

WEEKLY BOOKLET

# ETIQUETTES OF SNEEZING

A speech delivered by  
Ameer Ahl al-Sunnah داعية بر كائهم العالیه

- Sneezing and scientific research
- Responding to the sneeze of a disbeliever
- Protection from dental diseases
- Responding to a sneeze during prayer



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داعية بر كائهم العالیه

چھینک کے آداب

## Etiquettes of Sneezing

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# Etiquettes of Sneezing



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الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ  
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Supplication for reading this book

**R**ecite the following supplication before you read a religious book or begin an Islamic lesson; you will remember whatever you study **اِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**.

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا حِكْمَتَكَ وَانْشُرْ  
عَلَيْنَا رَحْمَتَكَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

**O Allah! Open the doors of knowledge and wisdom for us and have mercy on us! O He Who is the Most Glorious and Honourable! (*Al-Mustatraf, vol. 1, p. 40*)**

### Note:

Recite *ṣalāt* upon the beloved Prophet ﷺ once before and after.

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## نَحْمَدُكَ وَنُصَلِّي وَنُسَلِّمُ عَلَى خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ

In Arabic, a sneeze is called عَطَسَ, and it is a natural act that occurs in humans and animals. Sneezing has been mentioned several times in *Aḥādīth*, and this is why our pure Shariah contains several important rulings and etiquettes regarding it. Among them are certain rulings which may render one sinful if neglected. Therefore, it is important to gain knowledge about this topic. The renowned spiritual guide and leader of Ahl al-Sunnah, Mawlana Ilyas Attar al-Qadiri دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَّةُ delivered a live speech on Madani Channel titled “Sneezing”, on 23<sup>rd</sup> Jumādā al-Ūlā, 1441 AH.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ! The Weekly Booklet Department, under Dawat-e-Islami’s department Al-Madina-tul-Ilmiyyah (Islamic Research Centre), is presenting this speech in the form of a booklet, with necessary edits and some additions in accordance with the subject. In this booklet, you will learn why one should say اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ after sneezing, what the response to a sneeze is, what to do if someone sneezes in prayer, and whether the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم ever sneezed. Along with other essential information, the booklet also includes some accounts to maintain the interest of readers. Read this booklet to attain the pleasure of Allah Almighty and acquire Islamic knowledge, and gift it to others with the intention of spreading goodness.

Abu Muhammad Tahir Attari Madani

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّنَ ط  
اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ط بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ط

## Etiquettes of Sneezing

### Attar's supplication:

O Allah! Whoever reads or listens to the booklet *Etiquettes of Sneezing*, grant them contentment with Your decree, and forgive them and their parents without accountability.

اٰمِيْنُ بِجَاهِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّنَ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم

### Virtue of sending *ṣalāt* upon the beloved Prophet ﷺ

The final Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever sends *ṣalāt* upon me 1,000 times a day will not die until they see their place in Paradise.”<sup>1</sup>

صَلُّوْا عَلٰى الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

### Who sneezed first?

When Allah Almighty willed to create Prophet Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ,

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb, vol. 2, p. 328, Hadith 22



## Etiquettes of Sneezing

He commanded the angel of death, Sayyidunā 'Izrā'il عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, to bring a handful of soil from the Earth. By the command of Allah Almighty, when the Angel of Death عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ took a handful of soil from the Earth, the upper layer of the Earth peeled off like a shell and came into his hand. The soil included 60 colours and various qualities. Allah Almighty commanded it to be kneaded with different types of water. Then, from that soil, the body of Prophet Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was formed and placed at the gates of Paradise. The angels were astonished upon seeing it, as they had never seen a creature with such a form and appearance before.

