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Why Do The Shias Prostrate On Clay Tablets?

BY:
ALLAMA SHEIKH ABDULHUSAIN AL-AMINI

Translated from the Swahili translation of
SAYYID MUHAMMAD MEHDI SHUSTARY

BY
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February 7, 1996
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ENGLISH TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

My friend, Al-Hajj Jaffer Kassamali Jaffer, previously of Zanzibar and Tanga Tanzania, now living in New York requested me to undertake the task of translating this booklet from Swahili into English. After discussing with him the merits of the venture vis-a-vis tabligh activities, I was convinced that this work could be of significant value for those wishing to understand some of the practices of the Shia Ithna Asheri Muslims who are many times misunderstood by other muslim sects.

As the Swahili publication had been done by the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, I first had to seek their permission of this translation; the said permission was granted, thanks to ther Bilal Muslim Mission publisher, Fidahusain Hameer.

I have made all efforts to adhere to the Swahili text in my translation, dispite the fact that this had made me, at times, sound archaic.

This work has been dedicated to the memory of the parents of Jaffer Kassamali Jaffer and to my parents and to my eldest brother Gulamali Mohamed Husein Dungersi who passed away recently in Dubai. Please read Sura-e-Fateha for the departed souls.

May Allah accept our efforts.

Mohamed Raza Dungersi

PREFACE

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL

Many thanks are for Allah for enabling me to fulfill my desire of translating and writing religious books in Kiswahili so as to enable our African brothers to have a better understanding of Islam as received from the progeny of the prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, known as SHIA-ITHNA-ASHARI faith.

Having compiled my booklet “Matters that Concern the Dead”, I felt the need and the obligation to address issues that bother some Muslims in general and our Sunni brothers in particular, who, out of ignorance, revert to false accusations, hatred and misunderstanding.

One such issue is, “Why do Shias prostrate (do ‘SAJDA’) on clay tablets?” Instead of searching for the reply in their own sources, they accuse us of worshipping the clay tablets.

This booklet is a translation of a part of a book called

سيرتنا وسنتنا سيرة نبينا (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) وسنته

(Our Actions and Traditions are the Actions and Traditions of the Prophet, (may peace be upon him and his progeny)), written by a famous Shia scholar, the late Allamah Sheikh Abdul-Hussain Al-Amini. The author of this book is a prolific writer on matters that confound our Sunni brother; one such notable work being *Al-Ghadir*.

In this booklet Allama Amini has quoted from Sunni sources all

those incident that support his argument. He has recorded these traditions in three catagories. Firstly, he has grouped all those traditions that stress the fact that while praying (SALAT), prostration must be done on earth. Second group lists all those items that are permissible to be used in place of the earth; as for example, a mat. In the third group, he lists those other items that one can use when neither earth nor items under catagory too are available.

Lastly, Allama has proved why the use of clay tablets from Karbala is unparalleled in merit and impotence more than any other item for prostration to achieve nearness to Allah.

We pray to Allah, in the name of the Prophet and his progeny, may peace be on them all, to enable us to explain to our sunni brothers the true traditions of our prophet.

Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi al-Musawy

Tehran, Iran
11th Julai, 1977.

INTRODUCTION

Prayers (SALAH) is the first and foremost branch of Islam, as “it prevents Shameful and unjust deeds”,¹ “It is a way to seek help”,² “It is an obligation associated with time”,³ and “It is one of the successes achieved by the faithful”⁴ etc.

All these are because, as the Prophet may peace be upon him and his progeny, has said “Prayers are the pillars of religion. If they are accepted (by Allah) all other deeds are accepted; if they (Prayers) are not accepted, every other act of worship is rejected.”

Therefore, to make sure that all our deeds of worship are acceptable, we have to comply with all those requirements that make our prayers acceptable: correct pronunciation, standing upright, to bend down in ‘RUKU’ and prostrate ‘SUJUD’ in the prescribed manner. These are the conditions pertaining to the prayers per se. There are other prerequisites that must be adhered to. They are: Your body and your clothes must be clean (TAHIR); so must the place where you are praying. You must also perform ablution (WUDHU) as prescribed.

Our Muslim brothers follows all these conditions except one which they ignore, this being the obligation to prostrate on earth or clay. For let it be known that ordinarily one is not allowed to prostrate on things other than earth or nonedible things from earth or things from earth that cannot be used for making cloth.

- 1 Allah says, “. . . For prayers restrain from shameful and unjust deeds; and and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest. . .” (Qur’an 29:45)
- 2 Allah says, “O you who believe! seek assistance through patience and prayer....” (Qur’an 2:153)
- 3 Allah says, “. . . surely prayer is a timed ordinance for the believers.” (Qur’an 4:103)
- 4 Allah says, “Successful indeed are the believers, Who are humble in their prayers.” (Qur’an 23:1-2)

Therefore, to ensure that your prayers are valid and acceptable, you must prostrate on earth or things coming from earth but are not edible or used for making cloth. For example: a clay tablet, a piece of stone, a straw mat, a straw carpet.

However, if you prostrate on other items than mentioned above without being forced to, for example on a praying carpet made out of silk, be sure that your prayers are invalid. Why? Because you have acted not only against the tradition and the command of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, but also in defiance to the conditions of players.

Many reliable traditions have been reported from the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, saying that Allah has purified earth and made it worthy of being prostrated on. As a matter of fact, the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, himself used to prostrate on earth, or on stone or 'KHUMRA' (straw mat). There is no tradition suggesting that the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, ever allowed or himself performed a prostration on a carpet or a mat that was no made of leaves under normal circumstances. Rather, the Prophet, may peace be on him and his progeny, instructed his companions to prostrate on earth, on a stone or on a straw mat and never to prostrate on the head gear (since this was part of their clothes).

To adhere to this tradition, the companions of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, used to cool their clay tablets (which had become hot due to sunshine) and then prostrate on it, knowing fully well that this was the way to perform a correct prayer.

True: The earth has been specified as a place to perform a prostration but this does not mean you can prostrate anywhere on earth. The condition is the earth on which you prostrate must be clean (TAHIR). We know that it is difficult to know whether the

earth is clean (TAHIR) or not at public places such as the pathway, hotels and bus terminals. Muslims as well as non-Muslims have access to such places, and they are not necessarily mindful to the laws of cleanliness and 'NAJASAT' (non-cleanliness) as defined by religion. This makes it a big problem for travelers.

To avoid this problem, what is wrong if a Muslim (who cares to make his prayers be valid) uses a clay tablet while traveling or when he is at a public place which is unclean?

Any one who uses earth for his prostration will naturally choose such earth that has unique merits and brings the worshiper close to Allah. Is there any such unique earth?

Without any doubt such earth is that from Karbala; the earth that was mixed with the blood of Imam Husain, may peace be upon him, and of those Muslims who sacrificed their lives and whose blood was spilled in defence for the religion of Allah - Islam; the earth which if was not unique would not have been sent by Allah to His Apostle, Muhammad through His angel, informing him of his grandson's martyrdom.

Why did the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, smell this earth and weep? Why did he kiss this earth and preserve it for future memory? Because it was the earth on which would be spilt the blood of the leader of martyrs, his beloved and the beloved of his Lord, the chief of the youths of Paradise, the leader and savior of Muslims whose blood has been given great importance as one of the signs of Allah.

When Allah and His Prophet have sanctified the earth of Karbala, who are we to do otherwise specially when we claim to follow their traditions ("sunna")? When we know that one of

the conditions for proper prayers is performance of prostration (SUJUD) on earth, then why not do so on the sanctified earth of Karbala? What makes you do prostration on a carpet, on a cotton or silk mat when you know that your prayers are unacceptable unless your forehead touches earth?

Traditions and rulings available are in abundance to address the issue: “Why do Shias prostrate on earth?”

PROSTRATION AND OBJECTS ON WHICH PROSTRATION IS ALLOWED

One of the obligations for the person praying is to do so on earth. On this issue, all Muslims are in agreement. A true tradition of the Prophet says:

جُعِلَتْ لِي الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِداً وَظَهُوراً

“Allah has made earth an object for prostration and so pure.”

Imams of all sects of Islam are in agreement that whenever possible prostrations should be done on earth or objects coming from earth. In due course, traditions sustaining this claim would be produced.

