in this respect, any place the soil comes from is equally acceptable and no place is better than another. As far as the permissibility of *sajda*, there is no preference for one place over another. Of course, choosing clean clay would be preferable from a hygienic standpoint.

One must keep in mind that it is impossible to verify the ritual purity and cleanliness of the clay one chooses with certainty, and that this certainty is impossible to obtain in every neighbourhood of a city, villages, hotels, motels, etc. Therefore, it is worthy of consideration that a Muslim carry some clean soil or clay with him or her to have available to prostrate upon whether at home or on a journey. There is nothing stopping a Muslim from being cautious in his religion and carrying some clean soil, the ritual purity of which is known with certainty, and upon which one may prostrate during prayer. By doing so, one may avoid prostrating upon unclean, ritually impure, and unhygienic substances, which would be a barrier between the one offering prayers and God.

At the same time, one would be prostrating in a manner consistent with the *sunnah* of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). Meaning, with the emphasis that Islam places on cleanliness during prayer and the fact that praying in garbage dumps, slaughterhouses, graves, busy streets, baths, and mangers has been prohibited, and the fact that it is considered important to purify and keep clean the mosques, the *sunnah* will not allow *sajda* upon unclean and ritually impure objects. It is as though this is the opinion taken by the pious jurists of the past. It was on the basis of such a precaution that a well-known member of the *tabi'een* and great jurist, Masruq Ibn Ajda' had an unbaked brick that he would carry with him and prostrate upon, as previously mentioned. Also, it has been mentioned in the book, *Al-Isaba Fi Tamyiz As-Sahaba*, that he was a Companion of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him).

At any rate, this is the first principle amongst the Shi'a, which has a long history and precedent amongst the Companions of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him).

The second principle: Indeed, according to the rule of general value, some lands and locations are considered better than others. There is a specialty and distinction for some lands over others based on

association. Do you not witness that governments bring into being a certain level of distinction to lands that are designated as parks and squares, especially if they are part of a palace complex? This reasoning is also valid when it comes to lands that are, in a way, associated with God. Therefore, they certainly have some distinction and special rules and relations which cannot be denied. For the person who has accepted Islam, has submitted himself to divine laws and commandments, and is living under the shadow of the flag of monotheism and Islam, it is necessary for him to follow, love, and defend them.

Based on this rule of general value, which is accepted by all, the Ka'bah, the holy sanctuary, the two holy mosques of Mecca and Medina, as well as regular mosques and places of worship have special rules when it comes to paying respect, ritual purity and impurity, the fact that a *junub* or a menstruating woman is not allowed in them or the fact that the sale of such locations is prohibited.

Therefore, making Mecca a sanctuary, the people's attention to the obligatory Hajj with all its actions and rituals, and similarly Medina, which in Islamic law is considered a special sanctuary, is all part of special rules for special places in Islam. A strong global government is one that is associated with God, such as the government of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) when he kissed the eyes of the great Companion Uthman Ibn Math'un after he had passed away and tears were streaming down the cheeks of the Prophet (peace be upon him) according to a narration from A'isha. (Asqalani, *Al-Isaba fi Tamyiz As-Sahaba* and others)

This association with Almighty God is the same that made the Prophet (peace be upon him) cry over his grandson, Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him), hold mourning ceremonies, and smell and kiss the soil of Karbala. (Al-Amini, *Siratuna wa Sunnatuna*)

It is this same association which made Umm Salama keep some soil of Karbala in her clothing.

It is this same association which allowed Fatima Az-Zahra (peace be upon her) to take the soil of her father's grave and smell it.

It is the association by which the people of the tribe of Bani Dabba on the day of the Battle of the Camel gathered the droppings of A'isha's camel and would break them open and smell them, as At-Tabari narrated.

It is based on this association that Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), when he passed through the land of Karbala, took a handful of soil, smelled it, and began to cry so much that his tears wet the ground. (There will be more to come on this subject.)

