

Looking at  
The Hanbalee Text  
*al-Khiraqee*  
Placing The Hands On The Chest

*Researched and Compiled by  
Abu Hibbaan & Abu Khuzaimah Ansaari*

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[www.ablulhadeeth.wordpress.com](http://www.ablulhadeeth.wordpress.com)*

## Hanbalee Text

### al-Khiraqee ( d. 334):

- “The hands are raised up to the lobes of the ears or parallel to the shoulders, then the right hand is placed upon the left, and both of them placed below the navel.” (Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee)

## Reply

Firstly the origin and sources are the Quraanic text and the Prophetic ahadeeth and as it is often advocated by those who deem it necessary and permissible to adhere and follow a madhab usually tend to say evidences must have been used to derive these rulings and final positions.

This is a basic text of Hanbalee fiqh authored by Abul Qaasim Umar bin al-Hussain bin Abdullah al-Khirqee and he died in the year 334H. It is considered to be one of the very first classical text on the hanbalee fiqh and as the name suggest it is Mukhtasar ie summarised and brief, its full name is *Matn al-Khirqee A'la Madhab Abee Abdillaah Ahmad ibn Hanbal ash-Shaibaanee*

Therefore it is very strange that this text would be used to establish the opinion of the hanaabilah to clasp their hands below the navel when this text is just a very brief guide. Furthermore the author ie al-Khiraqee has not cited any evidences at all whatsoever and has just cited a position we known without evidences this is invalid as its just opinion. It is often said the madhaahib must have used evidences yet in this instance there is no evidence so just to cite Khiraqee saying the position of the madhab is below the navel is ambiguous and requires further investigation.

The checker ie Abu Hudhaifah Ibraaheem ibn Muhammad of one of the editions of Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee added a footnote to this passage and said, “There are a number of narrations from Imaam Ahmad that acknowledge and establish the placing (of the hands) on the chest.” (Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee (pg.21), Chapter, The Characteristics of the Prayer. Edn 1<sup>st</sup> Daar us-Sahaabah Lil-Turaath of Tantha (Egypt) 1413H/1993) see scans below

# مَذْهَبُ الْخِرَاقِيِّ

عَلَى مَذْهَبِ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ  
أَحْمَدَ بْنَ حَنْبَلٍ الشَّيْبَانِيِّ

## باب صفة الصلاة

وإذا قام إلى الصلاة قال : الله أكبر ، وينوى بها المكتوبة ، يعنى بالتكبير .  
ولا نعلم خلافاً بين الأمة فى وجوب النية للصلاة ، وأن الصلاة لا تنعقد  
إلا بها .

فإن تقدمت النية قبل التكبير وبعد دخول الوقت ، مالم يفسخها أجزاءه .  
ويرفع يديه إلى فروع أذنيه ، أو إلى حذو منكبيه ، ثم يضع يده اليمنى  
على كوعه اليسرى ، ويجعلهما تحت سرتة (١٨) ، ثم يقول :

(١٨) الروايات عن الإمام أحمد تقر بوضعها على الصدر .

So we have previously mentioned al-Khiraqee is a basic text of the Hanaabilah and it does not cite any evidences just opinions of the madhabs. In this situation and other situations it is obligatory upon as Muslims to refer back to the divine sacred texts and in this instance for the evidences utilised by the madhab.

Then we look at these evidences in light of the scholars of hadeeth and fiqh if the hadeeth are authentic we take them irrespective of the madhab and what the end result of adopting the ahadeeth brings.

A recent explanation of Khiraqee does not mention the evidence used for this position and this explanation was by Khaalid bin Abdullaah al-Ansaari titled. '*Sharh Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee*' Edn 1<sup>st</sup> Daar ul-Ei'tisaam Lil-Nashr 1425H/2004H and he also does not mention any evidence. As it must be said by the checking by Muhammad Zuhair ash-Shaawaish of Matn al-Khiraqee of one of the earliest printed edition in this century with his checking back in 1378H/1954 and he also offered no explanation.