In earlier days, the companions of the Prophet used to carry earth or clay which would heat up from sun rays at zuhur prayers; the companions would have to cool it with their hands. There are many traditions stating that there were no alternatives but to prostrate on earth or objects from earth when things (such as heat) preventing prostration could be removed (like cooling it).

Also there are traditions saying that the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, would spread cloth under his palms when the earth was hot or cold. However, these traditions do not

specify that the Prophet substituted earth with cloth. Therefore, it is assumed that it is not permissible to substitute earth with any non-earth object.

When performance of prostration on earth is not safe due to heat or cold, a substitute is permissible, but an exception does not make a rule.

Moreover, there are traditions stating that prostrating on mats and carpets made out of straw is tantamount to prostration on earth or objects of earth which are non-edible and which are not used as cloth.

As a matter of fact, as an object for prostration nothing can match the earth in drawing you nearer to Allah because it is from earth that we originate, that we get our sustenance and to which we shall all return. Indeed, by prostrating on earth, our foreheads collect dust and dirt that is part of earth and this makes us realize how insignificant we are; this brings about a sense of humility and understanding as to how weak we are in the presence of Allah. Pride caused by heritage or wealth dissipates and one feels small in the presence of the Might and Majesty of the Almighty. Such thoughts and realization cannot come about if a person prostrates on silken carpets and mats woven and decorated with colorful designs and decorations. On the contrary, such a person may end up with thoughts of pride, arrogance and boastfulness.

At this juncture, we are introducing to our distinguished readers those traditions that appear in the six famous books called *AS-SIHAHU AS-SITTA*, (i.e. *Sahih Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Jami Tirmidhi*, *Sunan Nasai*, *Sunan Ibn Majah* and *Sunan Abi Daud*) which are regarded most reliable by our Sunni brothers, and also in other sources acceptable to them. All these sources portray the

Prophet's traditions concerning objects that are permissible for the purpose of prostration. We pray to our Lord to guide us to stay on His traditions which are fixed and which should lead us correctly. These traditions are under three categories

FIRST CATEGORY

TRADITIONS WHICH PROVE THAT IT IS OBLIGATORY TO PROSTRATE ON EARTH

We begin with traditions which prove that prostration has to be done on earth

(1) The Prophet, may peace be upon him, says: "Allah the Almighty has made earth an object of prostration and pure."

جُعِلَتْ لِي الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِداً وَطَهُوراً

Imam Muslim quotes a tradition which says:

"The entire land has been made a place on which to perform prostration and its earth has been purified (so it can be used) in absence of water."

جعلت لنا الأرض كلها مسجداً، وجعلت تربتها لنا طهوراً إذا لم نجد الماء

Imam Tarmidhi quotes a tradition which says:

"The earth has been made for me as an object for prostration and is pure."

جعلت لي الأرض كلها مسجداً وطهوراً

These traditions are also reported on the authority of such personalities as Ali, Abdullah bin Umar, Abu Hurayrah, Jabir, Ibne Abbas, Hudhaifa, Anas, Abi Amama and Ahu Dhar.

Bayhaqi quotes a tradition saying:

"The earth had been purified for me and has been made a place to

perform prostration."

جعلت لي الأرض طهورا ومسجدا

Over and above that, Bayhaqi quotes a similar tradition worded differently; it says: "The earth has been purified for me and is a place for prostration. And whenever the times of prayers approaches a person, the person should pray wherever he is."⁵

جعلت لي الأرض طيبة ومسجدا، وأيما أدركته الصلاة صلى حيث كان

(2) The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, told one of his companions, Abu Dhar: "The earth is a place for prostration. Therefore, whenever the times of prayers approach, pray wherever you are."⁶

الأرض لك مسجد فحيثما أدركت الصلاة فصل

(3) The Prophet's Companions, Ibne Abbas says: "The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, used to prostrate on a piece of stone."⁷

ابن عباس: إن النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) سجد على الحجر

This tradition has been quoted on the authority of Hakim and has been further endorsed by Dhahabi.

5 *Sahih Bukhari* of Imam Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari, Vol. I, p. 86 & 118; *Sahih Muslim* of Imam Muslim bin Hajjaj Naysaburi, Vol. II, p. 64; *Sahih (Sunan) Nasai* of Imam Abu Abdir Rahman Ahmad bin Shuaib Nasai, Vol. II, p. 32; *Sahih (Sunan) Abu Daud* of Imam Abu Daud Sulaiman bin as-Sajistani, Vol. I, p. 79; *Sahih Tirmidhi* of Imam Abu Isa Muhammad bin Isa as-Sulami at-Tirmidhi, Vol. II, p. 114; *Sunanul Kubra* Vol. II, p. 433 and 435.

6 *Sahih (Sunan) Nasai*, Vol. II, p. 32;

7 *Al-Mustadrak alaa al-Sahihain* of Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdallah al-Hakim al-Nishapuri, Vol. III, p. 473.

(4) The Prophet's companion, Abu Said al-Khudri says:

“I personally witnessed signs of mud and water beneath the nose and the forehead of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny.”⁸

أبصرت عيناى رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) وعلى أنفه وجبهته أثر
الماء والطين

There is no doubt that these marks were seen after he had prostrated on the earth.

(5) The Prophet's companion, Rufaa bin Raafi says: “After saying takbir and going into proper prostration, a person praying is required to put his forehead on the ground till his body is still.”⁹

ثم يكبر فيسجد فيمكن جبهته من الأرض حتى تطمئن مفاصله
وتستوي

This tradition has been quoted on the authority of Bayhaqi.

(6) Al-Bazzaz and Tabarani quote a tradition which has come through a chain of reliable sources, traceable to Ibne Abbas, Anas and Baraydah saying that one among three acts not permissible in prayers is “Rubbing away traces of clay from the forehead before the prayers are completed.”

ابن عباس، وأنس، وبريدة بإسناد صحيح مرفوعا: ثلاثة من الجفاء:
يمسح جبهته قبل أن يفرغ من صلاته

And by the authority of the Prophet's companion Waathila bin
8 *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. I, p. 163 and 198; Vol. II, p. 253, 254, 256, 258 and
259; *Sunan Abu Daud*, Vol. I, p. 143-144; *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 104.
9 *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 102.

al-Asqaa, report Tabarani and Al-Bazzaz that “A person should not wipe-off traces of earth from his face before he has completed his prayers.”¹⁰

وفي لفظ وائلة بن الأسقع: لا يمسح الرجل جبهته من التراب حتى يفرغ من الصلاة

(7) The Prophet’s companion, Jabir bin Abdulla Ansari says, “I was with the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, preparing for afternoon prayers. I had with me a cluster of stones and I was trying to cool them so that I could prostrate on them - they having been overheated by sunshine.”¹¹

كنت أصلي مع رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) الظهر فأخذ قبضة من حصى في كفي لتبرد حتى أسجد عليه من شدة الحر

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal reports this tradition with some minor alteration in these words: “When we were praying with the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, I took clusters of stones from one hand to another so as to cool them as they were hot from sunshine, and then prostrated on them.”¹¹

كنا نصلي مع رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) صلاة الظهر، وأخذ بيدي قبضة من حصى فأجعلها في يدي الأخرى حتى تبرد ثم أسجد عليها من شدة الحر

Bayhaqi reports this tradition in these words : “I was with the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, preparing to pray the afternoon prayers. I took a cluster of stones in my hands so as

10 *Majma’ul-Zawaid* of Ibni Hajar- Al-Makki p. 83-84

11 *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, Vol. I, p. 327; *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 105.

to cool them from the heat of the sun; I then placed them where I wanted to prostrate and then prostrated on them.”

كنت أصلي مع رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) صلاة الظهر فأخذ قبضة من الحصى في كفي حتى تبرد، وأضعها بجبهتي إذا سجدت من شدة الحر

Bayhaqi quotes Sheikh to have said: “It would have been easy if only we were permitted to prostrate on the clothes we wear, instead of having to cool heated stones with their hands and then to prostrate on them. May Allah give us guidance.”