It is also based on this association with the divine that a man from the tribe of Bani Asad began crying after smelling the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him). (Al-Amini, *Siratuna wa Sunnatuna*)

After this explanation, any free-willed researcher could understand that the secret behind the excellence of the soil of Holy Karbala is its association with God and the position that the owner of the land has with

God.

What is your conception regarding the sanctity of the land which is the resting place of one who has been killed in the way of God, a great commander of a divine army, which was destroyed in the way of God? It is a resting place which is the resting place of one beloved by God and the son of one beloved by God, one who calls to the way of God and guides to the way of God, one who strives in the way of God, and gives his soul and his family in the way of God. This is the resting place of one who gave his blood for the elevation of truth, spreading belief in Unity, and strengthening the pillars of religion.

Therefore, why would God not display such a person, and how would God not protect his blood, and taking into consideration his honor and his holiness, why would God allow a drop of his blood to spill on the earth when he was throwing his blood into the sky with his hands? (Ibn Asakir, *At-Tarikh* and Hafidh Al-Ganji, *Kifaya*)

Why would God not send His angels to His Messenger (peace be upon him) with the soil of Karbala, and why would the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) not smell that soil and kiss it? Why would he not remember it throughout his life and use it as a medicine and as a salve?

So, Oh True Muslim! Come along with me. Is prostration upon this pure soil, which has this position of bringing mankind closer to God during prayer, not better than upon any other soil?

Is it not better to get closer to God by that act which shows humiliation, submission, and servitude to God by putting one's forehead on soil which is a lesson in defending the sanctity of God and which is an embodiment of supporting the honor of God, which is also the honor of Islam?

Is this pure soil not that which is associated with the secret of *sajda* upon the ground, which is the secret of not bowing to oppression, the secret of the greatness of Almighty God, and the secret of servitude and considering oneself nothing before God?

Is it not appropriate for prostration to be performed upon a soil which is a sign of divine unity and sacrifice in the way of God?

Is it not better for the place for one's prostration to be taken from soil from which springs of blood, which were colored with the color of the love of God, were flowing? And from a place which was founded upon the *sunnah* of God and His sincere love and friendship? From soil that is mixed with the pure blood of one who was purified by God and whose love God has ordained as the price of His message?

It is on the basis of these two principles that we take a piece of the clay of Karbala and prostrate upon it. Amongst the Shi'a, taking some of the soil of Karbala for *sajda* is not a religious obligation or a must, as some ignorant people have attributed to them.

By taking into account the *hadiths* that we have mentioned, it becomes clear that prostration upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) is, according to the *sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be

upon him), an act which is considered *mustahab*. (It is said that) the Prophet (peace be upon him) encouraged it. As mentioned earlier, the reality of the opinions and rulings of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) are to be found in the *hadiths* that they have narrated from their fathers, and in the end from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

For example, whatever Al-Imam As-Sadiq (peace be upon him) stated in the form of rulings and legal opinions is actually from his father, Al-Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (peace be upon him), and he from his father, Al-Imam As-Sajjad (peace be upon him), and he from his father, Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), and he from his father, Amir al-Mu'minin, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him). These great imams directly addressed this, and said, "We do not say anything on our own or according to our personal opinion. That which comes from our tongue, is actually in writing from Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him), dictated by the Messenger of God (peace be upon him)." (Sharaf Ad-Din, *Al-Muraji'at*. Also, see *Yanabi' Al-Mawaddah*, *Fusul Al-Muhimmah*, *Kifayat At-Talib*, and *Nur al-Absar*)

In addition to these words, one must take into account that the Imams of *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) are a unique source of knowledge for the Islamic nation.

The *Sunnah* of Almighty God and the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) Regarding the Soil of Karbala

Here we have to make the point that at the time that the Imams (peace be upon them) issued these *hadiths*, prostrating upon *khumra* and the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) were not considered *bid'ah*, infidelity, and idolatry. During the time of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) and his Companions, prostration upon *khumra* had become a continuous action and their *seerah* in this regard had been well established.

