

Prayer – he would look at the shoulders and the feet.” (Al-Mu’jam al-Awsat, 2436)

Similar practices have been reported about Uthmaan, Ali and other Sahaba as well (may Allah be pleased with them all).

SCHOLARS’ VIEWS ON THIS ISSUE

- **Imaam Nawawi (rahimahullah) stated:** “Even though the Prophet (ﷺ) strictly enforced this practice, the people have become disregarded and heedless on the Sunnah of straightening the rows and being close together.” (Lasnah al-Talibin, 2/28)
- **Shaikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) stated:** “Indeed the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded with straightening the row, to fill the gaps, to complete the first row and then the next, and the Imaam be in the middle.” (Majmu’ al-Fatawa al-Misriyyah, p.59)
- **Shaikh Uthaymeen (rahimahullah) said:** “(Allah will cause discord between you) This is a threat and there is no threat except upon acting nr something that is forbidden, so the straightening the rows is obligatory.” (Majmu’ Fatawa, 13/22)
- **Shaikh bin Baaz (rahimahullah) stated:** “It is obligatory upon those praying to arrange the rows and to fill the gaps by being close together and join the foot with the foot without causing harm to others.” (Majmu’ Fataawa, 12/200)
- **Shaikh bin Baaz (rahimahullah) stated:** “Imaams **must** instruct and encourage the straightening of rows before every Salaah.” (Majmu’ Fataawa, 12/203)
- **Imaam al-Suyuti (rahimahullah) stated:** “Straight rows prevent gaps where Satan can enter and disturb unity.” (Al-Haawi lil-Fataawa, 1/52)

BENEFITS OF PROPER ROWS

- Strengthens unity and brotherhood.
- Ensures discipline and humility in worship.
- Prevents Satanic disruption in congregation.
- Preserves the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Sahabah.

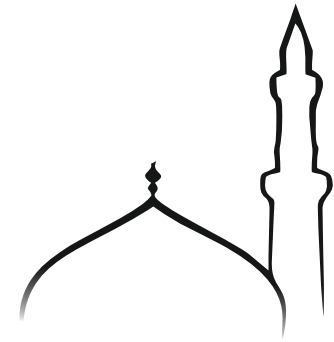
CONCLUSION

Proper alignment in rows is an emphasized Sunnah which, according to many scholars, is obligatory. The Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions were meticulous in this matter. Every Muslim should strive to uphold this practice and revive this forgotten Sunnah, which will bring both reward and unity to the Ummah.

FINALLY, SHAIKH ALBANI’S APPEAL TO THE MUSLIMS

“I appeal to the Muslims and in particular to the Imaams of the Mosques who are ardent upon following the Prophet (ﷺ) – that they implement this Sunnah and call the people to it. So that they can all unite upon it altogether, and so with that they will be saved from the threat of this Hadith, Or “Allah will cause discord between their hearts.” (Silsilah al-Ahaadith as-Saheehah, 1/73)

Note:- The way to practice the above-mentioned Sunnah of our beloved Prophet (ﷺ) is possible only when we place our feet vertically facing the Qibla and aligned to the width of the shoulders and not in V-shape.



LET'S REVIVE THIS SUNNAH

The Straightening of the Saff

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During the course of my travels and visits to different Mosques, I have witnessed the violation of an important Sunnah – which many scholars have termed as obligatory – i.e. **the straightening of the Saff during Salah.**

Not only the majority of common Muslims, but even the Imaams/scholars have abandoned this Sunnah – straightening the rows (Saff) physically – they just announce “Straighten the Row/Saff” and commence the Salah without following the Prophet’s (ﷺ) practice of straightening the Saff physically as the Sahaba followed. There are many Ahadith that underscore this Sunnah with great emphasis.

Following are some of the Ahadith on the importance and application of straightening of the Row:

1. **Imaam Bukhari** in his *Sahih*, in the section of “Book of Adhan” has a chapter (75) with the heading: “The sin of a person who does not complete the rows (who is not aligned) for the prayer.” In this chapter he mentioned the following hadith:

Narrated Anas bin Malik (R.A.):

“I arrived in Madinah and was asked whether I found any change since the days of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ). I said, ‘I have not found any change except that you no longer stand in alignment in your prayers.’” (Sahih Al-Bukhari Vol.1, Hadith No. 724)

In the next chapter (76), Imaam Bukhari (rahimahullah) has put the heading, “To stand shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot in a row,” and under this heading is the following hadith:

Narrated Anas bin Malik (R.A.):

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Straighten your rows as I see you from behind my back.” Anas (R.A.)

added, “Everyone of us used to put his shoulder with the shoulder of his companion and his foot with the foot of his companion.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari Vol.1, Hadith No. 725)

2. **Jabir bin Samurah (RA) reported:** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to us and said, “Why don’t you draw yourselves up in rows as angels do in the presence of their Lord?” We said, “Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), how do the angels draw themselves up in rows in the presence of their Lord?” He (ﷺ) said, “They make the first rows complete and align closely together in the rows.” (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 430a)

3. **Al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib (RA) reported:** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to pass through the rows from one side to the other and he used to set our chests and shoulders in order, and say, “Do not be irregular.” (Sunan Abi Dawud, Hadith No. 664)

4. **Numan (R.A.) reported:** ‘The Prophet (ﷺ) used to straighten our row, and when we were straight, he used to say Takbeer” (Sunan Abi Dawud, Hadith No. 665)

THE MESSENGER (ﷺ)’S STERN WARNING AGAINST NON-COMPLIANCE OF HIS COMMAND

- **An-Nu’mān bin Bashir (RA) reported:** The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Straighten your rows or Allah will alter your faces.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari, 717)
- **Nu’mān bin Bashir (RA) reported:** I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, “Straighten your rows, or Allah will create dissension (division/factions) amongst you.” (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 436a)

- **Anas bin Malik (RA) reported:** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “Straighten your rows, for the straightening of a row is a part of the perfection of Prayer.” (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 433)
- **Abi Mas’ud (RA) reported:** The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would touch our shoulders at (the time of) Prayer and he would say, “Stand straight and do not differ, lest your hearts be turned and there be dissension in your midst.” (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 432a)
- **Ibn Umar (RA) reported:** The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Set the rows in order, stand shoulder to shoulder, close the gaps, and be flexible and soft with your brothers, and do not leave openings for the devil. If anyone joins a row, Allah will join him up, but if anyone breaks a row, Allah will cut him off.” (Sunan Abi Dawud, Hadith No. 666)

THE PRACTICE OF THE COMPANIONS IN STRAIGHTENING THE ROWS

1. **Anas bin Malik reported:** The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Straighten your rows for I see from behind my back.” Anas added, “Everyone of us used to put his shoulder with the shoulder of his companion and his foot with the foot of his companion.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 725)
2. **Abi ‘Uthmaan an-Nahdhi reported:** Umar (r.a.) would command with straightening the rows, and then he would say, “Move forward O so and so.” (Musannaf ‘Abdur Razzaq, 2494)
3. **Nafi’ reported:** “Umar (r.a.) would order some men to straighten the rows, and when they informed him that the rows were straight, he would make the Takbeer.” (Muwatta Imaam Malik, 376)
4. **Abu ‘Uthmaan reported:** “I saw Umar bin Khattab – when he would proceed forth for the