

Allah, beginning with the name of, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All praise belongs to Allah; who made His beloved ﷺ the coolness of our eyes. Infinite prayers, and all-embracing salutations be upon our master, the final Messenger ﷺ, who will lead and enter the Ummah into the rows of Paradise, and upon his pure family, and his noble companions who taught us how to honour and revere the Prophet ﷺ

Remedying Our Sore Eyes Through The One Who Heals

The kissing of the thumbs, followed by the wiping of the eyes - in search of healing - upon hearing the purifying name of the final Messenger ﷺ

Mufti Wajid Iqbal ~ Essential Islam

Preface

The honourable tradition of kissing one's thumbs - followed by wiping the eyes - upon hearing the blessed name "Muhammad" ﷺ (particularly during the call to prayer i.e. the adhan) is an act of veneration and love, that was originally established by the first Caliph of Islam, the champion of truth, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه.

Despite this fact, many in the modern era have objected to this practise. Therefore, we begin this article with several preparatory statements and principles that will remove all doubt, and categorically prove that the act of kissing one's thumbs upon hearing the blessed name "Muhammad" ﷺ is not only permissible, but also recommended (mustahab).

Preamble

Everything is Permitted Unless Proven Otherwise

It is a well-known concept amongst the men of principle (i.e. the scholars of Usul al-Fiqh) that everything is graded as permissible, as long as its prohibition or dislike is not proven through the Shari'ah. The following verse is why the majority (i.e. the schools of thought) have adopted this principle:

"O you who have believed, do not ask about things which, if they are shown to you, will distress you. But if you ask about them while the Qur'an is being

revealed, they will be shown to you. Allah has pardoned that which is past: and Allah is forgiving and forbearing.”¹

Under this very verse, the author of Tafsir al-Khazin writes:

“(Narrated from Salman رضي الله عنه) the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was questioned (regarding the permissibility of actions). He answered: ‘halal is that which Allah has made halal in His Book, and haram is that which He has made haram in His Book. Whatever He is silent towards, that is what He has forgiven, so do not be burdened’.”

Imam Ibn Abidin ash-Shami (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) writes:

“It is explicit in the books of tafsir that the chosen way according to the majority (i.e. the Hanafis and Shafi’s) is that all things are permitted (unless proven otherwise).”

Permitted Actions Can Become Ibadah

A permitted action can become worship when it is performed with the sincere intention of honouring the final Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم. This reason for this is because ‘actions are but by intentions’, as narrated in the first hadith of Bukhari.

Imam an-Nawawi (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) further supports this notion in his commentary of Muslim, where he states:

“Permitted things become worship with pious intentions.”

Declassifying a Hadith from a Sahih Level Does Not Lead to Rendering it as Fabricated

If the muhaddithin choose to declassify a narration from the level of sahih (authentic), this does not mean the hadith is fabricated. Rather the muhaddithin may categorise the hadith as hasan (sound) or da’if (weak). Imam Ibn Humam (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) states in Mirqat:

“If one accepts the notion that a certain a hadith ‘is not authentic’, this does not harm the narration, as making this evidence does not rely upon it being authentic (sahih); rather hasan is sufficient.”

If a narration is to be classed as weak, it does not mean that the actual text of the hadith is wrong or inaccurate; rather it tells us that the chain of a certain (specific) narrator is weak. Similarly, for a particular narration to be placed in the mawdu’at (fabricated) compilations does not necessitate that the text of the hadith is fabricated, nor wrong, rather it means that a certain narrator’s chain may be fabricated.

¹ Surah al-Ma’idah

In fact da'if narrations can be used as evidence for proving and acting upon acts of honour and virtue. Imam Ibn Humam (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) states in Fath al-Qadir:

"A weak hadith is not a fabrication; it is acted upon in the virtue of action."

Furthermore, acting upon a da'if hadith not only makes the action permitted, it also renders the act as mustahab (recommended). Imam an-Nawawi (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) states in Kitab al-Adhkar:

"It is permitted and mustahab to act upon a weak hadith (in virtue) - especially when it encourages good actions, and discourages bad actions - as long as it is not fabricated."

