

تَعْلِيمُ الصَّلَاةِ

تأليف

مُحَمَّدٌ مُحَمَّدُ الصَّوَّافِ

عنى بنشره

بِجَدِّهِ السَّيِّدِ إِدْرِيسَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْفَلَاحِيِّ

طبع بموافقة المؤلف

على نفقة

الشيخة السيدة بروة وطر



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE MUSLIM BOOK OF PRAYER

By

Shaikh Muhammad Mahmud Al-Sawwaf

Translated into English by

Dr. Mujahid Muhammad Al-Sawwaf

*Publication done under the
supervision of:*

ABDULLAH BIN IBRAHIM AL-ANSARI

طبع بموافقة المؤلف
على نفقة الشؤون الدينية

الطبعة الخامسة

CONTENTS

I. THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN ISLAM AND THE JUDGMENT ON ONE WHO ABANDONS IT.	1
Prayer, the Pillar of Religion	1
The Spiritual Influence of Prayer	1
Prayer as a Remedy for the Heart.	1
Unity and Equality in Prayer	2
The Judgement of One Who Renounces Prayer.	2
A. First Example	
B. Second Example	
C. Third Example	
Expectation of the Mercy of God	7
Rejected Prayer	8
A Weak Argument	10
II. PREPARATION FOR THE PRAYER	12
The Meaning of Prayer	12
Cleanliness	13
Cleansing the Body of Impurity.	14
How to Perform the Ritual Ablution	15
Wiping the Socks	16
Things which Invalidate the Ablution	16
Total Ablution	17
What Necessitates Total Ablution	17
How to Carry Out Total Ablution	17
Purification with Earth (<i>Tayamum</i>).	18
Removing Dirt	20
The Times of Prayer	20
The Call to Prayer (<i>Adhan</i>)	22
A Description of the Call to Prayer	22
The Second Call (<i>Iqama</i>).	25
How to Make the Second Call	25
Facing the Direction of the <i>Ka'ba</i>	27
The Tule When the Direction of the <i>Ka'ba</i> Cannot be Determined	28
When the Direction of the <i>Ka'ba</i> is not Faced.	29

III. HOW THE PRAYER IS PERFORMED	30
The Five Prayers	37
The Voluntary Prayers	37
The Morning Prayer (<i>Subh</i>)	38
How the Two <i>Rak'as</i> are Performed	38
The Noon Prayer (<i>Dhuhr</i>)	44
How to Perform the Four <i>Rak'as</i>	45
Important Note	45
The Afternoon Prayer (<i>'Asr</i>)	46
The Sunset Prayer (<i>Maghrib</i>)	46
Note	46
The Evening Prayer (<i>'Isha'</i>)	47
The Separate Prayer (<i>Witr</i>)	47
Some Important Notes	49
The Prostration of Forgetfulness	51
Performing the Prayer by One Who is Sick	52
Congregational Prayer	52
How the Congregational Prayer is Performed	54
Prayer during a Journey	56
Joining Prayers Together	58
The Friday Prayer	58
How to Perform the Friday Prayer	60
The Prayer of the Two Feasts	61
The Prayer of the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast	61
(<i>al-Fitr</i>)	
The Prayer of the Feast of Immolation (<i>al-Adha</i>)	63
Important Note	63
The Funeral Prayer	64
The Prayer for God's Guidance	66
The Prayer for the Eclipse of the Moon	67
The Prayer for the Eclipse of the Sun	67
The Reason for the Prayer for the Eclipse	68
How to Perform the Prayer of the Eclipse	68
Charity and Forgiveness	69
The End	70

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, Shaikh Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawwaf was born in 1915 in Mosul, Iraq. He received his Islamic education in that city and became a well-known preacher there. He then continued his studies at al-Azhar Islamic University in Cairo, Egypt, completing a six-year program. After obtaining his M.A. in Islamic Law, he returned to Iraq to teach at Sharrah College in Baghdad. After many years of effort in the Islamic cause in Iraq, he moved to Saudi Arabia in 1959. He became a member of Shari'ah College in Mecca as well as a founding member of the Muslim World League in Mecca. He has been sent to many Muslim Countries as a personal envoy of the late King Faisal. This book (*The Muslim Book of Prayer*) is one of fifteen authored by him.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Professor Mujahid Al-Sawwaf, currently a visiting scholar at the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, is a professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Religions at King Abdul Aziz University in Mecca. He holds a chair in the Holy Mosque at the Kaaba in Mecca, where he is responsible for lecturing on Islam in English during the pilgrimage. He obtained his Ph.D. from Oxford University, writing on Qur'anic commentary. He has attended conferences in different parts of the world and lectured extensively on Islam and Comparative Religions. Dr. Al-Sawwaf writes short stories, and participates in Saudi literary circles. He has published scholarly articles as well as purely literary pieces. He is married and has two daughters.