قال الشيخ: ولو جاز السجود على ثوب متصل به لكان ذلك أسهل من تبريد الحصى في الكف ووضعها للسجود عليها، وبالله التوفيق

(8) The Prophet’s companion, Anas bin Malik says, “We were praying with the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, in summer and all of us had to cool with our hands a cluster of stones so as to prostrate on them while praying.”¹²

كنا نصلي مع رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) في شدة الحر فيأخذ أحدنا الحصباء في يده فإذا برد وضعه وسجد عليه

(9) The Prophet’s companion, Khabab bin Al-Art says: “We complained to the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, that because the ground was hot our foreheads and palms were getting burnt, but the Prophet did not do anything.”¹³

12 *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 106.

13 *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 105, 107; *Naylul Awtaar* of Shawkani, Vol. II, p. 268

شكونا إلى رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) شدة الرمضاء في جباهنا
وأكفنا فلم يشكنا

(10) The Prophet's companion Umar bin Khattab says: "One night it rained, so in the morning each of us carried stones, on which to prostrate. When the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, saw us do this, he said, 'How beautiful a mat you have.' That was the beginning of the use of stones in prayers."¹⁴

مطرنا من الليل فخرجنا لصلاة الغداة فجعل الرجل يمر على البطحاء
فيجعل في ثوبه من الحصباء فيصلي عليه، فلما رأى رسول الله (صلى
الله عليه وسلم) ذاك قال: ما أحسن هذا البساط. فكان ذلك أول بدء
الحصباء

Abu Daud quotes Ibn Umar in these words: "One night it rained and the ground was all wet. So everyone took stones and put them on the ground."¹⁴

مطرنا ذات ليلة فأصبحت الأرض مبتلة فجعل الرجل يأتي بالحصى في
ثوبه فيبسطه تحته، الحديث

(11) The Prophet's companion, Ayadh bin Abdullah Al-Qarashi says: "Once the Prophet, may peace be upon him, saw a man praying and prostrating on the edges of a headgear on his head which came down to his forehead. The Prophet pointed at him and said, 'Remove your headgear.'¹⁵

14 *Sunan Abu Daud*, Vol. I, p. 75; *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 440

15 *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 105

رأى رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) رجلاً يسجد على كور عمامته فأوماً بيده: ارفع عمامتك، وأوماً إلى جبهته

(12) Imam Ali, the Prince of Believers, says: “Anyone who is in the state of prayers, must remove his headgear from his forehead.”¹⁵

إذا كان أحدكم يصلي فليحسر العمامة عن جبهته

(13) Naafi, the Prophet’s companion says that whenever Abdallah bin Umar went into a prostration, he would free his forehead from his headgear so that his bare forehead touched the ground.”¹⁵

إن عبد الله بن عمر كان إذا سجد وعليه العمامة يرفعها حتى يضع جبهته بالأرض

(14) The Prophet’s companion, Ahada bin As-Saamit used to remove his headgear from his forehead when he went to pray.”¹⁵

عبادة بن الصامت إنه كان إذا قام إلى الصلاة حسر العمامة عن جبهته

(15) The Prophet’s companion, Abu Ubaida, says: “Ibne Massud would pray and do prostration only on earth.”¹⁶

إن ابن مسعود كان لا يصلي أو لا يسجد إلا على الأرض

This tradition has been reported by Tabarani in his book *Al-Maj-ma’ul Kabir*.

(16) “Ibrahim used to pray on ‘al-Burdii’ and prostrate on earth. When an inquiry was made as to what was ‘al-Burdii’; it was found out that it meant a kind of grass.”¹⁶

إبراهيم إنه كان يقوم على البردي ويسجد على الأرض. قلنا: ما البردي؟

قال: الحصير

16 *Al-Majma* of Ibnil Hajar Haythami Shaykhani, Vol. II, p. 57

(17) The Prophet's companion, Saleh bin Haywan as-Sabaai says, "The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, was praying next to a person whose forehead was covered with his headgear. The Prophet, may peace be upon him, removed the headgear from the person's forehead."¹⁷

إن رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) رأى رجلاً يسجد بجانبه وقد اعتم على جبهته فحسر رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) عن جبهته

SECOND CATEGORY TRADITIONS PERMITTING PROSTRATION ON OTHER (THAN EARTHEN) THINGS

We shall now consider traditions which allow prostration on things other than earth without any cause.

(1) The Prophet's companion, Anas bin Malik says, "My wife, Malika, invited the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, to partake meals in her house. After the meals, when it was time for prayers, the Prophet may peace be upon him and his progeny, said, 'Be ready for me to lead the prayers.'"

Anas continues, "I brought an old mat which was dark though overuse. I made it wet by sprinkling water on it. The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, stood up to lead the prayers. An orphan stood behind him and I stood next to the latter. Behind us was an old man."¹⁸

إن جدته مليكة دعت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) لطعام صنعته

17 *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 105; *Nasbur-Raayah* of Zaylai, Vol. I, p. 386
18 *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. I, p. 101.

له فأكل منه ثم قال: قوموا فلأصلي لكم، قال أنس: فقمتم إلى حصير لنا قد اسود من طول ما لبس، فنضحته بماء، فقام رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم)، وصدفت، واليتيم وراءه، والعجوز من ورائنا. الحديث

Anas says, “Umme Saliym requested the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, to visit her home and pray there so as to make her home be considered as a place where he worshipped. He complied and together with the people of the house prayed on a wet mat that was spread by her.”¹⁹

إن أم سليم سألت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) أن يأتيها فيصلي في بيتها فتتخذة مصلى فأتاها فعمدت إلى حصير فنضحته بماء فصلي عليه وصلوا معه

Anas says, “One of my uncles invited the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, to his house saying, ‘I wish you to partake meals in my house and to pray too.’ The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, complied. He then asked the ‘fahal’ in the house to be swept clean on one side of the house where he then sprinkled water; he then prayed on it and so did we.”

Ibne Majah explains ‘fahal’ to be a straw mat which is dark through overuse.²⁰

صنع بعض عمومي للنبي طعاما فقال للنبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم): إني أحب أن تأكل في بيتي وتصلني فيه قال: فأتاه وفي البيت فحل من هذه الفحول فأمر بناحية منه فكنس ورش فصلي وصلينا معه.
فقال: قال أبو عبد الله بن ماجة: الفحل هو الحصير الذي قد اسود

19 *Sahih Nasai*, Vol. II, p. 57

20 *Sunan Ibne Majah*, of Imam Ibn Majah al-Qazwini, Vol. I, p. 255

Anas says, “Whenever the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, retired in the apartment of Umme Saliym for an afternoon nap (‘QAYLULA’), she would spread for him a piece of hide and then from it collect his precipitation which she would then mix with her perfume. When he wanted to pray, she would spread a straw mat for him.”²¹

كان رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) يقيل عند أم سليم فتبسط له نطعا فتأخذ من عرقه فتجعله في طيبها، وتبسط له الخمرة ويصلي عليها

Anas says, “The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, had the best character, found in none. When it was the time to pray and he was at home, he would ask the mat on which he was sitting be swept clean, and then have water sprinkled on it so that he could pray on it. He would then lead the prayers. These mats used to be woven from the green leaves of the date palm.”²²

Anas also says, “Once the prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny entered a house in which was spread a mat woven out of date palm leaves. He swept one side of it, sprinkled water on it and prayed on it.”

In the margin of a page in the book called Sunanul Kubra, it is stated that “Al Fahal” is a mat woven from the green male date palm.

كان رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) أحسن الناس خلقا فربما تحضره الصلاة وهو في بيتنا فيأمر بالبساط الذي تحته فيكنس ثم ينضح ثم يقوم فنقوم خلفه فيصلي بنا. قال: وكان بساطهم من جريد النخل. وفيه أيضا لفظ: إن رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) دخل بيتا فيه فحل فكسح ناحية منه ورش فصلى عليه.

21 *Sunanul Bayhaqi* of Imam Ahmad bin Husain bin Ali al-Bayhaqi, Vol. II, p. 421

22 *Sunanul Bayhaqi*, Vol. II, p. 436

قال في هامش السنن: الفحل: حصير معمول من سعف فحال النخل.

Over and above that, Imam Tirmidhi records a tradition on the authority of Anas which says, “The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, sprinkled water on our straw mat and then pray on it.”²³

ملخصا: عن أنس قال: نضح بساط لنا فصلى عليه.