One of the earliest explanations of the Khiraqee was that of Shaikh Noor ud deen Abee Taalib Abdur Rahman bin Umar bin Abil-Qaasim bin Alee bin Uthmaan al-Basree adh-Dhareer who died in the year 684H titled. '*al-Waadhibu Fee Sharh Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee*' (Edn 1<sup>st</sup> Daar al-Khadar Lil Taba'ah Wan-Nashr Wat-Tawzee'a 1421H/2000, Beiroot Lebanon)

# الواضح

## في شرح مختصر الخرقية

تصنيف  
نور الدين أبي طالب عبد الرحمن بن عمر بن أبي القاسم بن  
علي بن عثمان البصري الضرير

٦٨٤ - ٦٢٤ هـ

In it Shaikh Noor ud deen said in explanation of al-Khiraqees words, *“and both of them placed below the navel”* This has been narrated from Alee, Abu Hurairah (Radhiallaahu Anhuma) and others from the Messenger of Allaah (Sallalahu Alayhee Wasallam) who said, *“It is from the Sunnah to place the right hand on the left below the navel.”* Transmitted by Ahmad and this is equivalent to the Prophetic Sunnah. This statement is also emanated from the companions.

*It is also narrated from (Imaam) Ahmad the Sunnah is to place the hands above the navel and this is also the statement of ash-Shaafi’ee from what is narrated by Wail ibn Hujr (Radhiallaahu Anhu) who said, “I saw the Prophet (Sallalahu Alayhee Wasallam) praying and he placed his hands on his chest one over the other.”*

*It is also narrated from (Imaam) Ahmad that one has the choice or option to place them below the navel or above the navel based on all of the narrations (on this subject) and the command pertaining to them is broad.”* (End of his words) (‘al-Waadhih Fee Sharh Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee’ (1/213-214)

## **BENEFITS**

Firstly the explainer Shaikh Noor ud deen has summarised the narrations and used different wordings from what is present in the books of hadeeth. The narrations of Alee and Abu Hurairah (Radhiallaahu Anhuma) have been continuously used by all of the different madhabs in support of this opinion and in recent times books on prayer in the English language from the hanafee school of opinion from the likes of *‘Fiqh ul-Imam’* of Abdur Rahman ibn Yoosuf and Mr Riyadh’s book *‘Salah of The Believer’* which are of Deobandee Hanafee persuasion and also some have been printed in the English language by the Barailwee Hanafee persuasion all by default use the very same reports.

The narration elucidating the meaning of the report of Alee and Abu Hurairah can be found in the *‘Sunan Abee Dawood’* (1/201 no.756) of Imaam Abu Dawood and The *‘Musnad’* of Imaam Ahmad himself (1/110 no.875)

And the narration of Wail ibn Hujr can be found in the *‘Sabeeh Ibn Khuzaimah’* of Imaam Ibn Khuzaimah (1/234 no.479)

So we also find the evidences used by the Hanaabilah for the position of placing their hands below their navels are the very same reports of Alee and Abu Hurairah (RadhiAllaahu Anhuma) but these report have been comprehensively established to be weak. (as a brief idea refer to an appendix of the English translation of Allaamah Muhammad Naasir ud deen al-Albaanees '*Sifah Salaatun Nabee*' which addresses the trustworthiness of the central narrator of both of these reports and he is Abdur Rahman ibn Koofee al-Waasitee.

The most staunchest and most bigoted in this issue are our brethren from amongst the Ahnaaf ie the hanafees and even they have admitted overwhelmingly and acknowledged in their various works throughout history the weakness of Abdur Rahman al-Koofee. Which inshaAllaah maybe addressed at a different time. It suffices for now to know that some traditionalists ie prominent and universally accepted scholars have even established universal consensus in his weakness ie Ijmaa which as we dear readers know constitutes evidence.

The next question we may ask ourselves well if these reports are so weak why did such scholars from amongst the hanaabilah or others for that matter still utilise them as evidence as part of their madhabs. Well the simple answer to this is that this issue has been continually argued and discussed throughout history on why people still utilise evidences that are weak.

