

Ten Evidences for the Permissibility of Women's Prayer in the Masājid

Shaykh Zubair ‘Alī Za’ī رحمه الله

TRANSLATED BY ABŪ SINĀN



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All praise is for Allāh, Rabb of the 'Ālamīn (all that exists), and may His Praise and Peace be upon his Trusted Messenger, to proceed – the permissibility of women praying behind men in the Masājid is established from authentic aḥādīth and āthār of the pious predecessors (Salaf al-Ṣāliḥīn), some of the evidence for this is as follows:

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
قَالَ "إِذَا اسْتَأْذَنَكُم نِسَاؤُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ فَأُذِنُوا لَهُنَّ"

1) Sayyidunā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه narrated the Prophet ﷺ said, **"When your women ask you for permission to go to the masjid at night, then grant them permission."** (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī no.865, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim no.442 Darussalam no.988*)

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn 'Abdil-Barr said, "This ḥādīth shows understanding that it is permissible for women to go to the masjid at night, and this is applicable to every prayer (from the general meaning of the ḥādīth)". (*At-Tamhīd 24/281*)

أَنَّ أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ، زَوْجَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَخْبَرَتْهَا أَنَّ النِّسَاءَ فِي
عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كُنَّ إِذَا سَلَّمْنَ مِنَ الْمَكْتُوبَةِ
قُمْنَ، وَتَبَتِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَنْ صَلَّى مِنَ الرِّجَالِ
مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ، فَإِذَا قَامَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَامَ الرِّجَالُ.

2) It is narrated from Ummul Mu'minīn Sayyidah Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها, **during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ when the women said the final taslīm of the prayers they would stand [to leave], and the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and the men (his Companions) would remain seated. Then, when the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ stood, the men would also stand.** (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī no.866*)

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، قَالَتْ إِنَّ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِيُصَلِّيَ الصُّبْحَ، فَيَنْصَرِفُ النِّسَاءُ مُتَلَفِّعَاتٍ بِمُرُوطِهِنَّ، مَا يُعَرَفْنَ مِنَ الْغُلَسِ.

3) It is narrated from Ummul Mu'minīn Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها **When Allah's Messenger ﷺ would lead the morning prayer, the women would leave wrapped in their murūt (woollen garments), without being recognised due to darkness.** (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī no.867, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim no.645, Muwaṭṭa of Imām Mālik 1/5 no.3 and no.494 in the recension of Ibn Al-Qāsim*)¹

It is apparent from this ḥādīth that it is permissible for women to offer prayers in the Masājid. There is another narration from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها in which the Prophet ﷺ said, **"Do not prevent the women from going to the Masājid, and they should go (to the Masjid) without perfume while wearing plain clothes."** Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها said, "If he (the Prophet ﷺ) saw the state of the women today, he would have prevented them (from going to the Masājid)." (*Musnad Aḥmad 6/69-70 and its chain is ḥasan*)

There is another narration from Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها which says that if the Prophet ﷺ saw the state of the women today, he would have prevented them from the Masājid just as the women of Bani Isrā'īl were prevented. (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī no.869, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim no.445*)

It is understood from this ḥādīth that the previous legislation that prohibited women from praying in the masjid is now abrogated – we do not act on the the law of Bani Isrā'īl, but we act in accordance with the Islamic law given to the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the Seal of all the Prophets, until the Day of Judgment.

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "إِنِّي لَأَقُومُ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَأَنَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُطَوَّلَ فِيهَا، فَأَسْمَعَ بُكَاءَ الصَّبِيِّ، فَاتَجَوَّزُ فِي صَلَاتِي كَرَاهِيَةً أَنْ أَشُقَّ عَلَى أُمِّهِ".

4) Sayyidunā Abū Qatādah Al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, **"I stand for the prayer, and I intend to lengthen it, then I hear the crying**

¹ Shaykh Zubair 'Alī Za'ī in explanation of this ḥādīth wrote, "1. The morning prayer should be offered in the darkness (i.e. when it is dark). 2. It is necessary for women to cover themselves with a veil. 3. Every woman should veil herself from men. 4. It is permissible for women to offer prayers in the Masjid..." (*Itihaf ul-Basim Fi Tahqiq Muwatta al-Imam Malik, under ḥādīth no.494*)

of a child, so I shorten the prayer as I dislike that there be a hardship upon his mother.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* no.868)

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ "إِنِّي لَأَدْخُلُ فِي الصَّلَاةِ وَأَنَا أُرِيدُ إِطَالَتَهَا، فَأَسْمَعُ بُكَاءَ الصَّبِيِّ، فَأَتَجَوَّزُ فِي صَلَاتِي مِمَّا أَعْلَمُ مِنْ شِدَّةِ وَجْدِ أُمِّهِ مِنْ بُكَائِهِ "

5) Sayyidunā Anas bin Mālik رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Verily I begin the prayer and I desire for it to be lengthened, then I hear the crying of a child, so I shorten the prayer because I know his crying will cause emotional distress for his mother.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* no.709, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* no.470)

أَنَّ زَيْنَبَ التَّحْقِيفِيَّةَ، كَانَتْ تُحَدِّثُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ "إِذَا شَهِدْتَ إِحْدَاكُنَّ الْعِشَاءَ فَلَا تَطِيبِ تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةَ "

6) Sayyidah Zaynab Ath-Thaqafiyyah رضي الله عنها used to report from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ that he said, “When any one of you women [intend to be] present at ‘Ishā’, then let her not apply perfume that night.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* no.443)

عن أبي هريرة، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال: "لا تمنعوا إماء الله مساجد الله، وليخرجن تفلات".