(2) The Prophet’s companion, Abbas, Says, “The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, used to pray on ‘KHUMRA’.”²⁴

Imam Tirmidhi says that according to Imam Ibnul Arabi al-Maliki, ‘KHUMRA’ is a small praying carpet made of straw.

كان رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) يصلي على الخمرة
قال الإمام ابن العربي المالكي: الخمرة: حصير الصلاة.

(3) The Prophet’s companion, Abu Said Khudri says, “I paid the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, a visit and saw him pray on a straw mat and prostrate on it.”²⁵

أبو سعيد الخدري: أنه دخل على النبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم)، فرأيت
يصلي على حصير يسجد عليه

In his book, *Jamiah*, Vol. II, pg. 127, Tirmidhi quotes this tradition but omits the words “Prostrate on it.”

(4) Bibi Maymuna, the Mother of the Faithfuls, (one of the Prophet’s

23 *Sahih Tirmidhi*, Vol. II, p. 128.

24 *Sahih Tirmidhi*, Vol. II, p. 126.

25 *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. II, p. 62 and 128; *Sunan Ibne Majah*, Vol. II, p. 321.

wives) says: “When the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, was praying, I too was praying so close to him that when he went into prostration his clothes would touch me; and he used to pray on ‘Khumra’”²⁶

ميمونة أم المؤمنين: كان رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) يصلي وأنا حذائه وربما أصابني ثوبه إذا سجد، وكان يصلي على خمرة

Bibi Ayesha says, “The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, asked me to bring for him ‘Khumra’ from the mosque. I replied, ‘I am in the state of haiz.’ He replied, “The (uncleanliness of) haiz is not in your hands.”²⁷

عن عائشة قالت: قال لي رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم): ناوليني الخمرة من المسجد قالت: فقلت: إني حائض فقال: إن حيضتك ليست في يدك.

(5) The Prophet’s companion, Ibne Umar says, “The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, used to pray on ‘Khumra’ and prostrate on it too.”²⁸

ابن عمر: كان رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) يصلي على الخمرة ويسجد عليها

(6) Bibi Umme Salmah, the Mother of the Faithfuls says, “The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, had a mat and a

26 *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. I, p. 101; *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. II, p. 128; *Sunan Ibne Majah*, Vol. I, p. 320; *Sahih Nisai*, Vol. II, p. 57; *Sunanul Bayhaqi*, Vol. II, p. 421;

27 *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. I, p. 168

28 *Al-Kabir* of Imam Abul-Qasim Sulaiman bin Ahmad Tabarani, and *Al-Awsat* of Imam Abul-Qasim Sulaiman bin Ahmad Tabarani.

‘Khumra’ on which he used to pray.”²⁹

أم سلمة أم المؤمنين: كان لرسول الله حصير وخمرة يصلي عليها

This tradition has been narrated by Abu Ya’la and Tabarani had recorded them in his books *Al-Kabir* and *Al-Aswat* on the authority of the said Abu Ya’la and Bibi Umme Habiba.

(7) The Prophet’s companion, Anas say, “The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, used to pray on ‘Khumra’ and used to prostrate on it.”³⁰

أنس: كان رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) يصلي على الخمرة ويسجد عليها

THIRD CATEGORY

TRADITIONS ALLOWING PROSTRATION ON THINGS UNDER EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Let us now consider those traditions that permit one to prostrate on other than earthen things in cases of emergency.

(1) The Prophet’s companion, Anas bin Malik says, “At times when we were praying with the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, and when the ground was so hot that we could not put our bare foreheads on it, we would prostrate on part of our clothing.”³¹

29 *Al-Majma*, Vol. II, p. 57.

30 *Al-Awsat* and *As-Saghiyr* of Imam Abul-Qasim Sulaiman bin Ahmad Tabarani.

31 *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. I, p. 101; *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. II, p. 109; *Sunan Ibne Majah*, Vol. I, p. 321; *Sunan Abu Daud*, Vol. I, p. 106; *Sunanul Darimiy*, Vol. I, p. 308; *Musnad Ahmad Ibne Hambal*, Vol. I, p. 100; *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 106; *Naylul Awtaar*, Vol. II, p. 268.

أنس بن مالك: كنا إذا صلينا مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فلم يستطع أحدنا أن يمكن جبهته من الأرض من شدة الحر طرح ثوبه ثم سجد عليه

Imam Bukhari reports this tradition thus: “When we were praying with the Prophet, may peace be upon him, and his progeny some of us would put parts of our clothing in the place of performing prostration because of intense heat.”³¹

وفي لفظ البخاري: كنا نصلي مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فيضع أحدنا طرف الثوب من شدة الحر في مكان السجود

Imam Muslim narrated thus: “We used to pray with the Prophet, peace be upon him, in the extreme heat. If one of us could not be his forehead on the ground because of the heat, he made part of his garment (place of prostration) and prostrated.”³¹

وفي لفظ مسلم: كنا نصلي مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في شدة الحر فإذا لم يستطع أحدنا أن يمكن جبهته من الأرض بسط ثوبه فسجد عليه

Another version of the same tradition is: “When we were praying with the Prophet, may peace be upon him, some of us would put part of our clothings to prostrate on because of intense heat.”³¹

وفي لفظ: كنا إذا صلينا مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فيضع أحدنا طرف الثوب من شدة الحر مكان السجود

Shawkani in his book *Naylul Awtaar* says, “In accordance with the tradition quoted above it appears that prostrating on cloth is permissible so as to protect oneself from the heat of the earth. This shows that the main idea is to prostrate on earth, prostrating

on cloth is permissible only when prostrating on earth is not permissible. Those who use this tradition to allow people to prostrate on cloth on all occasions have done so on their own authority.”

Nawawi says that indeed this is also the ruling of Abu Hanifa and many other jurists.

قال الشوكاني في النيل: الحديث يدل على جواز السجود على الثياب لاتقاء حر الأرض، وفيه إشارة إلى أن مباشرة الأرض عند السجود هي الأصل، لتعليق بسط ثوب بعدم الاستطاعة، وقد استدل بالحديث على جواز السجود على الثوب المتصل بالمصلي
قال النووي: وبه قال أبو حنيفة والجمهور.

(2) The Prophet’s companion, Anas bin Malik says, “While we were in the Prophet’s house for the ‘adh-dhahaair’ prayers we prostrated on our clothes for protection from intense heat.”³²

أنس بن مالك: كنا إذا صلينا خلف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بالظواهر سجدنا على ثيابنا اتقاء الحر

Imam Sindi commenting on this tradition says, “Adh-dhahaair’ is the plural of the word ‘dhihiyra’ which means any period of intense heat in the middle of the day. Evidently, the word “we prostrated on our clothes” means they prostrated on the very clothes they were wearing, since in those days people dressed just adequately; where could they get the extra clothes to use for other purposes? This proves that only the clothes one is wearing while praying can be used

32 *Sunan Ibne Majah*, Vol. II, p. 216

to prostrate on and this is the verdict of the majority.”

وقال الإمام السندي في شرحه: الظهائر جمع ظهيرة وهي شدة الحر نصف النهار (سجدنا على ثيابنا) الظاهر أنها الثياب التي هم لابسوها ضرورة أن الثياب في ذلك الوقت قليلة، فمن أين لهم ثياب فاضلة؟ فهذا يدل على جواز أن يسجد المصلي على ثوب هو لابسه كما عليه الجمهور.

This explanation is based on the narration of Ibne Abbas who said, “I witnessed the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, pray in and prostrate on his clothes.”

وعلى هذه الصورة يحمل ما جاء عن ابن عباس: رأيت رسول الله يصلي يسجد على ثوبه

This tradition has been reported by Abu Ya’la and also by Tabrani in his book *Al-Kabir*.

Bukhari in his book *Sahih* in the section on ‘Prostration on clothes at Times of Intense Heat’ quotes Hasan saying, “People used to prostrate on their headgears or caps or their hands covered with their clothes.”³³

وقال الحسن: كان القوم يسجدون على العمامة والقلنسوة ويدها في كفه

EXPLANATION

There is a tradition based on which opinions have been given that one can prostrate on clothes under exceptional circumstances despite the fact that this is not specifically stated to be so. This tradition is:

33 *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. I, p. 101

Ibne Abbas reports: “I saw the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, at dawn on a cold day praying on a white piece of cloth at the same time protecting his palms and his knees from the cold with this white cloth.”