Allah Almighty then commanded the soul to enter that body. As the soul entered and reached the nose of Prophet Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, he sneezed. When the soul reached his tongue, Allah Almighty said, “Say الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ.” When he عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said, “الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ”, Allah Almighty said, “يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ يَا أَبَا مُحَمَّدٍ”, meaning, “May Allah have mercy upon you, O Abū Muḥammad.” [This is the *teknonym* of Prophet Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.] Then Allah Almighty said, “I have created you to express My praise and glorification.” Thereafter, the soul gradually spread throughout the entire body, and he stood up.<sup>1</sup>

May Allah have mercy upon him and forgive us without

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<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Khāzin, part 1, Al-Baqarah, under verse 30, vol. 1, p. 43 Summarised; Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān, part 1, under verse 30, vol. 1, p. 100

accountability for his sake.

اٰمِيْنُ بِجَاهِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم

## Sneezing and scientific research

O devotees of the Prophet! A sneeze is very important for the human body. Allah Almighty created soft membranes (i.e., very thin layers of skin and tissue in humans and animals which are transparent) throughout the entire air passage, from the nose, mouth, and throat to the lungs. According to scientific research, when we sneeze, the bacteria and viruses present in the nose are removed, and our body becomes free from germs. How wonderful is the system created by our Lord. سُبْحَانَ اللّٰهِ الْعَظِيْمِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ All glory and praise are for Allah Almighty, the most majestic and great.

صَلُّوْا عَلَی الْحَبِيْب صَلَّی اللّٰهُ عَلَی مُحَمَّدٍ

## 14 Aḥādīth regarding sneezing

### 1. Allah Almighty likes sneezing

The final Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم said, “Allah loves sneezing but dislikes yawning. So, if anyone of you sneezes and praises Allah, every Muslim who hears him must respond to him, saying: يَرْحَمُكَ اللّٰهُ”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, p. 163, Hadith 6226

### Why is “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ” said after sneezing?

The commentator of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, ‘Allāmah Sharīf al-Ḥaqq al-Amjadī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

Sneezing is one of the six essential elements for good health (“سِتَّةُ ضَرُورِيَّه” refers to the six necessary things a person needs throughout their life until death. This includes air, food and drink, physical movement and rest, mental/emotional activity and calm, sleeping and waking, and the retention of substances in the body for an appropriate duration, followed by their proper elimination from the body.) When a person sneezes, harmful moisture is removed from the body. So, the one who sneezes is instructed to say “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ”.<sup>1</sup>

Dear Islamic brothers! The Hadith mentioned above refers to yawning, which is called “اُبَاسِي” in Punjabi. Some people open their mouths and make strange sounds while yawning; this should be avoided. The beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم said, “When the one who yawns makes a sound, the devil laughs at him.”<sup>2</sup> That is, when someone yawns with their mouth wide open and says “haah”, the devil laughs at how he influenced the person to act foolishly.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nuzhat al-Qārī, vol. 5, p. 597

<sup>2</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, p. 163, Hadith 6226

<sup>3</sup> Mir'āt al-Manājīḥ, vol. 6, p. 392

## Benefits of sneezing

Mufti Aḥmad Yār Khan رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

Sneezing clears the mind, lightens the head and refreshes one's mood, making it easier to engage in worship. Doctors say that if a cold comes and passes, it acts as a remedy for many illnesses. On the other hand, yawning is a sign of laziness, and it brings stagnation to the body. Sneezing is liked by Allah, while yawning is liked by the devil. That is why the Prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام never yawned.<sup>1</sup>

## 2-3. What to do after sneezing

The beloved Prophet of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “When anyone of you sneezes, he should say “أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ”, and his brother or companion should say “يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ”. When the latter says “يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ”, the former should say “يَهْدِيكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيُصْلِحْ بَالَكُمْ” (may Allah grant you guidance and improve your condition).<sup>2</sup>

In another narration, it states that the former should say “يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ” (may Allah forgive you and me).<sup>3</sup>

Mufti Aḥmad Yār Khan رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

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<sup>1</sup> Mir'āt al-Manājīh, vol. 6, p. 391

<sup>2</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, p. 162, Hadith 6224