DEDICATION

To every Muslim who is aware of his obligations to God and who obeys Him; who prostrates himself in submission to His command; whose soul and body praise his Maker, acknowledging His excellence and exaltedness, His true and everlasting godliness; whose soul rises above unclean and blinding materialism and ascends to the world of the pure and unsullied spirit.

To Muslim men and women such as these who have been rightly guided, who believe, and who fear God, I dedicate this small book hoping, with God's favor, that it will find acceptance.

Muhammad Al-Sawwaf

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The English version of this widely read Arabic Book has presented a number of difficulties, not the least of which has been the rendering in translation of a number of short passages from the *Qur'an*. There can of course be no substitute for the *Qur'an* in the original language in which it was revealed to Muhammad, peace be upon him; nevertheless, the problem had to be faced. The translations which appear here have been drawn from the translations of Abdullah Yusuf Ali with minor changes.

As far as possible, all Arabic words (other than proper names, titles of books, etc.) have been avoided. However, this policy has failed in two respects; in the first case with the word *Imam*. Fortunately this is a word now well-known in the English language and needs little further elucidation except perhaps to remind the reader that it is used both as a title for the ancient scholars and also in its more general meaning as the leader of the prayer. It is hoped that the context will be sufficiently clear on all occasions. Secondly is the word *rak'a*. This word has no suitable equivalent in the English language. Because of its vital importance in the prayer ritual it has been retained in the Anglicised form "*rak'a*." It is clearly defined when it first appears. Very few other Arabic words occur and when they do, explanatory notes are given.

A minor problem exists with the word *qibla*. Not only does this word mean the direction to which Muslims turn when praying (i.e. towards the *Ka'ba*) but it is also the name given to the recess in the mosque which indicates this direction. For the first meaning the phrase "*towards the Ka'ba*" has been used, the Arabic word being retained only for the second meaning.

Two other problems must be mentioned. The first concerns the *sunnah* of the Prophet, i.e. his sayings and acts which were later established as legally binding precedents (in addition to the Law established by the *Qur'an*). To maintain the simplicity of the author's style it was felt that this term should be avoided. Recourse has therefore been made to the widely used word "*tradition*." The reader must understand that whenever "*tradition*" is mentioned in connection with the Prophet, the words that follow are accepted by Islam as the Law. All of the traditions mentioned in this book are either well established or accepted as authentic and Muslims are advised to consider all of them as requiring an obligation as well as giving proper guidance.

The final problem to be faced was that of the eulogistic phrases customarily used by devout Muslims following the mention of God, the Prophet, the Prophet's wife 'A'isha, his other Companions, and certain other revered members of the community of Islam. That these phrases (e.g. in the case of the Prophet it is customary to write "God bless him and grant him salvation") have been omitted from the translation should in no way inhibit the devout and pious Muslim from using them or interpolating them when reading this book — indeed it is recommended that he should do so. They have only been omitted here for technical reasons connected with the presentation of the English idiom and in no way reflect any lack of reverence by the translator.

Mecca

INTRODUCTION

Praise be to the Compassionate and Merciful God, just and wise, who grants His favor and mercy to whomever obeys Him, who is angered by and punishes whomever disobeys Him. He is Self-sufficient, All-powerful, the Greatest, the Most High. Praise be to Him, Exalted be His countenance, Mighty be His dominion. It is he who judges, and it is to Him that we return.

I bear witness that there is no god but God. It is He who has imposed upon Muslims the duty of saying five prayers daily and enjoined them from above the Seven Heavens to observe the prayers saying, "Guard strictly your prayers, especially the Middle Prayer, and stand before God with all devotion" (Q. 2:238).

I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, the most excellent of worshippers, leader of the Godfearing, supreme among prophets.

This is a short book of instructions about prayer. I wrote it when I realized the urgent need for something like it. I had become aware of a praiseworthy inclination among many men and young people towards the true religion and everlasting message of God. They have within them the need to perform their religious duties, especially in prayer — that cornerstone and pillar of Islam which God has made a beacon of his religion — a suit as it were, or an external sign of the Godfearing. The souls of a multitude are wasting away from the grief that springs from the neglect of prayer, for, by abandoning this great cornerstone, they shun God. They long to return to God and to perform the prescribed prayers, but they are confronted by their ignorance as to the proper manner in which to perform them. A great number are ashamed to let this bitter fact be known, for when a man looks at himself, he sees that he has grown old and knowledgeable and has achieved a worldly stature which is to be envied, yet he is unable to perform a simple prayer — something which even Muslim children, let alone their elders, should know with certainty. This is a cardinal sin against which all men should be on their guard. I mention this with the utmost sorrow, having myself become aware of it and having found many Muslims in my country¹ in this distressingly sad situation. This is what has prompted me to write this short book so that those who read it may perhaps benefit from it and gain profit by it.