عن ابن عباس: رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلي في كساء أبيض في غداة باردة يتقي بالكساء برد الأرض بيده ورجله

Imam Ahmad bin Hambal report reads like this: “One rainy day, I saw the Prophet, peace be upon him, when he prostrated, he rested his palms on a cloth which he had wrapped around his hands to protect them from the mud.”

وفي لفظ أحمد: لقد رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في يوم مطير وهو يتقي الطين إذا سجد بكساء عليه يجعله دون يديه إلى الأرض إذا سجد

Thabit bin Saamit’s report reads like this: “When the noble Prophet was praying in the mosque of Bani Abdul Ahshal, he rested his palms on a cloth which he had wrapped around his hands to protect them from the chill of the ground.”

وعن ثابت بن صامت: إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قام يصلي في مسجد بني عبد الأشهل وعليه كساء ملتف به يضع يده عليه يقيه برد الحصى

Another version of this tradition is: “I saw him (the Prophet) resting his palms on cloth when he was prostrating.”

وفي لفظ: رأيت واضعا يديه في ثوبه إذا سجد

Ibne Majah's report reads, "I saw him (the Prophet) resting his palms on cloth when he was prostrating."³⁴

وفي لفظ ابن ماجة: فرأيتہ واضعا يديه على ثوبه إذا سجد

Shawkani in his book *Naylul Awtaar* says, "This tradition shows that one can prostrate on the edges of ones clothes in times of emergency. This may be caused by rain as has been mentioned in the tradition or by heat or chill as explained in the tradition of Ibne Abu Shaibah. The tradition in question indicates clearly that the cloth the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, used to prostrate on was part of his clothes he was wearing."

قال الشوكاني في نيل الأوطار: الحديث يدل على جواز الالتقاء بطرف الثوب الذي على المصلي ولكن للعدر، إما عذر المطر كما في الحديث، أو الحر والبرد كما في رواية ابن أبي شيبة وهذا الحديث مصرح بأن الكساء الذي سجد عليه كان متصلا به.

To us this interpretation is incorrect because the relevant tradition show clearly that the noble Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, used clothes to protect his hands and legs only and not to use them as a object to prostrate on. Lastly, one can draw such a conclusion from the tradition reported by Bibi Ayesha which runs like this.

Bibi Ayesha reports, "While praying, the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, does not keep any thing under his legs except one day when it rained and he then put hide under his legs."³⁵

34 *Sunan Ibne Majah*, Vol. I, p. 321; *Sunanul Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 108; *Nasbur Raayah*, Vol. I, p. 386; *Naylul Awtaar*, Vol. II, p. 269-270.

35 *Sunanul Bayhaqi*, Vol. II, p. 436

ونحن لم نر هذا الحمل في محله إذ الحديث لا يدل بظاهره إلا على اتقاء رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) بالكساء برد الأرض بيده ورجله فحسب، وليس فيه إيعاز قط إلى السجدة والجبهة، وسيله سبيل حديث السيدة عائشة: كان رسول الله إذا صلى لا يضع تحت قدميه شيئاً إلا أنا مطرنا يوماً فوضع تحت قدميه نطعاً

This tradition appears in Tabarani's *Al-Aswaat* and in also reported by Bayhaqi. Haythami in his *Al-Majma* (Vol. II, p. 57) considers this tradition as weak since among those forming the chain on narrators is Ibrahim bin Ishaq Adh-Dhabii.

Moreover, there is another tradition that is recorded in Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal's *Al-Musnad* based on the following chain of narrators: Muhammad bin Rabia - Yunus bin Al-Harith At-Taifi - Abi Aun - who heard it from his father that the Prophet's companion Mughira bin Shuuba said, "The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, use to prefer to pray on hide with hair on it and which had been treated so that it could not decay."³⁶

عن محمد بن ربيعة عن يونس بن الحرث الطائفي عن أبي عون عن أبيه عن المغيرة بن شعبة قال: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلي أو يستحب أن يصلي على فروة مدبوغة

The chain of narrators of this tradition is very weak and cannot be considered as basis on making rulings because one of the narrators is Yunus bin Al-Harith at-Taifi who in the opinion of Ahmad bin Hambal, is: "His tradition are controversial."

36 *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, Vol. IV, p. 254; *Sunan Abu Daud*, Vol. I, p. 106; *Sunanul Bayhaqi*, Vol. II, p. 420.

Abdullah bin Ahmad says, “When I asked my father about this person, he gave him a very bad reference.”

Ibne Mu’in says, “This person is useless.”

Abu Hatim describes him as, “Unreliable.”

Imam Nasai said, “He is unreliable.” When asked again he said, “He is not dependable.”

Ibn Abi Shaiba has said: “I asked Ibn Mu’in about him, he replied ‘We see him as a man who is not to be trusted at all.’”

As-Saaji says in his book called *Tahdhibut-Tahdhib*, Vol. XI pg. 437 that “He is not reliable though he has not been accused of being a liar.”

Moreover, in the chain of narrators of this tradition is Abi Aun Ubaidullah bin Said Al-Thaqafi Al-Kufi. As narrated in *Al-Jurh-wat-Tadiyl*, Abu Hatim told his son that “This person (Abu Aun) is not known to have existed.”

Ibne Hajar says, “The tradition that he quotes on the authority of Mughira is ‘*Mursal*’ (meaning the chain of narrators has missing links).

Even without all these, if we just look at the wordings of this tradition per se, we will notice that the conditions of prostration have not been specified; what has been specified is just praying on hide covered with hair.

CORRECT DEDUCTION

All these traditions have been quoted as recorded in the 6 *sahih* books (*As-Sihahu as-Sitta*) and the books of '*sanad*' (*Masaanid*) which are about the traditions of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, and which are regarded as very reliable and have been compiled by the Sunni authorities. We have quoted all traditions pertaining to prostration and have not left out any.

All these traditions focus on the issue of prostration, and substantiate the fact that whenever possible and under normal circumstances, a person who prays must prostrate on earth, or on objects coming from earth or objects made out of earth and which fall under one common classification as earth; such things, as mentioned in various traditions include Khumra, straw carpets and mats made out of leaves.

Under normal circumstances, you have no choice but to prostrate on one of these things. Nothing else is permissible.

However when a person who wants to pray has a valid excuse for not prostrating on earth, he may then prostrate on only parts of the clothes that he is wearing at the time of prayers. This is because traditions do not mention clothes other than the ones that form part of those worn by a person praying.

As for prostrating on cloth spreads, carpets made from silk or animal furs of any kind or clothes or dresses, there is no evidence or proof permitting this, neither is there any authentic and reliable tradition that permits such objects to be used for prostration.

As for these six authentic and famous books which preserve the laws and rules of religion especially prayers which is a very important

pillar of faith, there is not a single tradition or a word or a signal or an indication allowing prostrating on such objects.

By the same token, none of the other reliable books of tradition (such as books of narrators and '*sunnah*') compiled in the first three centuries has any evidence in the form of hadith even in the category of '*marfuu*' or '*mawquuf*' or '*musnad*' or '*mursal*' allowing usage of these items for prostration.

Therefore, the permission to prostrate on cloth-spreads, silk and fur carpets etc. and to use them in the mosque (as has become the practice these days) as objects of prostration is an act of innovation which contradicts the tradition of Allah the Almighty and His Messenger - despite His warning: "... NO CHANGE WILL YOU FIND IN ALLAH'S WAY. NO TURNING OFF WILL YOU FIND IN ALLAH'S WAY." (QURAN 35:43)

It is mentioned in the famous book named *Al-Musannif*, Vol. II, the famous Sunni Scholar, Al-Hafidh Al-Kabir Abu Bakr bin Abu Shaiba narrates on the authority of Said bin Musayyib and Bwana Muhammad bin Siyriyn that "Praying on carpets is an act of innovation (bid'a)." As for introducing innovations in the traditions of the Prophet there is a reliable narration accepted by all Muslims, saying that the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, has said, "The worst deed in religion is innovations and all innovations are bid'a (contradicting religion)."