<sup>3</sup> Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, vol. 4, p. 340, Hadith 2749

## Etiquettes of Sneezing

Sneezing is a blessing from Allah, so one should praise Allah for it. Since the person appreciated the blessing of Allah by praising Him, the one who heard it responds with a supplication: “يُحَمِّكَ اللَّهُ”. As this person did a favour by supplicating for him, it is only right to respond with a favour, so the one who sneezed should supplicate: “يُحَمِّكَ اللَّهُ” (in response to hearing “يُحَمِّدُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيُصَدِّقُ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِ”). There is profound wisdom in the exchange of these words.<sup>1</sup>

### 4. Not praising Allah Almighty after sneezing

Two men sneezed before the beloved Prophet ﷺ and he responded to one of them but not the other. So, the man said, “O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! You responded to him but not me.” The beloved Prophet ﷺ replied, “That man praised Allah, but you did not praise Allah.”<sup>2</sup>

### 5. A response from the angels

The beloved Prophet ﷺ said, “When someone says “رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ” after sneezing, an angel responds with “أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ” [completing the phrase]. If the person who sneezes says

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<sup>1</sup> Mir'āt al-Manājīh, vol. 6, p. 393

<sup>2</sup> Sahih Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 163, Hadith 6225

“اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ”, the angel replies “يَرْحَمُكَ اللهُ”, may Allah have mercy on you.”<sup>1</sup>

## The best way to praise Allah Almighty after sneezing

The reviver of Islam, the Imam of Ahl al-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad Razā Khan رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

At the time of sneezing, many people only say “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ”; one should say the entire phrase “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ”. (He further states:) What a great blessing it is to receive a prayer of mercy from the pure tongue of an angel. That is, when the one who sneezes says “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ”, the angels pray for him, saying “يَرْحَمُكَ اللهُ”, may Allah have mercy on you. Even if one only says “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ”, the Sunnah is fulfilled, however, the honour of receiving a prayer from the angels is missed.

The Imām رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, referencing *Al-Qawl al-Badīʿ*, also states that the most excellent and complete phrase of praise after sneezing is:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ مَّا كَانَ مِنْ حَالٍ وَصَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَى خَيْرِ خَلْقِهِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآهْلِ بَيْتِهِ.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kitab al-Du'ā li al-Tabarānī, p. 552, Hadith 1985

<sup>2</sup> Malfuzat-e-‘Ala Hazrat, pp. 319-320, summarised

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### Is it necessary to respond to a sneeze?

Nowadays, many adults do not know how to say “يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ”, and they are unaware that something should be said after sneezing and in response to it. Remember, saying “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ” after sneezing is *sunnah mu'akkadah* (emphasised sunnah).<sup>1</sup>

### Important ruling

The ruling regarding *sunnah mu'akkadah* is that if it is missed once or twice without an excuse accepted by Islamic law, it is deemed blameworthy, but if one makes a habit of neglecting it, they are sinful.

### Purchasing Paradise for one dirham

The compiler of *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, Imam Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. Ash‘ath al-Sijjistānī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ was once travelling on a boat when he heard someone sneeze and say, “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ”. He رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ rented a small boat for one dirham, sailed towards the person who sneezed, responded to the sneeze by saying “يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ”, and then returned. When he was asked about why he did this, he said, “When that person sneezed, he praised Allah, and perhaps that person is accepted in the court of Allah and his prayers are answered.” When the boatmen slept, they heard

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<sup>1</sup> Hāshiyat al-Ṭaḥṭāwī ‘alā Marāqī al-Falāḥ, p. 7

someone in their dream say, “O boatmen! Abū Dāwūd purchased Paradise from Allah for one dirham.”<sup>1</sup>

May Allah Almighty have mercy upon him and forgive us without accountability for his sake.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاهِ خَاتِمِ النَّبِيِّينَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلُّوْا عَلَيَّ الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ

## 6. Responding to the sneeze of a disbeliever

The Jews used to sneeze in the presence of the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, hoping that the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ would say “يَرْحَمُكَ اللهُ” to them. However, the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ would say, “يَهْدِيْكُمْ اللهُ وَيُضِلُّكُمْ بِآلِكُمْ”.<sup>2</sup>

## 7. The harms of not responding to a sneeze

The fourth Caliph of Islam, Sayyidunā ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, “I heard the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ say, ‘If any of you do not respond to his brother’s sneeze when he says “الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ”, the one who sneezed will hold him accountable and take

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<sup>1</sup> Faṭḥ al-Bārī, vol. 11, p. 514, under Hadith 6225

<sup>2</sup> Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī, vol. 4, p. 339, Hadith 2748



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recompense from him on the Day of Judgement for not responding.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Fatwā from Dār al-Iftā Ahl al-Sunnah regarding the response to a sneeze**

Dear Islamic brothers! The ruling on responding to a sneeze is that one must do so immediately. Any delay without a valid excuse, according to Islamic law, is considered a sin.

"Imam Ibn ‘Ābidīn al-Shāmī al-Dimashqī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

It is necessary to respond to *salām* and sneezes immediately. It is *makrūh taḥrīmī* and a sin to delay the response without a valid excuse. Moreover, the sin is not erased simply by responding later, but repentance is required.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, repent as a precaution by saying: “O Allah! I repent from and ask You to forgive me for every occasion when I deliberately or forgetfully delayed the response or did not respond at all to a sneeze when it was necessary.”

اٰمِيْنُ بِجَاهِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Budūr al-Sāfirah fī Umūr al-Ākhirah, p. 382

<sup>2</sup> Al-Durr al-Mukhtār ma‘a Radd al-Muḥtār, vol. 9, p. 683

## 8. Sneezing during prayer

The beloved Prophet ﷺ said, “Sneezing during prayer is from the devil.”<sup>1</sup> Remember, the devil becomes happy when one sneezes during prayer because he has disrupted it. Otherwise, sneezing is not prohibited, rather it is a blessing from Allah Almighty, provided it is not caused by illness.<sup>2</sup>

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ      صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

## 9. Three consecutive sneezes

The third Caliph of Islam, Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ sneezed three times in the presence of the beloved Prophet ﷺ. The final Prophet ﷺ said, “O ‘Uthmān! Shall I not give you good news? Angel Jibril brought me news from Allah that whoever sneezes three times consecutively, his faith becomes firm in his heart.”<sup>3</sup>

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ      صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

## 10. Sneezing during speech

The beloved Prophet ﷺ said, “The most truthful

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<sup>1</sup> Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī, vol. 4, p. 344, Hadith 2757, selected

<sup>2</sup> Mir‘āt al-Manājīh, vol. 2, p. 139 Summarized

<sup>3</sup> Nawādir al-Uṣūl, vol. 4, p. 471, Hadith 1066

Etiquettes of Sneezing

speech is the one during which a sneeze occurs.”<sup>1</sup>

Sayyidunā ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, “A single sneeze during conversation is more beloved to me than a truthful witness.”<sup>2</sup>

Imām Aḥmad Razā Khan رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ writes, “When something is being narrated whose truth or falsehood is unknown, if someone sneezes at that moment, it is considered a sign of the matter being truthful.”<sup>3</sup>

## 11. Sneezing while supplicating

The beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Sneezing during a supplication is a true witness.”<sup>4</sup>

Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ said, “Sneezing while supplicating is a sign of acceptance [i.e., a sign the supplication is accepted].”<sup>5</sup>

## 12. Glad tidings of forgiveness

Sayyidunā Abū Rāfi‘ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ reports:

The final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ left his home to go to

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Mu‘jam Al-Awsaṭ, vol. 2, p. 302, Hadith 3360

<sup>2</sup> Nawādir al-Uṣūl, vol. 4, p. 469, Hadith 1063

<sup>3</sup> Malfuzat-e-Ala Hazrat, p. 319

<sup>4</sup> Kanz al-‘Ummāl, vol. 5, p. 68, Juz' 9 Hadith 25520

<sup>5</sup> Malfuzat-e-Ala Hazrat, p. 319

the masjid, and he was holding my hand. When we reached Baqī' cemetery, the Prophet ﷺ sneezed and let go of my hand. Then he stood up as if he were surprised. I said, "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! May my parents be sacrificed for you! Have you said something I did not understand?"

