

# Khushoo in Prayer

**Description:** What *khushoo* is and to gain and maintain it.

By Aisha Stacey (© 2014 NewMuslims.com)

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Category: Lessons > [Acts of Worship](#) > [Prayers](#)

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Objectives:

- To understand the subtleties of the word *khushoo* and how it relates to our prayer.

Arabic Terms:

- *Aayaat* - (singular "ayah) the word *aayaat* can have many meanings. It is almost always used when talking about proofs from Allah. These include evidences, verses, lessons, signs, and revelations.
- *Shaytan* - sometimes spelled *Shaitan* or *Shaytaan*. It is the word used in Islam and the Arabic language to denote the devil or Satan, the personification of evil.
- *Sahabah* - the plural form of "Sahabi," which translates to Companions. A *sahabi*, as the word is commonly used today, is someone who saw Prophet Muhammad, believed in him and died as a Muslim.
- *Salah* - the Arabic word to denote a direct connection between the believer and Allah. More specifically, in Islam it refers to the formal five daily prayers and is the most important form of worship.
- *SubhanAllah* - How Perfect is Allah, far removed is Allah from every imperfection.
- *Tafseer* " it can be translated to the English word exegesis. Thus it is an explanation or interpretation of a text. Usually a scripture, in this case the text of the Quran.
- *Waswaas* - insinuations from *Shaytan* particularly to disrupt or destroy worship.
- *Sutrah* " a barrier a person puts in front of him while praying.
- *Deen* - the way of life based on Islamic revelation; the sum total of a Muslim's faith and practice. *Deen* is often used to mean faith, or the religion of Islam.
- *Du'a* - supplication, prayer, asking Allah for something.
- *Adhan* - an Islamic way of calling Muslims to the five obligatory Prayers.

## What is *Khushoo*?

At one time or another you might hear someone say that they wish they had more *khushoo* in their prayer. *Khushoo* can be translated as humility and devotion in prayer. It is the state of mind that allows you to transcend the everyday worries that flitter in and out of your mind disrupting your focus in prayer. We all need a little more *khushoo*, some of us more than others, but even the greatest and most devoted of us will at times complain about their lack of *khushoo*.



*Khushoo* in prayer means concentration, humility and submission. It means wholeheartedly fighting off any distractions or *waswaas* that enters our minds when we should be entirely focused on worshipping Allah. One of *Shaytan*'s most significant plots is to disrupt the prayer. By doing this he achieves two goals; he robs people from the joy of worshipping Allah and at the same time makes them lose part or all of the reward. One of the *sahabah* tells us that Prophet Muhammad said, "The first thing you will lose of your religion is *khushoo* and the last thing you will lose of your religion is the *salah*..."<sup>[1]</sup>

**Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their *salah* with all solemnity and full submissiveness." (Quran 23:1-2)**

We can say that we have achieved *khushoo* when a person is able to empty his heart and mind for prayer and focus on it to the exclusion of all else and prefers to be praying rather than anything else. We all know that this can be very difficult especially when we are plagued by the *waswaas* of *Shaytan*.

When a person stands with the intention to pray the *Shaytan* feels jealous and begins an assault that is designed to ruin the prayer. He will distract the believer by all means possible, he annoys him by whispering. Did you make your ablution properly; did you leave the stove on? He will even use matters of the *deen* making you think about anything other than the prayer.

## Eight easy ways for gaining and maintaining *khushoo*.

- 1) Prepare for prayer properly. You can do this by repeating the words of the *adhan* and making *du'a*. Paying attention to your ablution and all the time remembering Allah. Also making sure that your clothes and place of prayer are clean and tidy. Allah is of course the most deserving of our clean attire and surroundings.
- 2) Move calmly to the place of prayer and also during the prayer. Do not move through the positions of prayer like a chicken pecking at the ground. Haste prevents *khushoo*.
- 3) Remember death and what awaits us after death. Prophet Muhammad said,

oeRemember death in your prayer, for the man who remembers death is bound to pray properly and pray the prayer of a man who does not think that he will prayer any other prayer".[2]

- 4) Think about the words of the prayer and the recited verses of the Quran. The Quran was revealed to be pondered over. It would be helpful to read a *tafseer*. Pause at the end of each *ayah* and even interact with the words. For instance when Prophet Muhammad recited an *ayah* that mentioned glorification he said *SubhanAllah*, if the *ayah* mentioned seeking refuge with Allah he would seek refuge with Allah.[3]
- 5) Recite in a slow rhythmic tone and try to beautify your voice. Allah says in Quran, **oe...And recite the Quran in a slow pleasant style."** (Quran 73:4) A slow measured pace is more conducive to reflection.
- 6) Keep in mind that Allah responds to prayers. Prayer is a connection and conversation with Allah and it must be accorded its proper value. Speak calmly and allow a pause to allow Allah to respond.
- 7) Pray (if possible) with a *sutrah* in front of you. This could be a wall or a tree if outside or even placing a chair in front of your praying place. This restricts your field of vision and stops anyone from passing in front of you. This should also include not praying in places where there is a lot of noise or distractions.
- 8) Looking at the place of prostration. It is reported from Aisha, the beloved wife of Prophet Muhammad, that he used to pray with his head tilted forward and his gaze looking at the ground.[4] Try not to be distracted, by sights, sounds or thoughts and minimise any likelihood of disturbance.

## The advantages of having *khushoo*

- 1) Prophet Muhammad said, **oeThere is no Muslim man who, when the time for a prescribed prayer comes, he does ablution properly, has the proper attitude of *khushoo*, and bows properly, but it will be an expiation for all his previous sins, so long as they were not major sins. And this is the case for life"**. [5]
- 2) The rewards for prayer are in proportion to the degree of *khushoo*, taking into account the effort and intention.
- 3) The one who prays with *khushoo* will feel lighter at the end of his prayer, as if his burdens have been lifted and he is refreshed.

In conclusion always bear in mind that *khushoo* in worship is a serious issue and being deprived of it is nothing less than a calamity. Even Prophet Muhammad would seek refuge from a heart that has no *khushoo*. [6]

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Endnotes:

[1] *Al Madarij* 1/521

[2] *Silsilat al-Ahadeeth as-Saheehah* by Sheikh Albani

[3] *Saheeh Muslim*

[4] *Al-Hakim and Saheeh* according to the conditions of *Bukhari, Muslim and Sheikh Albani*.

[5] *Saheeh Muslim*

[6] *At-Tirmidhi*

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