This is such a complex issue that books have even been written on it, in recent times the great Saudi and renowned scholar of Usool and Aqeedah Allaamah Shaikh Muhammad ibn Saaleh al-Uthaimeen Rahimahullaah, authored a book on why scholars differed or why differences of opinion existed and the Shaikhs goes through such pertinent reasons. It is indeed one of those must read books and you will be pleased to know it has been translated into English a number of years ago.

Imaam Shaikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah also wrote a monumental work on the subject of understanding the differences of opinion amongst scholars titled, '*Raf al-Malaam Ann Ai'matul A'laam*' as have other Scholars from the likes of Shaikh Shaah Waleeullaah Dehlawee and Shaikh Muhammad Hayaat Sindhee.

Some of the reasons they have mentioned are that the scholars are unaware of the other ahadeeth or narrations, another reason is if they were aware they believed their position was stronger, another reason is that they may have been unaware of the authenticities of such reports and or the authenticity of opposing reports and this leads onto another reason and that is that the scholars of fiqh or compilers of such books on fiqh were not strong in the verification and research of ahadeeth but rather their expertise was more focussed on the interpretation, interpolation and elucidation of these sacred texts. The above narration is a prime example of this.

It must also be noted here and we find this extremely interesting and that is it is often said and re-iterated and this article that was shared with us is a pertinent example that the 2 opinions from Imaam Ahmad are below the navel or above the navel and this is what Shaikh Noor ud deen has mentioned in '*al-Waadhib Fee Sharh Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee*' baring in mind this was at least as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century of Islaam.

Unfortunately there are those who are from amongst us, who for some strange and odd reason lack the vision and insight into such issues and say, "well only the words above the navel has been mentioned from Imaam Ahmad as his opinion and therefore this does not mean on the chest so why do the Salafis and the Ahlul Hadeeth say Imaam Ahmads opinion was to place the hands on the chest." This is a very common point made by such "madhabees" they also say in a different way above the navel does not mean on the chest.

In answer to this weak point Imaams Ahmad position was to place the hands on the chest because the evidence used for placing the hands above the navel is the hadeeth of Wail ibn Hujr (RadhiAllaahu Anhu) which mentions on the chest. So this shows every time the wording above the navel is cited as Imaam Ahmads position, it should by default denote on the chest as this was the understanding of the explainer of *Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee* ie Shaikh Noor ud deen as he used the hadeeth of placing the hands on the chest.

Furthermore according to some opinions anything above the navel means the chest and this is well known according to the usoolee scholars and the linguists. So the defining line and distinguishing sign is the belly button ie

the navel, below or above it and in this way the navel becomes the line of demarcation.

It is most pertinent and extremely interesting to note a cunning and deceptive ploy by our madhabee brethren in that they have now shifted their arguments and therefore now say placing the hands below the navel and also above the navel are both valid and correct opinions. They also say placing the hands them on the chest is something alien and an odd opinion. Similarly it also opposes the position of the majority of the people of knowledge.

Previously they were (ie the Madhabees) vehemently opposed to anything above or on the navel and in recent times our beloved hanafee brethren have changed and refined their position after realising the strength and authenticity of the evidences presented and have now formulated a new argument that below the navel is good, above the navel is good and acceptable but just not on the chest.

This ploy according to them has been adopted in order to include the 2 varying opinions of the Hanbalee madhab according to their understanding that above the navel does not mean on the chest thereby increasing their numbers from just the hanafee madhab to now include the hanbalee madhab and to say to the Salafis and Ahlul Hadeeth that you guys now even oppose the hanaabilah, yet this is nothing but just distancing themselves from the truth and overlooking the divine sacred texts.

A clear rebuking of this point is that numerous scholars and researchers from amongst the madhab of the hanabilah have done 1 of 2 things, the first is that they have adopted the opinion of the madhab which suggests according to their understanding of the hanbalee madhab that above the navel means the chest and therefore place their hands on their chests.