Since every Muslim has the need for the five prayers, the Friday prayer,

¹This book was written in Baghdad, Iraq, before the author's departure to Saudi Arabia.

the Congregational prayer, the prayer of the Two Feasts, the prayer for the dead, the prayer during a journey, and the prayer for God's guidance, I have included these subjects in the hope that they will be of value. I have tried to use the simplest terms so that all, the young and the old, the educated and the uneducated alike, might understand. Those who do pray may benefit from it by correcting their mistakes, while those who do not pray will learn the prayers written here. I have avoided, as far as I have been able, contentious matters and have mentioned nothing except what has been established as correctly passed down from the Prophet and what is held to be the opinion of most of the *Imams*.

I beseech God's guidance in this work for only He can do this. I beseech Him that my words retain their sincere intentions and that He counsel those who may find errors or mistakes therein to pardon me. May God grant me success in it. I ask God to grant that all readers may benefit from it, to forgive us our sins, our mistakes and our extravagances, to guide our feet in the true path, to make us steadfast in our promise to our Lord both in this world and on the Day of Resurrection. God is my all, the perfect counsellor, the perfect master, the perfect helper.

Muhammad Mahmud Al-Sawwaf

from God. It is to be deprived of His mercy, the abundance of His favors, and the plenitude of His generosity. It is to be refused His kindness and blessings.

True prayer is the remedy for the ills which beset the heart and corrupt the soul. It is the light which dispels the darkness of evil and sin. *Abu Huraira* said:

“I heard the Messenger of God say, ‘Look, if any one of you had a river at his door and bathed in it five times a day, would any of his dirt be left?’ They said, ‘None of his dirt would be left.’ He said, ‘This is like the five prayers by which God washes away our sins.’”¹

IV. UNITY AND EQUALITY IN PRAYER

Equality and justice are made manifest through prayer. When the *muezzin* calls “Come to Prayer, Come to Prosperity” all those whose duty it is to pray and who hear his call, be they rich or poor, young or old, ruler or subject, assemble in one row with no distinction or difference between them — all of them servants of God. They meet on common ground in the house of God, thinking only of Him and humbling themselves before Him.

“And the places of worship are for God (alone); therefore invoke not anyone along with God.” (Q. 72:18)

Standing behind one *Imam*, they face in one direction, worship One God who has no partner, and become humble and submissive, fearing His punishment and craving His mercy. With certainty, divine blessings will descend upon them and they will be surrounded with His mercy.

“Pray to Him with fear and longing (in your hearts): For the Mercy of God is near to those who do good.” (Q. 7:55)

V. THE JUDGMENT ON ONE WHO RENOUNCES PRAYER

God has ordained prayer and made it the beacon of Islam and the pillar of the religion. The Prophet said, “On top is Islam. The pillar which supports it is Prayer and the highest place in it is the struggle for the cause of God.” Prayer was the first of the religious observances decreed by God. It was ordained on the night of the Prophet’s ascension to the seven heavens. Because of its importance and the great value which God places upon it, He spoke directly to His messenger, with no intermediary. For this reason He visits severe reproach upon whomever abandons it, considering them to be nonbelievers and to have strayed from the true path.

He who has turned from prayer has turned from Islam and has angered his Lord. He has broken the commandments of his faith and set himself

¹Related by *Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.

on the road to destruction. By this action he has rendered all his good deeds useless, for he has acted contrary to the pronouncements of God concerning prayer — and one who disobeys God is virtually one who denies Him for, had he acknowledged God's words, surely he would have obeyed this, the most divine of all commands:

"Almighty God said,

'Establish regular prayers at the two ends of the day and at the approach of night, for those things that are good remove those that are evil; be that the word of remembrance to those who render (their) load.' (Q. 9:105)

'And establish Regular Prayer. Prayer restrains from indecency and evil.'" (Q. 21:45)

And,

"But when ye are free from danger, set up regular prayers; for such prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times." (Q. 4:102)

The Prophet said,

"What lies between a perfect man and unbelief is the renouncing of prayer."¹

Buraida said,

"I heard the Messenger of God say, 'The obligation which separates us from them is prayer. He who renounces it has become an unbeliever.'"²

Abd Allah B. Umar relates that one day, Speaking of prayer, the Prophet said,

"For one who observes it, it becomes a light, a proof and a deliverance on the Day of Judgment. For one who does not observe it, there is no light, no proof, no deliverance, and on the Day of Judgment he will be Qarun, Pharaoh, and Ubayy b. Kalaf."³

Those honored traditions and the words of the commands contained in the Qur'an clearly show the enormity of the sin of one who renounces prayer. They also indicate what his place will be in this world and in the hereafter.

Because of these and other traditions, and because of the importance of prayer in Islam, some of the Companions of the Prophet held the view that whoever renounced prayer had become a nonbeliever and many learned men followed them in this belief. Others held the opinion that if such a person deliberately renounced prayer, without denying that it was a religious duty, then he had strayed from the true path and ought to be punished and

¹Related by the *Imams Ahmad* and *Muslim* from *Jabir B. 'Abd Allah*.

²Related by *Imam Ahmad* and others.