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Angel Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام came to me and said, 'When you sneeze, say **أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَرَّمَهُ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَعَزَّ جَلَالِهِ**' (i.e., all praise belongs to Allah as is His generosity, and all praise is due to Allah as is His honour and greatness). Indeed, Allah says three times, 'My servant has spoken the truth, my servant has spoken the truth, my servant has spoken the truth- he has been forgiven.'"<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, this action is for the purpose of teaching the Ummah. Otherwise, the status of the Prophet ﷺ is such that it is through his blessed intercession that we sinners will be forgiven. **إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**

**صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ      صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ**

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<sup>1</sup> 'Amal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah, p. 116, Hadith 261

Etiquettes of Sneezing

### 13. A remedy for protection from toothache, earache, and stomach pain

When someone sneezes and says “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**”, and the listener precedes him in saying “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**”, then according to a Hadith, such a person will be protected from toothache, earache, and stomach pain caused by indigestion.<sup>1</sup>

### Protection from dental diseases

Muftī Aḥmad Yār Khān رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ said, “Whoever says “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ**” upon sneezing and runs their tongue over their teeth will be protected from dental diseases **إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**. This has been tried and tested.”<sup>2</sup>

### 14. Covering the face while sneezing

Whenever the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ sneezed, he covered his face with his hand or a cloth, and this muffled the sound of his blessed voice.<sup>3</sup>

### Refrain from sneezing loudly

Dear Islamic brothers! Sneezing is a good thing, and this entire

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqasid Al-Ḥasanah, p. 420, Hadith 1130

<sup>2</sup> Mir'āt al-Manājīḥ, vol. 6, p. 396

<sup>3</sup> Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, vol. 4, p. 343, Hadith 2754

explanation is in relation to an unexpected sneeze. Sneezes caused by a cold are not significant, but making as little noise as possible is considered courteous. In the case of sneezing in a masjid, there is even more emphasis on sneezing quietly.<sup>1</sup> Some people sneeze so loudly with a forceful sound that the person on the right jumps in surprise, and the person on the left is left wondering what just happened. Raising your voice while sneezing is foolishness.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, deliberately raising one's voice while sneezing is not a sign of a well-mannered person.

### How is it to take a bad omen from a sneeze?

The erudite Hanafi jurist, Mufti Amjad 'Ali al-A'zamī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

Many people consider sneezing a bad omen (i.e., take it as a sign of misfortune). For example, if someone is going to do something and hears someone sneeze, they assume the task will not be completed now. This is ignorance, as taking something as a bad omen has no basis. Calling something a bad omen which has been referred to in Hadith as a “truthful witness” is a serious error.<sup>3</sup>

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ      صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

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<sup>1</sup> Malfuzat-e-Ala Hazrat, p. 322

<sup>2</sup> Radd al-Muhtār, vol. 9, p. 685

<sup>3</sup> Bahār-e-Sharī'at, vol. 3, p. 478, Part 16

## 14 Etiquettes of sneezing

1. Responding to a sneeze once is necessary, provided that the one who sneezed says “**اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ**”. If the same person sneezes again in the same gathering and says “**اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ**”, responding is no longer necessary but recommended (*mustahabb*).<sup>1</sup>
2. The one who sneezes should say “**اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ**” loudly so others can hear it and respond.
3. If a person sneezes in the presence of many people and says “**اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ**”, the obligation is fulfilled on behalf of all the listeners if only one person responds with “**يَرْحَمُكَ اللّٰهُ**”, and it is no longer obligatory for everyone to respond. However, it is better if everyone present responds.<sup>2</sup>
4. If someone sneezes during the *khutbah*, the listeners should not respond.<sup>3</sup>
5. Sneezing does not invalidate the prayer.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Fatāwā al-Hindiyyah, vol. 5, p. 326; Bahār-e-Sharī‘at, vol. 3, p. 476, Part 16

