

Don't Look Towards the Sky in Salah

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Among the etiquettes of prayer that Muslims should be mindful of is to avoid looking around, especially towards the sky. In this regard, Imams Bukhari (d. 256) and Muslim (d. 261) have related the following Hadith in their respective *Sahih* works:

حدثنا علي بن عبد الله، قال: أخبرنا يحيى بن سعيد، قال: حدثنا ابن أبي عروبة، قال: حدثنا قتادة، أن أنس بن مالك حدثهم، قال: قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: ما بال أقوام يرفعون أبصارهم إلى السماء في صلاتهم؟ فاشتدّ قوله في ذلك حتى قال: كَيْتَبَهُنَّ عَنْ ذَلِكَ أَوْ لَتُخَطَفَنَّ أَبْصَارُهُمْ [صحيح البخاري ٧٥٠، أبواب صفة الصلاة، باب رفع البصر إلى السماء في الصلاة].

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة وأبو كريب، قالوا: حدثنا أبو معاوية، عن الأعمش، عن المسيّب، عن تميم بن طرفة، عن جابر بن سمرة قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: كَيْتَبَهُنَّ أَوْ لا ترجع إليهم [صحيح مسلم ٤٢٨، كتاب الصلاة، باب النهي عن رفع البصر إلى السماء في الصلاة].

The Hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* is narrated from Anas ibn Malik (d. 93) ﷺ and it says that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“What is with people, [who] raise their vision towards the sky in their salah? ... They must refrain from that, otherwise their vision will be snatched.”**

The Hadith in *Sahih Muslim* is narrated from Jabir ibn Samurah (d. 74) ﷺ and it says that the Prophet ﷺ said, **“The people must refrain from raising their vision toward the sky in prayer, otherwise it (their vision) shall not return to them.”**

According to some scholars, this means that such an individual will be stripped of the light of salah. Based on these narrations, the scholars are unanimous in that it is disliked to look towards the sky in salah.¹ Imam Muhammad ibn Sirin (d. 101) ﷺ said that the first two verses of Surah al-Mu'minun, **“The believers have certainly succeeded, those who are humble in their prayer,”** were revealed in relation to those who used to look around in their salah. After this surah was revealed, they focused in on their salah and kept their gazes fixed on their place of sajdah.²

¹ See: *Fath al-Bari* 3/323-325.

² *Tafsir al-Tabari* 7/17