³Related by *Imam Ahmad* and *Al-Tabarani*.

imprisoned until he had returned to it. In this way he would not be a bad example to the populace.

Leading exponents of orthodox Islamic schools of thought held the opinion that whoever abandons prayer should be put to death. This is what Ibn Rushd says in *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*,¹

“Al-Hafiz’Abd al-’Azim al-Mundhiri said, ‘A group of Companions held the view, as did those who came after them that whoever abandoned prayer deliberately until its time passed away should be declared an unbeliever.’

‘The above view was held by the Companions ‘Umar b. al-Khattab, ‘Abad Allah b. Mas’ud, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas, Mu ‘adh b. Jabal, Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah, and Abu al-Darda’. Among those who were not Companions and who held this view were Ahmad b. Hanbal, Ishaq b. Rahawaih, ‘Abd Allah b. Al-Mubarak, Al-Nakha’i, Al-Hakam b. ‘Utba, Ayub Al-Sakhtiyani, Abu Da’ud Al-Tayalisi, Abu Bakr b. Shayba, Zuhair b. Harb, and others.”²

Yet others held the view that he who deliberately abandons prayer without however abandoning his basic belief in its true religious merit has nevertheless strayed from the true path and, in order that he should not set a bad example for others, he must be chastised and imprisoned until he resumes prayer.

Scholars of the orthodox school of thought, such as *Ahmad*, *Ishaq*, and *Ibn Al-Mubarak* hold the view that one who abandons his faith should be punished by death. Among those who believe that such a person must be punished are *Malik*, *Al-Shafi’i*, and *Abu Hanifa* and his followers.³

Thus the Law of Islam admonishes severely its members and requires of them sincere adherence to Islamic law through the continuous practice of prayer, the most important pillar of Islam and the greatest of religious duties. No wonder then that we hear him adjured as a nonbeliever or as one who has strayed from the truth, for we read in the holy *Qur’an* and we see that he who abandons prayer is called an evildoer and is numbered among the criminals who will go down to Hell.

“Shall we then treat the believers the same as the sinners? What is the matter with you? How judge ye?” (Q. 68:35-36)

Indeed the *Qur’an* further explains and describes the wrongdoer who encounters the believer, saying:

“Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds. Except the

¹Cited by Shaikh Muhammad Ahmad al-Adawi in his book, *Miftah al-Khitaba w-al-Wa’z*.

²From al-Hafiz Al-Mundhiri, *Al-Tarhib w-al-Tarhib*.

³According to Ibn Rushd, *Bidayat Al-Mujtahid*.

companions of the right Hand (they will be) in Gardens: they will Question what led you into hell. They will say, "we were not of those who prayed; nor were we of those who used to talk of vanities with vain talkers; and we used to deny the Day of Judgment until there come to us Death, no intercession of (any) intercessors profit them." (Q. 74:38-48)

To abandon prayer then is to follow the road to Hell which leaves nothing, spares nothing, and consumes men with its heat — a proper reward. But your Lord harms no one.

Whoever has destroyed the pillar of his religion, whoever has disobeyed the commandment of his Lord, whoever has violated the teaching of His Prophet whom He has approved as a guide and messenger, whoever has heard the words of God which circumscribe his actions and has understood them and then has set himself a course of resistance and disobedience to them, whoever has been too proud to worship his Lord, on him this judgment is not excessive. If he pauses to consider for only a moment he will surely realize that by abandoning prayer he has put himself outside the pale of Islam and that he has no right to protest against this righteous judgment, especially after its description in the holy *Qur'an* and after reading a tradition such as the following which *Ibn 'Abbas* related from the Prophet:

"The props and bases of religion are three and on them Islam was founded. Whoever abandons any one of them is an unbeliever whose blood it is lawful to shed: witnessing that there is no god but God, the ordained prayer, and the fast of Ramadan.¹

The fact of being associated with something does not entitle one to expect benefit from it when the association is not supported by deeds which are imposed by that association. Let us have some examples.

A. FIRST EXAMPLE

Suppose you belong to an office where you hold an appointment. When are you entitled to be called an employee and take your salary?

Are you not required actually to do your work? And does not the head of your office record the date you begin? Then do you not keep office hours and work until the end of the month in order to receive your salary? If you do not do the work which you are appointed to do, or do not keep at the task until its completion, would the office put up with you patiently? Would they pay you? Of course not! Even if the order had been issued for your appointment, it is the easiest of matters to cancel it and dismiss you.

¹Related by *Abu Ya'la* with a good rendering of transmission.

B. SECOND EXAMPLE

You belong to some institute of school. Are you not required to attend class regularly and to prepare all that the staff asks of you? If you disobey the staff and do not listen to what they have to say, if you break the laws and regulations of the school or institute, will you continue to be a member of it, or will you be expelled? There is no doubt that you would be dismissed and your membership in the institution would be of no value to you.