<sup>2</sup> Radd al-Muhtār, vol. 9, p. 684

<sup>3</sup> Fatāwā Qāḍī Khan, vol. 2, p. 377

## Responding to a sneeze during prayer

6. If someone sneezes and a person who is praying responds by saying “يُرْحِمُكَ اللَّهُ”, the prayer is nullified. But if the one who is praying sneezes and says “يُرْحِمُكَ اللَّهُ” to himself, their prayer is not invalidated. If another person sneezes and the person praying says “أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ”, their prayer is not nullified, and if they say it with the intention of responding, the prayer becomes invalid. If someone sneezes during prayer and another person says “يُرْحِمُكَ اللَّهُ”, and the one praying replies with “أَمِينَ”, the prayer is nullified. If one sneezes during prayer, they should remain silent, but saying “أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ” does not nullify the prayer (because, according to customary practice, reciting praise of Allah Almighty after sneezing is not considered a response, so it is not a nullifier of prayer). If one does not say “أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ” at the moment he sneezes during prayer, it should be said after completing the prayer.<sup>1</sup>
7. The (sounds of) letters that are involuntarily produced in prayer when sneezing, coughing, yawning, or burping are excused.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bahār-e-Sharī‘at, vol. 1, p. 605, Part 3

<sup>2</sup> Bahār-e-Sharī‘at, vol. 1, p. 608, Part 3



## Etiquettes of Sneezing

8. If a person sneezes and says “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**”, and someone in another room hears, it becomes obligatory for the one who heard it to respond. If they do not respond, they will be sinful. Muftī Amjad ‘Alī al-A‘ẓamī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ said, “If someone sneezes behind a wall and says “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**”, the one who hears it must respond.”<sup>1</sup>
9. If a non-Muslim says “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**” after sneezing, say “**يَهْدِيكَ اللَّهُ**” (may Allah guide you), or “**يَهْدِيكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيُصْدِقُ بَأْسَكُمْ**” (may Allah guide you and rectify your affairs) in response.<sup>2</sup>
10. If someone sneezes in the bathroom, they should say “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**” in their heart without moving their tongue. As mentioned in *Bahār-e-Sharī‘at*:

One should not respond verbally to a sneeze, greeting, or the azan while in the bathroom. If one sneezes, they should not say “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**” with their tongue, but may say it in their heart.<sup>3</sup>
11. For a person engaged in the recitation of the noble

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<sup>1</sup> Dur Al-Muhtar, vol. 9, p. 684; Bahār-e-Sharī‘at, vol. 3, p. 477, Part 16

<sup>2</sup> Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī, vol. 4, p. 339, Hadith 2748; Radd Al-Muhtār, vol. 9, p. 684

<sup>3</sup> Bahār-e-Sharī‘at, vol. 1, p. 409, Part 2

Quran, religious study, supplication, *dhikr*, etc., it is not obligatory to respond to someone who pronounces “**حَدَّ**” after sneezing. Therefore, they have the choice to respond or not. This is similar to the case where a person is occupied with any of these activities and someone greets them; responding to the greeting is not obligatory in that situation.<sup>1</sup>

12. If sneezing causes tears to come out, it does not nullify ablution.
13. Responding to a person’s sneeze is only required when the person says “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**” after sneezing. If they have not sneezed yet, or have sneezed but not said “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**”, responding is not necessary. Once the person says “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**”, it becomes necessary for the listener to respond. If someone says “**يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ**” before hearing “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**”, it does not count as a valid response, and once “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**” is heard, it becomes necessary to respond.
14. It is necessary to respond to a sneeze only when “**أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**” is heard from the one who sneezes.