PROSTRATING ON CLAY - TABLETS OF KARBALA

The main purpose that makes Shias to use the clay from Karbala as an object to prostrate on is based on two strong principles.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE

The chance of getting purified earth everywhere where one wants to use it to prostrate on.

Nothing is more desirable for a person wanting to pray to his Lord than to have, at his disposal, to prostrate upon earth the purity and cleanliness of which is guaranteed regardless of where this earth has been picked from. Legaly, what really matters is the clay to be used for prostration must be purified and clean.

It is obligatory for a person wishing to pray that his body, his clothes & the place where he wants to pray are clean (TAHIR). This requirements are difficult especially when one is on a journey : For how do you know if the place you want to pray at is pure. Is there a possibility for a traveller to be sure of the purity of a place when he is be it a hotel or a highway or a busstop or a parking lot when he knows fully well that these places are open to Muslims as well as Non-Muslims with no concern pertaining to religious dictates on cleanliness or otherwise.

What is, therefore, wrong if a faithful Muslim makes a provision regarding his religious obligations and carries with him clay, the purity and cleanliness of which he is sure, so that he can use it to prostrate on?

By doing so would not he be avoiding prostrating on dirt or on an impure place which could invalidate his prayer and prevent him getting closer to his master?

In light of all the legal requirements of the cleanliness of the body and the clothes of the one praying, and the restriction as to places where one can pray such as on greenery, at abattoir, at the graveyard, at the barn, on the highway and in the bath, and the heavy emphasis

laid on keeping the mosques in the highest state of cleanliness and purity, which sensible person would pray at a dirty and impure place? (Refer the book called *Sunan* of Ibne Majah, Vol. I, pg. 252 & 256)

This sound, truthful and religiously steadfast approach was adopted by the pious and those from the old school of thought in the first century of Islam. For example, one such person strictly adhering to this worthy tradition was Masrouq bin Al-Adja-At-Tabiey, an eminent scholar accepted by all Muslims. In compliance to this tradition, he used to carry a clay tablet (*Labinah*) on which to prostrate when travelling. Abu Bakr bin Abu Shaiba, a prominent sunni scholar of his time said in his book named *Al-Musannif*, Vol. II under the subject ‘Those who carry an object of putting two things together’: ‘Every Time when Masrouq was on a journey in a ship he would carry a tablet of clay for prostration.’

This is the primary foundation on which Shias base their authority, it being the original principle followed by the early companions of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, and the companions of the companions of the Prophet, (TABIIN).

SECOND PRINCIPLE

Use of clay which brings closer association with Allah.

Doubtlessly, to have clay which brings the closest association with Allah, it is a matter of common sense that there must be, amongst clays, differences in degrees of importance vis-a-vis their association with Allah.³⁷

37 The relationship between the container and its content is caused by strengthening the factors that promote the meaning and impression that such a relationship is required to achieve. For example, if you say ‘Allah House’ it does not make sense and the desired effect is not attained. But if we say ‘The House of Allah’ then the necessary relationships and impressions are achieved. This is made possible by the inclusion of ⇒

It follows, therefore, that the importance of a particular land is on its origin, different people's views, and different events that take place there. This is a matter of common knowledge.

As a matter of fact, all nations, kingdoms and countries are in agreement on this principle: Personalities give prominence to places, lands and abodes through association.

Accordingly, standards are set on this matter and they cannot be ignored.

Don't you notice that the land, the ground, the residence and the office of the government officials especially the ruler's, are given special honour than similar objects belonging to the common persons? Don't you notice that there are special rules pertaining to these officials objects and affecting all the citizens?

Similarly, this prominence and association is found with the lands and buildings associated with Allah for which there are calls, laws, dictates and restrictions all of which must be honored and observed by those with faith in Allah the Almighty.

Every one who lives under the banner of Allah and Islam must honour and implements these laws without any opposition.

Because of this common principle acceptable to all, special laws have been established in regards to the KAABA and its precincts. Similar

⇐ necessary parts of speech (such as prepositions, articles etc.). The relationship between the house and its possessor is established. Through this relationship the significance of the house is established - its owner being Allah. The appropriate use of relevant parts of speech then help bring about the desired effect of the relationship between the container and its content. (Translator)

special laws have been promulgated for Masjidul Haram (in the city of Mecca) and the Mosque of the Prophet (in the city of Medina).

Moreover, other mosques, churches, and places of worship where Allah's name is called and prayers offered, have also special laws to observe respect, and honour, and to maintain cleanliness and to exclude indecency and to bar those who are unclean from nocturnal ejaculation (or any other ejaculation) and those women who are under 'HAIZ' and 'NIFAS'.

Another restriction imposed by such places of worship is they are neither for purchase nor for sale except under such a circumstance when such a sale is for the purchase of a better property or for a better replacement of an existing 'wakf' property concerning the community.

All these laws have been decreed vis-a-vis these places because of their relationship with the Almighty, the Creator of the Universe. To regard Mecca as a sanctified city of peace, to make it obligatory for people from all parts of the world to visit this city for pilgrimage so as to complete their religious duty of Haj, to have laws regarding the green and the dry of its lands all prove the place's holiness because of its association with Allah. He chose the land of Mecca amongst all lands of the universe.

The Holy City of Medina, too, is the city of Allah for which special laws have been decreed affecting its residents, the land and the populace who live and die therein. All this has been done because of the city's association with Allah and because it was the city of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, the last Messenger.

Although this law (pertaining to the object and its owner) is not

categorically specified, it is universally accepted in Islam because of its common usage through tradition. Truly speaking differentiation between various lands is a matter of common law - rather than written law. Also, it is an acceptable principal in Islam, that Prophets and their successors, their friends, the truthful ones, the martyrs and the faithful - each has his own position differing from others.

This issue is central in bringing about community life, unity, love and togetherness. Similarly, this same issue may cause enmity, hatred and disharmony when the relationship between an object and its owner is overemphasized.³⁸

The roots of misunderstanding and enmity and those of unity togetherness and peace are one and the same.

This is also the cause of instability in universities and other places of high learning. Also, enmity differences and conflicts and disharmony between various nations are caused by the same origins.

This also is the cause of differences between tribes, organizations and religious institutions.

This is also the basis on which the progress of the matters of the world, of religion and of politics is poised. It provides the basis on which is carried out religious, educational, communal,

38 For illustration, let us say there is a book the association of which is not clear - some say it is God's, others say it is man's. If it is associated with God than the book is God's. Once it is established that the book belongs to God then it is obligatory for the faithfuls to abide to all the dictates of the Book of God. Those who do not regard this book to be divine, then will oppose and antagonise those who consider this book to be divine. This will therefore, be the point of origin of misunderstanding between two groups vis-a-vis the true relationship between an object and its owner. (Translator)

governmental, national and political discourse.

This then is the root of peace as well as war, unity and disunity, agreements and disagreements.

The universal kingdom of Supreme power (the object) which supersedes all other powers is that of Allah (the owner). No one can exclude himself from His rulership (ownership).

Yes, it is this process of association (through ownership) that determines for an object's devaluation and debasement, association and disassociation, unity and disunity, giving and taking, honour and dishonor, reward and punishment.

It is through association that an otherwise unknown soldier is recognized, glorified and dignified by being honoured and praised by the government and the masses to the extent that when he dies a wreath of flowers is laid at his grave in his memory and he is immortalized in history. (All this is because he was the commander of an army of a country).

Association pacifies and softens the impact of hardship and calamities, making them bearable. It also prompts a person to prepare himself firmly to give up his wealth and even life, in service of such an association. This is because such a sacrifice is for the survival of the religion of Allah.

It is because of this association that made the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, to kiss the dead body of Uthman bin Madhum while tears were flowing on the former's cheek.³⁹

39 *Amaali* by Abul Qasim Abdul Malik Ibne Bushraan; *Musnad* of Abul Hassan Ali Ibne Ja'ad al-Jawhari, Vol. X; *Mustadrak Sahihain*, Vol. XXI.