C. THIRD EXAMPLE

If you join the army, either as an officer or as a private soldier, are you not required to wear a uniform? Do you not pay attention to the orders of your superiors and obey them with neither question nor delay? If you do not put on the uniform or, if after having put it on, you do not carry out the commands of your superiors and do not comply with the military regulations but rather on the contrary, fail in all the obligations which membership in this honorable profession places on you, do you think you would be allowed to enjoy the benefits, or do you think you would be discharged without delay and denied all the rights which you had been enjoying? I believe that you would expect to be dismissed as being unfit for this honorable profession.

Islam operates in a similar fashion. You accept God as your Master, Islam as your religion, and Muhammad (peace be upon him) as your Prophet and Messenger. Are you not required to carry out the obligations of the religion, to perform the religious duties, and to support its first principles? Is it not necessary, to be a member, to carry out the most important of its commands — the obligation to perform the prayer? This is the distinguishing mark of the Muslim just as the uniform is the distinguishing mark of the soldier. Are you not required to heed the commands of the holy *Qur'an* which was revealed by the Lord of Might and Omnipotence and to comply with every single order if you are to be associated with the *Qur'an* and its community? Are you not required to be guided by your Prophet, to follow his light, and to obey his every command seeing that God has commanded you to obey him and follow in his steps?

If you disobey the commands of your Lord and the instructions of your Prophet, if you put the *Qur'an* behind you and demolish the buttresses of Islam one by one until finally prayer itself is torn down, do you think that, having demolished and rejected prayer, you are still entitled to call yourself a Muslim? Should the mere fact of your connection with Islam be of any advantage to you? Will you retain your membership in the religion or will you be deprived of it? You will be expelled and barriers and fences will be erected between it and you. This answer is in my opinion, according to the

Law, and as you must see yourself, it is patently clear and generally recognized.

The Prophet said, "What lies between a perfect man and unbelief is the renouncing of prayer." The unbelievers are the ones who suffer loss.

VI. EXPECTATION OF THE MERCY OF GOD

Because of your belief that God is mighty and omnipotent, abounding in forgiveness and pardon, and ever near in His mercy, you should not think that religion is inconsistent with the examples I have given you. The reason is that His mercy is all-embracing and closest of all to man, especially to one who believes in Him even though his actions are wrong.

I support you in your belief that God is forgiving and compassionate, abounding in pardon, and that His mercy encompasses heaven and earth and whoever is in them. The extent of His mercy and munificence does not grow less. On the contrary, a single drop from the sea of His generosity is sufficient to submerge mankind with a flood of blessings and benefactions. This I say, and this I believe. Yet please bear with me a little while so that we can reflect on some of the verses of the holy *Qur'an* and try to understand something of the sayings of the Prophet. In this way we shall see whether the mercy of God is so cheap that it can be distributed without cost to whomsoever asks for it, to whomever does not ask for it, and to whomever does not hope for it; indeed, even to whomever it does not even come to mind, who neither thinks to seek it nor strives to obtain it.

It is my belief that sound logic, a mature intellect, and the everlasting Law do not accept that mercy is granted to such an extent for everyone. There are those, because of the evil they have done, for whom the mountains would crumble, the heavens would be split asunder, and the earth would tremble. They do not believe in God and they refuse his blessings. They treat mankind wrongly and unjustly. They deny God and His messenger and disobey Their commandments, heeding none of them, doing everything which Their Law commands them not to do.

Do you think they are entitled to obtain the same lofty status in acquiring the divine mercy? They are far from it. It is close only to the righteous. Almighty God said:

"For the Mercy of God is near those who do good. (Q. 7:55)

And:

"My mercy extendeth to all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right and practice regular charity and those who believe in our Signs." (Q. 7:155)

In one of the holy traditions (*Hadith Qudsi*), the Prophet called to mind that God had said:

“How impudent is he who aspires to My Garden without working for it. How can I pour My mercy on him who withholds obedience to me? Mercy is obtained by good deeds, piety, almsgiving, and reverence for God. Faith is proved by the actions which spring from that faith. Faith does not come simply by wishing for it but from resolution and steadfastness in the soul and from the deeds which attest to it.

Al-Bukhari relates a tradition of Anas which is traceable to the Prophet: “Faith is not wishing but is what is implanted in the soul and attested to by deeds. Wishes mislead people so that they leave this life without having performed a single good deed. They say ‘We revered God’ but they lie. Had they had reverence, they would have done good deeds.”

I hope after this that you have not despaired of the mercy of God for it is close to you, ready to be taken. Turn to God in repentance and be of the worshippers who prostrate themselves, obtaining the mercy, forgiveness, and favor of God which your soul desires. Here lies prosperity and happiness in this world and the next.

Hasten to repent. The door of repentance is always open for those who would enter. Draw close to God and God will draw close to you: no one can grant you greater help. Perform your religious duties and stand before God with humility, with worship, and prostration. God will forgive your sins, pardon your misdeeds, and admit you to His mercy. He will give you gardens and palaces. Hasten to true prayer which keeps you from evil and what is forbidden, which will bring you close to God.