Seeking *tabarruk* from the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his artifacts, his progeny, and close associates was well known and liked among the Muslims. In this regard there was no doubt amongst the Companions and the *tabi'een*.

Taking into consideration that Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) is one of the progeny of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), rather, his soul, and a part of him, his flesh is the flesh of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his blood is the blood of the Prophet (peace be upon him). How would the Companions or the *tabi'een* have any doubt about the excellence of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and seeking *tabarruk* from him or his pure soil? Rather, it will become clear from the argument in favor of the Companions seeking *tabarruk* from the Prophet (peace be upon him), his artifacts, his progeny, and close associates that seeking *tabarruk* from the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was never the subject of any doubt. How could there be any doubt on this subject when As-Samhudi writes, "They – meaning the Companions and others – would take some soil from his grave (meaning the Prophet's grave – peace be upon him). Then, A'isha gave instructions that they should not do this, but there was an opening in the wall of the room he was buried in, and they used to

take soil from the grave through the opening until A'isha instructed them to close the opening.” (As-Samhudi, *Wifa Al-Wifa*)

It is clear that A'isha's prohibiting people from taking soil from the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was only to prevent damage to the gravesite, and not because it was infidelity or idolatry. If this action were indeed infidelity, idolatry, or *bid'ah*, then A'isha would have directly said so. Also, some of the Companions would have prohibited people from it. How could this action be idolatry when the Companions themselves were taking soil from the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or other people were doing it in their presence.?

In another part of his book, As-Samhudi writes, “It becomes obligatory for anyone who removes the soil of Medina to return it to its place. As long as a person has not returned it, and is capable of doing so, he is living in sin. If there is a case where a journey compels a person to remove some of the soil of Medina, such as taking a clay pot, or taking that which is a medicine, such as the soil of the grave of Hamza (peace be upon him) to cure a headache, or soil from the grave of Suhaib (may God be pleased with him), it is exempted from this rule. This is because the great scholars of the early Muslims and the later generations have a unanimity of opinion regarding this subject.” (As-Samhudi, *Wifa Al-Wifa*)

It has been narrated about Umar Ibn Al-Khattab that in praying for rain, he sought *tabarruk* from the Prophet's (peace be upon him) uncle, Abbas (may God be pleased with him), and Abbas (may God be pleased with him) sought intercession from Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him). (narrated in the book, *As-Seerat al-Halabiya* and others) It has been narrated that Mus'ab Ibn Zubayr sought *tabarruk* from Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him).

Therefore, whenever such people would seek *tabarruk* from the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), his artifacts, and close associates, as well as the soil of Husayn (peace be upon him), it was, to them, a clear thing.

Furthermore, it has been narrated that after the Prophet's (peace be upon him) uncle Hamza (peace be upon him) was buried at Uhud and he was named the Master of Martyrs, people used to come to visit his grave and prostrate upon the soil of his grave. (from the book, *Al-Ard wat Turbat al-Husayniyah*)

It has been narrated in some *hadiths*, “The prayer beads of the daughter of the Prophet (peace be upon him) Fatima Az-Zahra (peace be upon her) was made of a woolen string with a knot for each *takbir* and she would use it for *dhikr*. When Hamza Ibn Abd al-Muttalib (peace be upon him) was martyred, she made prayer beads from the soil of his grave. Other people followed her example and made prayer beads from the soil of the grave of Hamza, the Master of Martyrs (peace be upon him). So, after Abu Abdullah Husayn Ibn Ali (peace be upon him) was martyred, the people turned from the grave of Hamza (peace be upon him) to the grave of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and started making prayer beads from the soil of his grave because of the excellence and preferability that it has. (*Bihar al-Anwar*, *Wasa'il Ash-Shi'a*)

Could it be the case that a Muslim who seeks *tabarruk* from the hair, fingernails, leftover food, water from *wudu*, rug, shoes, plate, and whatever the Prophet (peace be upon him) has touched, and who seeks *tabarruk* from people close to him and his Companions who pledged allegiance to him would not seek *tabarruk* from Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) and the soil of his grave? Never! Never!