Secondly they may have simply adopted the stronger opinion based on the way of the Madhab of Ahlul Hadeeth that the ahadeeth mentioning the placing of the hands on the chest to be stronger and more authentic than the ahadeeth which mention the position of below the navel. There are numerous scholars from amongst the hanabilah who left and abandoned the position of their madhab in this issue and adopted the position of on the chest and there so many it seems daunting to mention them.

Delving into the Mukhtasar al-Khiraqee we have yet another explanation titled, ‘*Sharh az-Zarkashee A’la Matn al-Khiraqee*’ which was authored by Shaikh Shams ud deen Abu Abdullaah Muhammad bin Abdullaah az-Zarkashee, who was Egyptian during the 8<sup>th</sup> century Hijree and he died approximately in the year 772H. So again this is an early explanation.

# شرح الزركشي على متن الخرقية

تصنيف الشيخ الإمام العلامة  
شمس الدين أبو عبد الله محمد بن عبد الله الزركشي

Shaikh Zarkashee said,

“*and both of them placed below the navel*” (Explanation) This is one report from (Imaam) Ahmad. From what Ahmad and Abu Dawood transmit from Alee (RadhiAllaahu Anhu) who said, “It is from the Sunnah to fasten the palm(s) in the prayer below the navel.” And the definitive Sunnah is equivalent to the Sunnah from the Messenger of Allaah (Sallallahu Alayhee Wasallam)

*The second report (from Imaam Ahmad) and this has the most precedence (al-Afdhal) is to place the hands below chest as is narrated from Qabeesah bin Hulb from his father who said, "I saw the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhee Wasallam) he placed his hands on his chest" and Yahyaa ibn Sa'eed described this and said, "the right on the left above the joint." Transmitted by Ahmad.*

*The third report (from Imaam Ahmad) one has a choice between the 2. This was adopted by Abee Moosaa and Abul Barkaat and his actions upon it has been reported. Abul Barkaat said, "and so from these narrations there is a wide scope in these 2 commands and there is no harm in anyone from amongst them. And Allaahs knows best." (Sharh az-Zarkashee A'la Matn al-Khiraqee (1/298) Edn 3<sup>rd</sup> 1430H/2009, Maktabah al-Asdee, Makkah, KSA)*

## **BENEFITS**

Again essentially 2 opinions below the navel based on the narration of Alee (RadhiAllaahu Anhu) and this has been established and comprehensively elucidated to be weak due to a central problematic narrator.

The saying of Shaikh Zarkashee below the chest is not problematic and just requires a little further comprehension and reasoning.

**Firstly** below the chest does not mean below the navel rather it means above the navel. It must also be noted Shaikh Zarkashee said back in the 8<sup>th</sup> century that this has precedence ie it is better to place the hands above the navel.

**Secondly** Shaikh Zarkashee uses the report of Hulb which categorically mentions chest.

**Thirdly** he explains what he means by chest as he goes onto say Imaam Yahyaa ibn Sa'eed described 'chest' as being above the joint.

**Fourthly** the question what does the joint mean here? Well being open minded and not indulging into polemics that some will exhort to, it is most pertinent that they are answered before they create further confusion and that is the 'Madhabees' may say above the joint may mean placing the right hand on and over the joint of the left hand ie the palm of the right hand covers the back of the left hand, the wrist and the beginning of the forearm.

This is an incorrect notion as the word ‘fauqa’ (above) has been used denoting position in terms of height in relation to something else and if the meaning we have discussed above was intended, the word A’la (on) would have been used.

**Fifthly** it could be strongly argued that Imaam Yahyaa ibn Sa’eed describing the narration of Hulb is doing so in specifying and clarifying what is meant and intended by chest and the author ie Shaikh Zarkashees by bringing his statement is also explaining his position where he said “below the chest.” So the joint here could mean and refer to the joint that occurs between the 2 sides of the ribs which is well above the navel and just below the chest in the general understanding of the word chest.

We have also discussed previously the meaning of the word chest and what does some have opined it could refer to anything from the lower part of the neck to the navel.