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<sup>1</sup> Dar-ul-Ifta Ahle Sunnat ka Fatwa No: wat-2311

## Etiquettes of Sneezing

Therefore, if the person says “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ” in a subdued tone and those present do not hear it, responding is not necessary. However, the scholars have stated that if it is not known whether the person said “حمد” or not, a conditional response should be given, such as: “If you said “حمد”, then “يَرْحَمُكَ اللهُ”<sup>1</sup>.

It is written in *Bahār-e-Sharī‘at*:

It is necessary to respond to a sneeze if the one who sneezed says “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ”. The response must be given immediately and in such a manner that the person who sneezed can hear it. If the response is made silently in the heart and the one who sneezed does not hear it, the obligation is not fulfilled.<sup>2</sup>

Keep in mind that when a *mahram* woman says “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ” after sneezing, the response should be “يَرْحَمُكَ اللهُ”. For example, if a mother sneezes at home and says “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ”, and her son hears her, he should reply with “يَرْحَمُكَ اللهُ”, with a *kasrah* under the ك. On the other hand, if a man sneezes and says “اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ”,

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<sup>1</sup> Dar-ul-Ifta Ahle Sunnat Ka Fatwa

<sup>2</sup> Bahār-e-Sharī‘at, vol. 3, p. 476, Part 16

the response should be “يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ”, with a *fathah* on the ل.

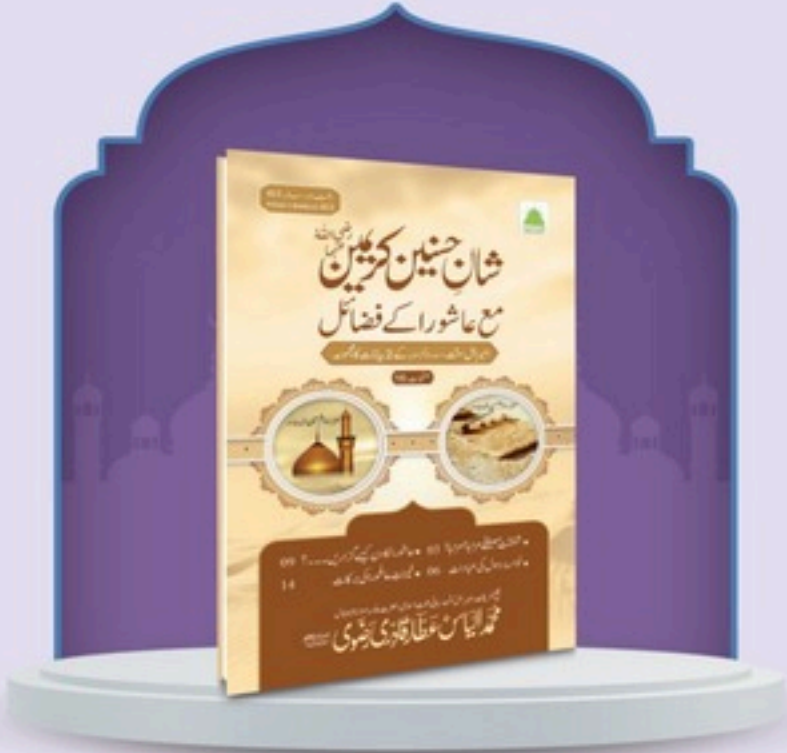
### What if a non-*maḥram* sneezes?

It is written in *Bahār-e-Sharī‘at* volume 3 page 477:

If a non-*maḥram* elderly woman sneezes, a man may respond to her. If she is young, he should respond in such a way that she does not hear it. If a man sneezes and a woman responds, if she is young, the man should reply in his heart, and if she is elderly, he may respond aloud.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ      صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

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