Taking into consideration the subjects that have passed, the excellence of prostrating upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) has been established. Multiple *hadiths* have been narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) through his *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) on this subject. Also, we had stated that this was in accordance with the *sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Furthermore, multiple other sources exist that point to the fact that this is in accordance with the *sunnah* of God and the Messenger of Islam (peace be upon him), specifically in relation to the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him).

One of the graces of God that has befallen the Shi'a and the lovers of the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (peace be upon them) is that in their actions they have followed the *sunnah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the way of the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them). They do this with the knowledge that the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) are one of the two weighty things that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has left as a souvenir, the weighty things (the Book and the '*Itra*') (peace be upon them) which will never be apart from one another until they enter the company of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in front of the pool of Kauthar. The Shi'a have not violated this and have been respectful of that which the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) have respected and to follow their straight path.

A Twelve-Imam Shi'a, taking into consideration the arguments and the *hadiths*, sees that Almighty God has given the greatest care to this pure soil, and the greatest respect and dignity. When God sent his angels into the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), they brought some of the soil of Karbala to him. Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted it and respected it.

As far as the respect of this honorable soil is concerned, there are many *hadiths* and words from which we can understand that when the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) entered the presence of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) to inform him that Abu Abdullah Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) was to be martyred, he brought some soil from the place of his martyrdom with him. This has also been narrated regarding the rest of the angels. When they brought this sad news to the presence of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), they would bring a handful of the soil of Karbala with them. (*Bihar al-Anwar*, *Kanz al-Ummal*, *Tarikh Al-Baqubi*, *Khasais As-Suyuti*, *Musnad Ahmad*, *Talkhis Al-Mustadrak Adh-Dhahabi*, and many others)

Based on this, the Twelve-Imam Shi'as believe that the soil that God presented as a gift to the Prophet (peace be upon him), indeed in following the *sunnah* of God, is worthy of respect and honor.

In kissing the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), the Twelve-Imam Shi'a takes into

consideration that the Prophet (peace be upon him) took that soil which was presented to him and kissed it.

It is narrated that Umm Salama (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "Then, the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to sleep. Then, he awoke with a red soil in his blessed hands, and he was kissing it. I asked him, 'O Messenger of God? What is this soil?' He answered, 'Gabriel gave me news that this son of mine (pointing towards Al-Imam Al-Husayn, peace be upon him) will be killed in the land of Iraq. Then, I told Gabriel to show me the land where he will be martyred. This is that same soil.'" (*Al-Mustadrak Al-Hakim, Kanz al-Ummal, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir*)

Therefore, the Twelve-Imam Shi'a, are taking hold of the *seerah* of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and acting according to his *sunnah* by kissing and honoring the pure soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him). It is seen in the *seerah* and *sunnah* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) kept the soil in a jar, gave it to Umm Salama, and ordered her to take care of it, saying, "This is the soil that my son (Al-Imam Al-Husayn, peace be upon him) will be killed upon. Keep it with you. Whenever this soil turns to blood, then know that my son (Al-Imam Al-Husayn, peace be upon him) has been killed." (*Bihar al-Anwar, Hashiat Ihqaq al-Haqq, Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir, Suyuti, Al-Khasa'is* and others)

Also, the Twelve-Imam Shi'a witnesses that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) smells his soil as one would smell a fragrant flower or musk. (Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir* and others) It is based on this that the Shi'a believes with certainty that the fragrance and smell of that soil before the blood of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), the beloved, son of the beloved was spilled upon it is the result of a divine and spiritual fragrance and a divine love towards this pure soil that is due either to something that exists within this soil itself or it is because of something that took place on this soil or will take place in a future time. So, the actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in relation to this pure soil brought about a special state of being for every Muslim related to this soil, whatever you may wish to call it.