But this will be impossible unless the prayer is humble and sincere before God, Lord of Heaven and Earth. If there is anything of hypocrisy, the labors of one who performs it will be rendered worthless and futile.

VII. REJECTED PRAYER

The fundamental point about prayer is that it purifies the soul, refines the character, and keeps one who performs it from falsehood and all forbidden actions. It cleanses one of base and shameful acts. If we see someone who prays yet at the same time unlawfully enriches himself with the possessions of others, who spreads evil among men, and whose actions are incompatible with the noble precepts of the religion, who perhaps uses prayer as a snare with which to capture the good opinion of people, behind which he conceals his many misdeeds, then the benefits which his prayer should bring upon him and which should restrain him from doing evil will be cancelled out.

If we should see someone like this we know that his prayer is rejected and futile. It will be rolled up like a bundle of worn-out clothes and thrown in

his face whether he likes it or not. His prayer will avail him nothing and will not draw him near to God. Rather, it will increase his distance from Him and incur more loss on himself. for tradition says, "He whose prayer has not restrained him from evil and misdeeds has only increased his distance from God."

Furthermore, the Law of Islam rejects the prayer of one who does not persevere in it, who does not perform the ritual ablution properly, who does not perform it with humility, who does not bow the body, and who does not prostrate himself for, an absence of concern for these matters indicates an absence of interest in them. If one does not pay attention to this important first principle, then why should one concern oneself with what follows it?

In the tradition which is related by *Anas b. Malik* the Messenger of God says:

"One who has performed the prayer at the rightful times, who has carried out its ritual ablutions, who has carried out the requirements of standing, submission, bowing and prostration, his prayer shall emerge shining white. It will say 'May God protect you as you have protected me.' But one who has performed the prayer at other than the rightful times, who has not carried out its ritual ablutions, who has not carried out the requirements of submission, bowing, and prostration, then shall his prayer emerge the darkest black. It will say, 'May God ruin you as you have ruined me.' So when it arrives where it is intended it will be rolled up like a bundle of old clothes, then he will be struck with it in the face."

Listen to the words of the Almighty, as related in the holy tradition (*Hadith Qudsi*), which explains from whom prayer will be accepted. Let this be a warning to those of you who have strayed from the path and those who have adopted religion as a means of achieving their private ends, who pray only for their own requirements. May God turn against them while they are so alienated and let them see what God promises to those whose prayer is accepted.

"I will accept the prayer of one who humbles himself before My greatness, who does not display arrogance towards what I create, who does not constantly spend the night disobeying Me, who spends the day remembering Me, who has compassion for the wretched, the wayfarer, the widow, and the afflicted. That man's light is as the light of the sun. I will protect him with My might, guard him with My angels, be a light for him in the darkness, in ignorance and understanding. His likeness in my creatures is as paradise in the garden."

The traditions make clear the judgment on those who mix good deeds with bad. Can this possibly be advanced as an argument by those who would use it as evidence whereby to discredit religion and prayer — unjustly and with enmity?

VIII. A WEAK ARGUMENT

Some people, when I have urged them to perform the prayer, have replied: "Religion lies not only in prayer. There are many who pray yet their hearts are wicked, their actions outside prayer are evil. As for us, our hearts are pure . . . we love religion and we respect it more than many who pray . . ." and so on. Their argument is weak. They are under the impression that the actions and prayers of these people which will be cast back into their faces are an argument against religion and prayer itself. They think that religion should become a tomb which exists only in the heart and should have no outward sign which would demonstrate — if nothing else — the conviction of the heart and the life of this religion.

Fear God! Try to find favor with Him! Hasten to do good works before you are distracted! Forge a link between yourself and your Lord with much prayer and almsgiving, and with many good deeds!

Know that Islam is not prayer alone, nor only a pure heart. No! It is prayer and purity, love and loyalty; it is steadfastness, good deeds, and hospitality; it is pilgrimage and bearing witness; it is almsgiving and worshipping; it is struggle for the cause of God and sincere devotion to Him.

"Call upon Him, giving Him sincere devotion and none besides Him."

(Q. 40:65)

Guidance and worship; book and sword, faith; knowledge and endeavor; wisdom and dignity; paradise and hell; obedience and reverence; a community and an organized society — Islam is a coherent unit, indivisible. It is not possible to believe one part of the Book and disbelieve another part. It must be accepted in its entirety. Working to achieve this faith means working at all of it.

Muslims, fear God. Turn to God before death overtakes you, for whoever turns to Him, to him He turns, forgiving him and granting him His favor. The mercy of God is not more liberal than that bestowed on one who approaches Him in search of it. Acknowledge God in times of prosperity and He will acknowledge you in times of adversity. Turn back to your religion and thrive, seek the help of God. Recite your Lord's Book. It will be for you a treasure and a light. Follow the light which Muhammad (peace be upon Him) brought you. Seek the hereafter through what God has given you, but do not forget your part in this world, transient though it may be, and even though it be filled with pleasure and amusement.