Again, it is association that made the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, to weep for his grandson Husain and to kiss and smell the earth of Karbala, and to remember what was to befall his grandson wherever he went.⁴⁰

(This was because Imam Husain was the beloved of Allah and also the chief of the Youths of Paradise).

It was this association that made the Mother of the Faithfuls, Umme Salma to carry in her clothes the earth of Karbala.⁴⁰

It was this association that made Bibi Fatima, the daughter of the

40 In *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Vol. III, p. 242 there is a tradition which runs like this: One of the companions of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, Anas bin Malik says, "An angel of rains asked from Allah permission to visit the Prophet, may peace be upon him. This permission was granted. The Prophet, may peace be upon him, instructed, his wife Umme Salma: 'Do not let anyone enter the room.' Umme Salma says 'soon after that, Husain came. He entered the room and began to play on the Prophet's back and neck. The angel asked the Prophet, may peace be upon him, 'Do you love this child?' 'Yes, I do' the Prophet, may peace be upon him, said. The angel said, "Then you should know that your ummah will murder him; and if you want I will show the place where he will be killed." The angel then stretched his fingers and produced red earth. Umme Salma collected the earth and tied it in her clothes." This tradition has been recorded, from Muamal-Amara Ibn Zazaan - Thabit - Anas bin Malik. Thabit says, "We understood that the earth came from the land of Karbala." Sulayman bin Ahmad says, "The Prophet smelt that earth and said, 'I feel the smell of grief and calamity.'" Sharjyl bin 'Aun says, "The Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, took the earth in his hands from the angel, smelt it and began to weep and in this state of weeping he said, 'O my Lord, do not have mercy on those who shall kill my grandson and put them all in Hell. He then gave the earth to Umme Salma."

Prophet to pick earth from her father's grave and to smell it.

It was because of association that Bani Dhabba were ordered to collect, to press in their hands and to smell the dung of a camel belonging to the Mother of the faithfuls in the Battle of Jamal. (Just because Aisha was one of the wives of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny).

It was because of association that when Amirul-Mu'minin Ali (a.s.) arrived at Karbala, he took a portion of the earth of Karbala, smelt it and cried till the land became wet with his tears, and said: "(On the Day of Judgment) seventy thousand men will be raised from this land and will enter Paradise without any accounting."⁴¹

It was because of association that one man from Bani Asad smelt the earth of the tomb of Husain (a.s.) and cried.

Hisham ibn Muhammad said: "Water was passed on the tomb of Husain and it obliterated all signs of the tomb of Husain; it dried up after forty days; a Bedouin from the tribe of Bani Asad came carrying a grip of earth and smelling it. When he arrived at the tomb of Hussein, he wept and said: "My father and my mother be sacrificed for you (O Husain)! How fragrance were you when you were alive and even now the earth of your tomb is fragrant also!"

He then read these lines:

أرادوا ليخفوا قبره عن عداوة
وطيب تراب القبر دل على القبر

"They were determined to obliterate his grave out of their hatred. But fragrance from his grave demarcated it once again."⁴²

41 Read *Al-Majma*, Vol. IX, p. 191.

42 *Tarikhush-Shaam* of Al-Hafidh Ali Hasan Abdul-Qasim ibne Asaakir, Vol. IV, p. 342; *Al-Kifayah* of Muhammad Yusuf Al-Kanji, p. 293.

Therefore, every aspect of the life of person is subject to these rules and regulations regardless of where this person is, or the times in which he lives, or whether he likes it or not.

Consider these relationships between the owner and what he possesses: my life, my body, my people, my offspring, my ancestry, my enterprise, my faith, my culture, my nation, my house, my country and so on and so forth.⁴³

Generally, such association fall under the jurisdiction of governments, local authorities, communities, parochial organs, cooperates an so on.⁴⁴

As soon as a commitment is given to an association - fully or partially - generally speaking, then the concerned parties are required to adhere and to follow all the specified regulations.

This fundamental approach has many advantages which can resolve many community problems: legal, ideological, sectarian or acts of faith and worship in Islam - issues that call for honour and respect.

All said and done, the preceding assertions suffice to establish the fact explaining why the earth of Karbala is sacrosanct because of its association with Allah, the Almighty and through Imam Husain (a.s) who has a special position to Allah.

After providing you with all these information, what opinion do you have now regarding the clay from Karbala - that clay under which

43 For example: the expression “my house” indicates my ownership. This bondage though association shows who has authority and control over this house. (Translator)

44 For example, the expression “my religion’ implies that I am the follower of a particular religion and as such I am bound to adhere to and implement the dictates of this religion (Traslator).

lies that great leader of the army of truthfulness, who came out upfront to sacrifice his life for the cause of Allah? That earth which covers the body of the beloved of Allah and his beloved Prophet. The earth that covers the body of one who called people to his fold and guided them to the path of Allah. The earth that is associated with that person (Imam Husain (a.s)) who gave his blood for the survival of the World of Truth, the Unity of Allah and for the establishment to the teachings of religion and for strengthening the path of Truth.

He was the Leader of Martyrs. Although he was killed on the way of Allah, he is still alive and continues to receive his sustenance from his Lord.⁴⁵

Can you name any ruler, since the creation of Adam to date, who had a unique commander-in-chief characterized by generosity, steadfastness, truthfulness, fame and nobility, comparable to Imam Husain (a.s), the commander-in-chief of the holy people of Karbala?

Only Allah can claim for having such a commander-in-chief.

Why did Allah prevent the spilling on earth of even one drop of that blood of Imam Husain (a.s.) which he splashed in the air on the day of Ashura?⁴⁶

45 Allah, the Almighty says, “Do not consider those who have been killed on the way of Allah as dead, no they are alive and continue to get sustenance from their Lord” (Qur’an, 3:169)

46 Hasan al-Muthanna reports on the authority of Muslim bin Riyah, a freed-slave of Imam Ali, (a.s.) saying: “On the day Husain was martyred, I was with him. When an arrow struck his face, he told me, ‘O Muslim, collect my blood in your palms.’ I did so till when the blood was about to overflow from my cupped palms. He then said, “Pour it into my palms.’ I did so. He then raised his hands to the sky saying, ‘O my Lord avenge the blood of the son of the daughter of your Prophet.’ Not a drop of the blood in his cupped palms spilled on the ground.’ ⇒

Why shouldn't his sacred name be remembered forever on the earth and in the heavens when his heart is filled with the love of Allah, the Almighty?

Why shouldn't there be complete darkness on the day of Ashura?

Why shouldn't Allah display signs of His wrath on the day of Imam Husain's martyrdom?

Why shouldn't the earth and heavens shed tears for Imam Husain (a.s.) (The occurrence of this incident has been recorded by such narrators as Ibne Siyirin).

Why shouldn't the sky send down showers of blood on that day?

Why wouldn't Allah, the Almighty, send specifically through His angel the earth of Karbala to the Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny?⁴⁷

⇐ (Refer *Tarikhush-Shaam* Vol. IV, p. 338, and *Al-Kifayah* p. 284). Some reports say that: "When the arrow struck Imam Husain (a.s), he collected his blood and splashed it all in the sky."

47 Abdullah Ibne Al Barqi Misri narrates a tradition from one companion of the Prophet, Abi Salma bin Abdulrahman saying: "Ayesha, the Prophet's wife, had a pantry. Any time the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, wanted to converse with the arch-angel Gabriel, he would go there. Once the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, retired in the pantry and asked Ayesha not to disclose his whereabouts should someone come asking for him. This room was close to the staircase. Imam Husain came, unnoticed, and went to his grandfather, the Prophet who was conversing with Gabriel. Gabriel inquired, 'who is this young boy ?' 'He is my grandson,' replied the Prophet. The Prophet then embraced Imam Husain (a.s.) and made him sit on his lap. Gabriel said, 'Your Ummah will kill him.' With a shock the Prophet asked, 'My ummah?' Gabriel replied, 'yes, your Ummah. And if you so wish I can show you the place where he will be killed.' He ⇒

O you believing Muslims! So as to achieve nearness to Allah at the times of your morning and evening prayers, isn't it better for you to prostrate on this clay than any other clay?

Isn't it better to prostrate on the clay from Karbala than to prostrate on a carpet or mat made of cloth when you do not know who made it or what it was made from and when the tradition of the Prophet forbids prostrating on any carpet or mat except those made from leaves?