Maybe the Prophet (peace be upon him) could smell the painful events that would occur in the future for his *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) such as the spilling of their blood, the looting of their property, their being taken prisoner, being whipped... and also the coming and going of pious people to that holy land and soil, and their taking up residence there, and their prayers and tears in that holy location, maybe, maybe...

At the time of smelling that soil, the Prophet (peace be upon him) lost control of his eyes and began shedding tears. It has been narrated that Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) said, "One day, I entered the presence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and saw that he was crying. I asked, 'O Prophet of God! Has someone made you angry? Why are you crying?' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'Before you came, Gabriel was with me and informed me that Husayn (peace be upon him) would be killed near the Euphrates River and said, 'Do you want me to make you aware of the fragrance of his soil?' I answered, 'Yes.' Then, he extended his hand and took a handful of soil and gave it to me. Now you see my eyes filled with tears.'" (*Musnad Ahmad, Hashiat Ihqaq al-Haqq, Tarikh al-Islam* of Adh-

Dhahabi, and others)

Therefore, Shi'as kiss that pure soil and smell it as they would smell the most expensive fragrances, the same way that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) kissed it and smelled it. And the Shi'as keep it, just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) kept it. And they let their tears fall upon it, just as the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) would spill tears upon it. Whatever the Shi'as do is in following the *sunnah* of God and the *sunnah* of the noble messenger of Islam (peace be upon him) and his *seerah*, which is the best and most complete example for each Muslim individual.

It is a strange soil, the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him), that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) spilled tears on it before his son's blood was spilled on it.

It has been narrated from Amir al-Mu'minin Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) that on his way to Siffeen, he stopped at Karbala and went to the place where his family's blood would be spilled and where they would be killed. He took some of the soil, smelled it, and said, "Blessed be you, o soil! A people will be resurrected from you, who will enter Heaven without reckoning." He continued, "How good it is for you, o land, that the blood of the Saints (*Awliya*) of God will be spilled on your soil!" (*Bihar al-Anwar, Al-Amali* of As-Saduq, *Kifayat al-Kanji Ash-Shafi'i* and others)

In some of the *hadiths* that have been narrated on the subject of the *sunnah* of God and the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) it has come, "When the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) smelled this soil and spilled his tears upon it, he said, 'Blessed be thou, o soil!'"

Amongst some of another group of *hadiths* it has come, "He used to hold the soil near his nose to smell it as if it were a fine musk."

In another place it came, "It was a red soil, sweet smelling." (*Hashiat Ihqaq al-Haqq* and others)

In addition to these sayings and *hadiths*, many correct *hadiths* have been narrated from the *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) about giving importance to this pure soil by seeking *tabarruk* through it, kissing it, putting one's eye up to it, rubbing it on one's body, and seeking healing of the sick through this pure soil. (*Bihar al-Anwar* and others)

In a *hadith* narrated by Umm Ayman from the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the excellence of the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) it has come, "This soil is the purest and most honorable piece of the earth and is from the soil of Heaven." (*Bihar al-Anwar*)

Keeping in mind that which we have explained until now, it becomes clear that the belief of the Shi'a is based on the betterness and excellence of prostration upon the soil of Al-Imam Al-Husayn (peace be upon him) over all other things which are permissible to prostrate upon in prayer. Indeed this excellence is to pay respect to that which Almighty God has paid respect to and is to be bound by that which God

and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have established as the *sunnah*, according to that which has been narrated from *Ahl al-Bayt* (peace be upon them) about venerating, respecting, prostrating upon, and making prayer beads from that holy soil.

“And all praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds.”