Do good and God will do good to you. Seek not the wickedness of the world. Perform the prayer and give alms. Bow down with those who bow down.

Fight for God in His holy war. A great struggle awaits you.

If we will not confront God by pious deeds, by patience, and by preparation, for grief will befall us and, God forbid, we shall become the losers. Therefore fear God.

“Be quick in the race for your Lord’s forgiveness for a garden whose width is that of all heavens and the earth is prepared for the righteous: those who spend, whether in prosperity or in adversity, who restrain anger and pardon men, for God love those who do good.”

(Q. 7:133-134)

May God direct us to the true path, reconcile us to endure obedience, delight us through prayer, afford us all help, give back the glory to religion and Islam, predispose to this religion he who would protect it. Almighty God is the greatest protector, the greatest of helpers.

Praise be to God, Lord of heaven and earth.

CHAPTER TWO

PREPARATION FOR THE PRAYER

I. THE MEANING OF PRAYER

The meaning of the Arabic word for "prayer" (*Salat*) is "supplication" or "request." The Arabic language has another word with the latter meaning but because this word is used in a more general sense a further word which would mean, specifically, "to make an invocation to God" had to be found. It is said that the word the Arabs now use originally meant "to glorify." Specific acts of devotion therefore are called "prayer" because in them we glorify God, as Islam commands we should and as Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Messenger of God, explained. The Companions, those who came after him, and the leaders of the religion, have followed him in this. The word has now come to have the meaning:

"The worship and glorification of God by specific words and actions, commencing with the words 'God is Great' and ending with the words 'May Peace, and the Mercy of God be with you'; a specially ordered and regulated form which the Islamic religion has brought into being and which all Muslims follow as a light and guide."

Nevertheless the word still retains its linguistic meaning of "supplication" and "glorification."

The meaning of our saying "Prayers belong to God" is that God and God alone is entitled to receive the supplications whereby it is intended to glorify Him.

The meaning of our saying "O Lord, bless! Muhammad" is "O Lord, glorify him in this life by exalting his memory, grant success to his mission, and preserve his Law." It means to ask in the hereafter for God's intercession on behalf of his community and for a great reward for him because of his good deeds. It has been said that its meaning originated when God commanded us to "pray for" the Prophet on whom he had bestowed His friendship, but because we were incapable of discharging that divine duty, we left it to Him saying, "O Lord, bless Muhammad for You know what befits him." The blessing of God on His Prophet is mercy, that of the angels is forgiveness. Ours is supplication and exaltation. Almighty God said:

"God and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet O Ye that believe!
Send ye blessings on him and salute him with all respect. (Q. 33:56)

¹The Arabic verb used here is the same as the verb "to pray." This section of the book is intended to clarify an apparent paradox in the Arabic language as related to Islamic teaching.

Prayer is an individual duty incumbent on every Muslim man and woman who, having reached the age of puberty and being of sound mind, have heard the message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and are capable of performing it and are clean and undefiled. A child is required to perform the prayer from the age of seven so that he will be brought up to love it and will make a habit of it. He must be made to perform it at the age of ten if by then he has refused to do so and has not heeded the instructions of his guardian and foster parents.

There are many verses in the holy *Qur'an* concerning prayer, the following being only a few of them:

"Prayer is enjoined on Believers at stated times to be conducted at appointed hours." (Q. 4:103)

"Enjoin prayer on thy people and be constant therein. We ask thee not to provide sustenance: we provide it for thee. But (the fruit of) the hereafter is for righteousness."¹ (Q. 20:132)

There are also many traditions concerning the importance of prayer and the obligation to perform it. Among other things they explain the qualities of prayer and the punishment awaiting those who renounce it. Some of them were mentioned in the first chapter of this book, but should you wish to refer to more of them you should consult the collections of tradition wherein you will find riches and gratifications.

II. PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

One is not permitted to perform the prayer without fulfilling certain conditions, but when they have been fulfilled, one may then stand before the Lord to perform it. These conditions are:

First: cleanliness. This includes cleanliness of the body, the garments, and the place where the prayer is performed.

Second: concealing the private parts. Properly speaking these are only two. In the case of a man it is preferable and prudent that he be covered at least from the navel to the knee at the sides, the front, and the rear. A woman's body should be totally covered except for her hands and face.

Third: the time to begin the prayer. Since it is not proper to perform the prayer before the times appointed by Islamic law, we shall give the five times which the Law prescribes later.

Fourth: facing the Ka'aba. This means facing towards the sacred house of God in Mecca.