Da'if ahadith are also strengthened by the actions of the people of knowledge. That is to say, if the scholars adopt and act upon a weak narration, their actions strengthen the weak narration. Imam as-Suyuti (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) states in at-Ta'qubat 'alal Mawduat:

"Many (scholars) have made it explicit that the evidence of authenticity from a hadith is for the people of knowledge to say, even if it does not have a trusted chain."

Declassifying a Hadith from the Level of Marfu Does Not Lead to Rendering it as not Mawquf

If the muhaddithin choose to declassify a narration from the level of marfu (a narration attributed specifically to the Prophet ﷺ), this does not detract from a narration being classified as mawquf (that which is dependent on a narrator i.e. a companion). Mawquf ahadith are an authority in themselves and can be used as evidence, this is something that is well documented in the books of Usul al-Hadith.

An Unrestricted Verse Will Remain Unrestricted

Another famous principle of the Hanafi School is that no unrestricted verse can become 'restricted with conditions', this is something that is elaborated on in the following section.

The Shari'ah Ruling

Proof from the Qur'an

Allah Almighty states in Surah al-Fath:

"So that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger and pay respect to him and honour him and that you may glorify Him morning and evening."

It is written in Tafsir al-Jalayn:

“The pronoun (in ‘honour him’) either refers to Allah, or the Messenger ﷺ.”

The author of Tafsir al-Khazin:

“The pronoun in ‘pay respect to him and honour him’ refers to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the text is complete here. The stop (waqf) here is a complete stop.”

A similar statement is found in the book Ma’alimut Tanzil.

Imam Qadi Iyad (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) in ash-Shifa writes:

“The most apparent is that this is the right of the Messenger ﷺ ...”

Furthermore, the scholars of tafsir have agreed that the meaning of this verse (the words ta’zir and tauqir in the verse) is to pay respect, aid, and honour the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Therefore, to honour the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is part of our faith, and our faith is incomplete without it. It therefore becomes necessary for every Muslim to honour the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and this is from the most virtuous forms of worship. It is stated in Majma’ul Bihaar:

“To honour the Messenger ﷺ is the most virtuous of worship.”

This blessed verse is not hidden amongst the men of intellect; those who have studied Islam know that this verse is unrestricted (mutlaqan). With this in mind - along with the principle which we mentioned in the preamble (no unrestricted verse can become restricted) - this verse now represents the notion that every action or saying, which is carried out in order to honour the Prophet ﷺ, is permitted, liked, and/or accepted (with the condition it has not been prohibited or disliked by the Shari’ah).

Shaykh Muhammad al-Yaqoubi (Allah preserve and protect him) in Anwar al-Muhammadiyah (the tashtir of the Qasidah al-Burdah) writes:

“Relate towards his person what you like of dignity. Writing the best of what you have been given in words. Composing a diamond necklace in his praise. And relate to his dignified status what you like from greatness.”

Proof from Ahadith

Imam as-Sakhawi (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) states:

“Ad-Daylami in his book Kitaab al-Firdaus reports that Sayyiduna Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه said: ‘when I heard the mu’azin say ‘I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah’, I said the same, kissed the inner-side of my (right) index finger, and placed it on my eyes. The Prophet ﷺ then said: ‘whoever does as my khalil (close friend) does, my intercession becomes obligatory for him’. This hadith is not Sahih.”

He narrates the following hadith in the same book:

"Whoever kisses the nails of his thumbs at the time of hearing 'I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah' during the adhan, I will be his leader, and the one to enter him into the rows of Paradise."

Imam at-Tahawi (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) writes:

"Know that we understand from this that kissing the thumbs and rubbing the eyes is an action of the greatest companion. We can derive from this that the action is permitted even if the narration is weak. Rather, such a hadith according to the muhadithin is marfu."

Mullah 'Ali Qari (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) writes:

"Everything narrated in this (i.e. kissing of the thumbs) is not sahih, (however) I will say that when the hadith is proven that it reaches Sayyiduna Abu Bakr as-Siddiq رضي الله عنه, then acting by it is permitted due to the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم saying: 'hold onto my sunnah, and the sunnah of the rightly guided caliphs.'"