For achieving nearness to Allah through humility and humbleness, isn't it better for His creatures to put his forehead on that soil that can earn him salvation and better understanding of Allah? The clay which symbolizes the struggle to preserve the laws of Allah and the sacred religion of Islam?

After Knowing the wisdom behind prostrating on earth, isn't it appropriate to do so on that earth that has the honor, the sanctity and the status from Allah, especially when this is the best way to remember Allah and to show to him our gratitude and humility?

← then pointed towards Taf (Iraq) and picked from there red clay and showed it to the Prophet." Commenting on this tradition Sayyid Mahmoud Madani says, "A similar tradition has been received from Ibne Saad except that at the end he adds 'This is the clay of the land on which Husain will be killed.' (Refer *As-Siraatus-Sawiy* of Sayyid Mahmoud Madani, p. 49; *Angalia pia vitabu hivi: Maqtalul Kharazmi* of Al-Khatib Al-Hafidh Al-Muwaffak bin Ahmad Kharazmi, Vol. I, p. 159; *Majma uz Zawad* Vol. IX, p. 187-188; *As-Sawa'iq Muhriqa* of Allama Ibn Hajar Makki, p. 155 na 190; *Khasai-sus-Suyuti* of Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti, Vol. II, p. 125-126; *Kanzul Ummal* of Ali Al-Muttaqi Al-Hanafi, Vol. VI, p. 223; *Jawharatul Kalaam*, p. 117; *A'laamun Nubuwwat* of Imam Abul Hasan Mawardi, Vol. XII, p. 83; *Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal*, Vol. VI, p. 294; *Majma' ul Kabir* of Imam Abul-Qasim Sulaiman bin Ahmad Tabarani etc.

Isn't it the most preferable earth in demonstrating Allah's unity and in expressing our submission to Him? The earth that generates compassion, love and tenderness.

Isn't it better and preferable to choose, as the object of prostration that earth from which gushes that blood which colored this earth with the love of Allah; the earth that helped preserve the tradition of Allah?

This is the earth which was soaked with the blood of he who was purified⁴⁸ by Allah and whose love has been made obligatory as a way of compensating the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, for his Prophthood.⁴⁹

This is the earth which is soaked with the blood of the leader of the Youths of Paradise, the beloved of Allah and His Prophet and the heritage the Prophet, may peace be upon him, left for the Muslim

48 Allah says, "And Allah only wishes to remove all abominations from you, you members of the family, and to make you pure and spotless." (Qur'an 33:33). For further reference on the verses of TATHIR consult the following works: *Sahih Muslim* Vol. II, p. 283; *Musnad Ahmad* Vol. 1 p. 330; *Mustadrak-Sahihain* Vol. III p. 108, 146 na 147. According to the tradition of the Prophet, may peace be upon him, the members of the family who have been cleaned of all abominations and who have been made pure and spotless and whose love has been made obligatory are: the Prophet himself, his cousin Ali, his daughter Fatima and his grandsons Hasan and Husain who together are referred to in this verse of the Qur'an.

49 Allah says, "... Say: No reward do I ask you this except the love of those near of kin..." (Qur'an 42:23). For further explanation on this verse of MAWADA refer the following works: *Tafsir Al-Kashshaf* of Zamakhshari Vol. II 2, p. 339; *Zakhairul 'Ukba* of Al-Muhibbuddin At-Tabari, p. 25; *Matalibus-Su-uul* p. 8; *Nurul Absar* of Shablanji, p. 112; *Ahyaul Mayyit* of Allama Hafidh Jalaluddin Sayuti, p. 239; *Tafsir Tabari* of Tabari; *Yanabiul Mawaddah* of Sheikh Sulaiman Qanduzi.

community.”⁵⁰

Based on this two principles, we Shias use clay tablets made from the earth of Karbala in circular or rectangular shape so as to prostrate on during the times of prayers in the same way as the famous scholar of Islam, Masrouq bin Al-Adja used to do. He used to carry with him a clay tablet made from the earth of Medina and prostrate on it when praying. Masrouq was a famous scholar who lived during the reigns of all the four caliphs (*Khulafa-ur-Rashidyn*) and who taught Islamic jurisprudence and traditions in Medtna. It is not likely, therefore, that a man of his status would indulge in innovations (*Bida*).⁵¹

50 The Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, has said, “Hasan and Husain are the leaders of the Youths of Paradise.” (See *Jama Tirmidhi* of Imam Abu Isa Muhammad bin Isa as-Sulami Tirmidhi p. 466 na 467; *Sunan Ibne Majah* p. 12; *Jama Saghiyr* of Allama Jalaluddin Suyuti, p. 6).

The Prophet, may peace, be upon him, has said, “O you people! I am leaving you behind two things: The book of Allah (Qur’an) and my progeny (AHLUL BAYT) If you abide by them you will never go astray after me.” (Refer: *Sahih Muslim* Vol., p. 279 - 280; *Jama Saghiyr*, p. 55; *Jama Tirmidhi*, p. 467 -a 468; *Mustadrak-Sahihain* Vol. III, p. 148 and 533; *Musnad Ahmad* Vol. II, p. 247, Vol. III, p. 4, 14, 17, 26 and 59, Vol. IV, p. 367 and 371, Vol. V, p. 182)

51 Ibne Asakir in his book *Tarikhush-Shaam* talks about Abul Hasan Ali Ibne Abbasi in these words: Abul Hasan wrote to his people in MAKKA saying, ‘Bring me a clay tablet from the mountain of Marwah so that I could prostrate on it.’ This incident and explanations to it have been recorded by Samhudi in his book *Wafaa-ul-Wafaa* that Abul Hasan Ali Ibne Abdallah Abbasi was famous for his piety and prayers and has continued to enjoy this reputation amongst his Sunni fellows then and now. His prolific knowledge has left an indelible mark on the annals of history. This action of this person who was following the tradition of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, cannot be discarded as innavative (*Bida*).

Out of these two principles which one - if any - is frivolous and has no merit at all?

Which one of them is contrary to the dictates of the Qur'an or contradicts the traditions of Allah and his Prophet?

Which one of them was non-existent and unknown at the times of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny, and could therefore be branded as innovative?

Which of these principles is against common sense and human nature?

Having provided all these explanations, we Shias, state that to prostrate on the clay of Karbala is a must for us, though no law force us to do so. Contrary to the belief of those who have no proper understanding of Shiaism, no law forces anyone to prostrate on the clay tablets from Karbala except that out of their free will and understanding that no other earth excels that of Karbala, Shias prostrate on the earth of Karbala.

Many scholars of Islam used to catty with them, when traveling, an object of prostration (other than the clay tablets of Karbala) made from leaves, having first ascertained their cleanliness.

In considering the respect and honor of these two principles, our opinion is: Those who have settled and reside in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, must prostrate on clay tablets made from the earth of these two cities. By so doing they will, on the one hand, be complying with a very important principle; on the other hand they will save themselves from having to prostrate on the hot floor of the mosque in the afternoon. Moreover, they will have clean and purified objects to prostrate on while traveling. By so doing,

they would be following the footsteps of their God-fearing predecessors such as Abul-Hasan Ali bin Abdullah Abbasi and Masrouq bin Al-Adja, about whom we have already discussed .

Having explained the importance of clay tablets, it would be proper that such tablets be made available at places where pilgrims visit so that these visitors can carry them back home as objects of remembrance of Allah and His Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny. Every time they look at these tablets, they will be reminded of Allah's Oneness and His Messenger's prophethood. Each of these tablets will be a source of light in the houses of Muslims who will fill their hearts with such lights. Wherever they may be, these Muslims will achieve nearness to Allah every time they prostrate on these tablets, since the latter have been made either from the best earth that Allah made for Himself and which He made a place of peace and general amnesty and His own house (KAABA); or from that earth which the Prophet made to be his place of abode.

From these two holy lands, there is a strong call guiding people towards Muslim unity, prayers both in the Kaaba and in the city of the Prophet, may peace be upon him, and towards the traditions of the Prophet, may peace be upon him and his progeny.

Allah the Almighty says, "... Whoever honors the sacred rites of Allah for him it is good in the sight of his Lord " (Qur'an, 22:30)

THE END

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