

If One's Right Hand Is Amputated, What Is the Ruling for Him on Raising the Finger During Tashahud?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: My right hand was withered from birth, meaning it is shriveled. Because of this, the hand is completely lifeless and non-functional. I perform all my tasks with my left hand. I wanted to ask regarding salah, that when the finger is to be raised in Tashahud, what is the ruling for me at that time? Will I raise the index finger of my left hand or not raise it at all? Please provide Sharī'ah guidance.

Answer

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

In the inquired situation, you are not instructed to raise your finger [رفع السبابة] in Tashahud. Therefore, you will not raise the finger of your left hand either, because the method that is narrated from the Prophet ﷺ is to raise the finger of the right hand and only this is the Sunnah. But if someone's index finger of the right hand is amputated, they will not point with any other finger of the right hand, or if they don't have a right arm at all they will not point with the fingers of the left hand. Hence, you will not point with the left-hand finger.

It is narrated in Sahih Muslim and other books of 'Sihah' and 'Sunan':

عن عامر بن عبد الله بن الزبير، عن أبيه، قال: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا قعد يدعو، وضع يده اليمنى على فخذه اليمنى، ويده اليسرى على فخذه اليسرى، وأشار بإصبعه السبابة، ووضع إبهامه على إصبعه الوسطى

Translation: It is narrated from 'Aamir Bin Abdullah Bin Al-Zubair, it is narrated from his father that he said: When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would sit (in Qa'dah) to recite (the Tashahud), he would place his right hand on his right thigh and his left hand on his left thigh, and he would point with his index finger and touch his thumb with the middle finger (forming a circle). (Al-Sahih Li-Muslim, Book of Salah, Chapter: Description of sitting in salah, Vol. 1, p. 260, Publ. Lahore)

Imam Nawawi رحمه الله تعالى states in the commentary of this Hadith:

ويشير بمسبحة اليمنى لا غير فلو كانت مقطوعة أو عليلية لم يشير بغيرها لا من الأصل باليمنى ولا اليسرى

Translation: He should point with the index finger of the right hand and not with any other. If it is amputated or diseased, he should not point with any other finger, neither with the fingers of the right hand nor of the left hand. (Sharah Al-Nawawi 'Ala Muslim, Book of Salah, Chapter: Description of sitting in salah, Vol. 5, p. 81, Publ. Beirut)
This pointing is to be done with his right hand. Describing the method of this, Allamah Shami رحمه الله تعالى writes:

وصفتها: أن يحلق من يده اليمنى عند الشهادة الإبهام والوسطى، ويقبض البنصر والخنصر، ويشير بالمسبحة

(Radd Al-Muhtar Ma'a Al-Durr Al-Mukhtar, Book of Salah, Chapter: Description of salah, Vol. 2, p. 266, Publ. Quetta)

It is only sunnah to point in the prescribed manner. Allamah ‘Abdul-Hay Lakhnawi رحمه الله تعالى states after describing the method:

وهذا؛ أي استئان الإشارة بالسبابة مع الكيفية المذكورة قد صححه واعتمد عليه كثير من أصحابنا، كما لا يخفى

(‘Umdah Al-Ri’ayah Bi-Tahshiyah Sharh Al-Wiqayah, Book of Salah, Vol. 2, p. 290, Publ. Beirut)

Pointing is to be done with the right hand only. Thus, it is stated in Nur Al-Idah Ma’a Maraqi Al-Falah:

"و" تسن الإشارة في الصحيح "لأنه صلى الله عليه وسلم رفع أصبعه السبابة وتكون" بالمسبحة "أي السبابة من اليمنى فقط

If the finger is amputated, one cannot point with any other finger, as Allamah Sayyid Ahmad Tahtawi رحمه الله تعالى writes under the above-mentioned text of Maraqi Al-Falah:

لا يشير بغير المسبحة حتى لو كانت مقطوعة أو علية لم يشير بغيرها من أصابع اليمنى ولا اليسرى كما في النووي على مسلم

(Hashiyah Al-Tahawi A’la Maraqi Al-Falah, Book of Salah, Topic: Describing its sunnah, p. 269, Publ. Beirut)

In Imdad Al-Fattah, it is mentioned under the text of Nur Al-Idah ‘والإشارة في الصحيح بالمسبحة’:

وتكون (بالمسبحة) تسمى بالسبابة أيضا من أصابع اليد اليمنى فقط

(Imdad Al-Fattah Sharh Nur Al-Idah, Book of Salah, Topic: The Sunnah, p. 299, Publ. Quetta)

It is also stated elsewhere in this book:

(واشاره بالمسبحة) من أصابع يده اليمنى

(Imdad Al-Fattah Sharh Nur Al-Idah, Book of Salah, Topic: Method of offering Salah, p. 323, Publ. Quetta)

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ knows best.)

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Ref No: Aqs-2752

Date: 20th Sha’ban Al-Mu’azzam 1446 AH/ 19th February 2025



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