Imam as-Sakhawi (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) further writes:

"It is related from Faqih Muhammad bin Saeed al-Khawlani who narrates from al-Faqih al-Alim Abul Hasan 'Ali bin Muhammad bin Hadid al-Hasani, who narrates from al-Faqih az-Zahid al-Bilali, who narrates from Imam Hasan رضي الله عنه: 'whomever states - at the time when he hears the mu'azin say 'I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah' - 'welcome to my beloved, the coolness of my eyes, Muhammad the son of Abdullah', and then kisses his thumbs, followed by placing them upon the eyes; he will not turn blind, nor will his eyes become sore."

Proof from the Scholars

Imam as-Sakhawi (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) writes in Maqasid al-Hasanah:

"The great preacher and Imam of Madinah, Shams Muhammad bin Salih al-Madani, in his history book, which relates from al-Majd, who is one of the great predecessors (i.e. from the tabi'un) from Egypt: 'whoever prays upon the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when he hears the adhan, gathering both his index finger and thumbs, followed by kissing them, and then rubbing both eyes, then his eyes will never become sore."

He further mentions Ibn Salih (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) stated:

"I heard this also from al-Faqih Muhammad bin az-Zarnadi from some of the Iraqi Shuyukh or the non-Arabs that he would say while rubbing his eyes (with his thumbs): 'blessings of Allah be upon you O my master! O the messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم! O the beloved of my heart! O light of my sight! O coolness of my eyes'. Then he said to me 'since I have done this, my eyes have never ached."

The author of Sharh an-Niqayah writes:

"Know that it is mustahab to say, whilst listening to the first recitation (the second shahadah is read twice) of the second shahadah: 'blessings of Allah be upon you O messenger of Allah!'; and at the second recitation: 'the coolness of my eyes is with you O messenger of Allah!' Then one should say 'O Allah benefit (grant me) hearing and sight' after placing his thumb nails upon both his eyes, as the Prophet ﷺ will lead him to paradise, as narrated in Kanz al-Ibad."

This narration is also mentioned Jami ar-Ramuz.

Khatam al-Muhaqiqin, Sayyid ul Ulama, Jamal bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) in his fatawa writes:

"I was questioned regarding kissing the thumbs and placing them on the eyes at the mention of the Prophet's ﷺ name during adhan. (I was asked) is it permitted or not? I answered with that which is explicit (in text books): 'yes, kissing the thumbs at the mention of his ﷺ name during adhan is permitted, and rather it is mustahab. Our scholars have made this explicit in more than one book'."

Imam ash-Shami (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) has quoted the above as well, as well as the great reviver of Hind, Imam Ahmad Raza Khan (Allah shower His Mercy upon him).

It is stated in the Malfuzat Mehriyah of the great wali of Pakistan, the reviver, Pir Mehr Ali Shah (Allah shower His Mercy upon him) that he was asked why he kissed his thumbs while listening to the second shahadah, he replied:

"Shami and Ruh al-Bayan have stated as such."

He further writes:

"It also has been narrated as such in hadith, even though the scholars have written it to be weak. However, the virtue of actions from even a weak hadith can be implemented."

Conclusion

This article irrefutably proves that the act of kissing one's thumbs - followed by wiping of the eyes - upon hearing the blessed name "Muhammad" ﷺ does not contradict any aspect of the Shari'ah. Its permissibility has been established, and furthermore it has been proven to be a recommended (mustahab) act. Additionally, there is no explicit evidence or proof which indicates that this action is haram (forbidden), makruh (disliked), or bid'ah (an innovation); thus it is a bias act of ignorance if anyone objects to this admirable deed.

In every era, Muslims from all four corners of the globe have performed this honourable action, and it is worth nothing that actions of reverence are determined by the Muslims:

“So whatever the Muslims hold to be good then it is good with Allah, and whatever the Muslims hold to be evil it is evil with Allah.”²

May Allah, through the means of this noble act: grant us the intercession of His Messenger ﷺ; resurrect us on the Day of Reckoning with ‘coolness in the eyes’; and under his ﷺ flag of praise. Amin!

² Ahmed