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SHARES

Glossary

Abqari – a type of carpet

Ahl al-Bayt – “people of the house,” the household of the Prophet (peace be upon them), identified in *hadith* as the Prophet’s daughter Fatima, her husband, Ali ibn Abi-Talib, and her sons Hasan and Husayn (peace be upon them). According to Twelve-Imam Shi’as, the nine Imams who are direct descendants of Husayn ibn Ali (peace be upon them) are included in this group as well.

Barathi’ – saddle blanket, a blanket placed under the saddle of a horse, camel, or donkey

Barda – a rug woven from palm fiber

Bat-ha – gravel

Bid’ah – innovation in religion, adding something to the religion that was not originally part of the religion.

Burnis – a cloak with an attached hood

Burya – a rug woven from split reeds

Dhikr – remembrance (of God)

Dunya – material world

Fiqh – jurisprudence

Hadith – tradition, saying, or action attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Haram – forbidden and sinful

Hasan – “good,” a hadith that is not as strong as a *sahih* hadith, but is still good

Hasbaa – pebbles

Hasir – a large rug woven from plant fibers

Ibrad – cooling

Ijtihad – “to strive, struggle, or try hard” to derive an Islamic jurisprudential ruling from the original sources, Quran, hadith, intellect, and consensus. (What constitutes an authentic source in deriving a jurisprudential ruling has been and continues to be a subject of disagreement amongst scholars.)

‘Itra – the family of the Prophet (peace be upon them)

Jadad – flat ground with some sand on it

Jaria – female servant

Junub – A person who is in a state of ritual impurity as the result of seminal discharge or coitus

Kharita – a vessel made of skin or anything else, like a pouch

Khasfa – a large basket woven from date palm fibers

Khawarij – Kharijites, a group of people who rejected the caliphate of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him)

Khumra – a mat woven from palm fiber used to prostrate upon

Lawh – a wide board, made of wood or bone

Madar – baked clay

Makruh – a disliked act

Marfu’ – a *hadith* with a missing link in the middle or the end of the chain of narrators

Matruk – a *hadith* that is discredited because the narrator is accused of fabrication

Mawla – convert to Islam

Muezzin – the person who recites the call to prayers

Mujtahid – a scholar of Islamic jurisprudence who has attained the level of *ijtihad*

Mustahab – a recommended act

Mutawatir – a *hadith* is considered to be *mutawatir* if a number of narrators at each level in the chain of narration.

Nawafil – voluntary or recommended prayers, as opposed to obligatory prayers

Rakat – a cycle of ritual prayer in Islam, standing, bowing, and prostrating twice

Safa – dead, rocky land

Sahih – a “sound” or “correct” hadith

Sajda – prostration; in jurisprudence, *sajda* has a technical definition, with certain conditions that need to be met for it to be considered a correct *sajda*.

Sajda sahw – prostration that must be performed after an obligatory prayer if a mistake is made during the prayer

Seerah – path, usually used to describe the actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Sihah – “correct” books of hadith. After the Quran, the six correct books (*Sihah As-Sittah*) are considered the most authoritative texts in Sunni Islam.

Sunnah – tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Sura – chapter of the Quran

Tabarruk – considering something sacred (consecrated) due to its association with something sacred, such as considering the sweat of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be sacred

Tabi'een – the generation of Muslims that came after the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). One is considered a member of this group if he or she met a companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) while believing in his prophethood and died as a Muslim.

Takbir – Saying “Allahu Akbar” in remembrance of God. It could also refer to saying other phrases, such as “subhana Allah” and “alhamdulillah.”

Taqiyya – denial of religious belief and practice in the face of persecution

Tayammum – a purification ritual performed before prayer using dirt in the absence of water

Tinfisa – a palm fiber mat the width of a cubit

Umma – nation, community

Umm al-Mu'minin – Mother of the Faithful, title for the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Urf – common definition (this is a concept in Islamic jurisprudence)

Wata – carpet

Wudu – ablution, ritual washing before prayer

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SHARES

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