7) Sayyidunā Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه narrated the Prophet ﷺ said, “Do not prevent a female slave of Allāh from going to the Masājid of Allāh, and they may leave [to go to the masjid] without being perfumed.” (*Musnad Aḥmad* 2/438 no.9645 and its chain is ḥasan and it is his wording, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* no.565, *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Khuzaymah* no.1679, and *Ibn Hibbān* no.2214)

عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال : قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم "يا معشر النساء ، إذا سجد الرجال فاحفظوا أبصاركن".

8) Sayyidunā Abū Sa’id Al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “O Assembly of women! When a man goes into sujūd (prostration), then protect your gazes.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Khuzaymah* no.1694 and its chain is Ṣaḥīḥ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*

Ibn Hibbān no.402, and Ṣaḥīḥ according to Al-Ḥākim upon the conditions of the Shaykhayn (Bukhārī and Muslim) 1/191-192)

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ قَالَ : كُنَّ النِّسَاءُ يُؤْمِرْنَ فِي الصَّلَاةِ عَلَى عَهْدِ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْ لَا يَرْفَعْنَ رُؤُوسَهُنَّ حَتَّى يَأْخُذَ
الرِّجَالُ مَقَاعِدَهُمْ مِنْ قَبَاحَةِ الثِّيَابِ

9) Sayyidunā Sahl bin Sa'd رضي الله عنه narrated that, **"During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, the women were commanded not to raise their heads before the men had sat (after prostration) due to the ugliness of their clothes (i.e., the shapes of their bodies being exposed)."** (*Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Khuzaymah no.1695, Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān no.2216, and its chain is Ṣaḥīḥ. Also, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī no.362, 814, 1215 and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim no.441*)

عن زيد بن خالد، أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال "لا
تمنعوا إماء الله مساجد الله، وليخرجن تفلات"

10) Sayyidunā Zayd bin Khālid رضي الله عنه narrated the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, **"Do not prevent the female slave of Allāh from going to the Masājid of Allāh, and they may leave [to go to the masjid] without being perfumed."** (*Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān no.2208 and its chain is ḥasan, another edition no.2211 and Al-Haythamī also said it is ḥasan in Majma' Al-Zawā'id 2/33*)

In summary, these narrations prove that women are permitted to offer ṣalāh in the masjid, provided that there is no fear of fitnah (temptation). It is also more virtuous for a woman to offer the prayer in her home, due to the fact that prayer in congregation is not obligatory for them.

Sayyidunā 'Umars رضي الله عنه wife would go to the masjid offer the 'Ishā' prayer, and Sayyidunā 'Umar رضي الله عنه did not prevent her from that. (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī no.362, 814, 1215 and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim no.441*)

Sayyidunā Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه was so strict in this matter, when one of his sons said: "We prevent our women from going to the Masjid.", he severely admonished him, and beat him. (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim no.442*)

One woman vowed that if her husband was released from prison, she would pray 2 rak'at (cycles of prayer) in every masjid in Baṣra. Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمته الله said, "She should pray in the masjid of her people." (*Muṣannaḥ ibn Abī Shaybah 2/484 no.7617, and its chain is Ṣaḥīḥ*) – That is, she should not pray in every masjid, but rather she should fulfill the vow by praying in the masjid in her neighbourhood.

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه said, "The best row (in congregational prayer) for the women is the last row, and the worst row is the first row." (*Muṣannaḥ ibn Abī Shaybah 2/385 no.7623, and its chain is ḥasan*)

‘Urwah bin Az-Zubayr رضي الله عنه said, "It is said that the best row for the women is the last row, and the worst row is the first row." (*Muṣannaḥ ibn Abī Shaybah 2/385 no.7624, and its chain is Ṣaḥīḥ*)

Imām Abū Bakr Muḥammad bin Ibrahīm Al-Mundhir An-Naysabūrī رحمته الله said, "Ahlul ‘Ilm (The People of Knowledge) are in agreement that the Jumu‘ah (Friday) prayer is not obligatory on women, and they also have consensus that if she attends and prays with the Imam (in congregation), then this is sufficient (i.e., permissible)." (*Al-Awsaṭ 6/156 no.864*)

It is proven and established from authentic aḥādīth and āthār of the Salaf us-Ṣāliḥ that it is permissible for women to pray ṣalāh in the masājid with the condition that they adhere to the etiquettes of Islamic legislation and are veiled, and so on. On the day of Jumu‘ah it is preferable for them to go to the masjid, rather than sitting at home, so that they may pray Ṣalāt al-Jumu‘ah behind the imām and listen to the sermon to learn matters of the religion.

It is surprising that some people take their women out for Tablīghī Jama‘at, then prohibit them from praying in the masjid, so that they remain ignorant and detached from religious education – if their women are forbidden from the masjid, and they keep them away from Masjid An-Nabawī, then these helpless women will be prevented from ṭawāf (circumambulating the Ka’ba) and the virtues of the Haramayn (Makkah and Medinah), and they will also be cut off from offering the Pillars of Ḥajj, and the error in this is self-evident.

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

"And our duty is only to convey plainly (the Message)." [36:17]