A. CLEANLINESS

1. General

Islam is the natural religion of civilized man which appeared in the arid

Arab Peninsula where cultivation is scanty because of a shortage of water. In spite of that, it brought with it proper standards of civilization, demanding complete cleanliness and pressing on people the necessity to adhere to the essential virtues. It established the basis of worship as:

a. Purifying the heart from the uncleanness of doubt, polytheism, misgivings, deviation, hypocrisy, dissimulation, hatred, rancor, and envy. The Muslim has been told that God sees him and that nothing at all may be hidden from Him:

“God knows the furtive look and all that the hearts conceal.” (Q. 40:19)

b. Cleansing the body and purifying it from filth, dirt, and defilement. Almighty God said:

“God loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who who keep themselves pure and clean.” (Q. 2:22)

The Prophet said “Cleanliness is half of faith” and “The key to prayer is cleanliness. To say the Words of Greatness is to begin it, to say the Words of Peace is to finish it.” The proverb says, “Cleanliness is part of Faith.”

Cleanliness is the first condition for entering into prayer. We have said that it includes (i) cleanliness of the heart and body, (ii) cleanliness of the garments, and (iii) cleanliness of the place where the prayer is to be performed.

The body is cleansed with water. Water which may be properly used for this purpose should be the natural water of rain, rivers, the sea, springs, or wells. Its taste, color and smell must be normal and should any of these three characteristics be abnormal then the water, according to the Law, is defiled and may not be drunk nor used. Nor may it be used for purification, as one would shrink from it in disgust and be unable to swallow it. The view of Islamic Law in this respect is supported and confirmed by modern medicine and common sense.

2. *Cleansing the Body of Impurity*

Impurity falls under two headings:

1. The Lesser Impurity. This calls for ritual ablution or the substitute for it (when water is impossible to obtain or when good reason exists which makes it difficult for water to be used). The impurity is caused by excretion or the passing of water or wind.

2. The Greater Impurity. This calls for total ablution and is caused by erotic dreams accompanied by ejaculation, or by sexual intercourse. God said, “If ye are in state of ceremonial impurity, cleanse yourselves.” (Q. 5:7) For women, menstruation and childbirth bring about the Greater Impurity and call for total ablution.

3. *How to Perform the Ritual Ablution*

Almighty God said:

“O ye who believe, when ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces and your hands to the elbows; rub your heads and your feet to the ankles.”
(Q. 5:7)

Because of this verse, ablution became a religious duty and without it prayer is not valid. Until the ablution has been carried out, it is not permitted to perform the prayer, while he who does perform it without ablution is a sinner.

The Prophet has given a practical illustration of how to perform the ablution which is as follows:

In resolving to begin the ritual ablution, first prepare some clean water, for the performance of this duty will permit you to perform the prayer. There is no requirement that the intention be spoken aloud or that any formality should accompany it. On the contrary, it is sufficient that it is in your mind and that you are determined, in your heart, to carry out the ablution. Then pronounce the name of God by saying, “In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful” and wash your hands to the wrists three times, passing the fingers of one hand between those of the other, and rubbing the hands well.

Next take the water between the hands and put it in your mouth and rinse it three times. Make an effort to use the *siwak*¹ to clean the teeth at the same time as rinsing the mouth. The traditional practice of using the *siwak* is fully authenticated. Alternatively rub your teeth with the thumb and forefinger. Many traditions have come down regarding the *siwak*, among them being one in which the Prophet said,

“If it had not been too great a burden on my people, I would have bidden them to use the *siwak* at every prayer.”

Then the water is sniffed up the nostrils and blown out three times in order to clean the nose of the dirt which is in it. After this, wash your face three times, making sure that the water reaches the creases of the face, the outside of the eyelids, and indeed all the face. Then wash the arms to the elbows three times, the right arm before the left. Next take the water in your hands and sprinkle it over your head; wiping your head with your hands first from front to back and then from back to front. It is permissible to wipe part of the head with one hand only.

Next rub your ears, inside and outside without taking fresh water (i.e. using the same water as that with which you wiped your head). Finally,

¹The Arabic word *siwak* means a small stick (the tip of which is softened by chewing or beating) used for cleaning and polishing the teeth.

wash your legs three times down to the ankle, the right leg before the left, and working the fingers between the toes, rub them well.

As far as the neck is concerned, nothing was established by the Prophet. Having finished the ablution, you may now recite the Words of Witness:

“I bear witness that there is no god but God. I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.”

Continue, saying:

“O Lord, make me of those who turn to You in repentance and of those who are undefiled.”

It is essential that the ablution be carried out in the order mentioned above.

This then is the ritual ablution which will enable you to stand before your Lord and which will be valid for two or more times of prayer, provided that it is not vitiated or broken.

4. *Wiping the Socks*

This is done according to the tradition of the Prophet. The top of the foot is wiped and not the sole, one day and one night while in the home. The traveler does this at day and night every three days. The feet must be cleaned before putting on footwear and it is permitted to wipe over woolen or other kinds of stocking. This latter is a dispensation for the people.

5. *Things which Invalidate the Ablution*

The ablution is invalidated if any of the following occur, in which case a person must carry it out anew:

- a. The passing of excrement, urine, or wind. In the case of those who are afflicted with a condition of permanent wetting, their ablution is not broken even though it occurs during prayer. In this case, they should carry out the ablution before every prayer.
- b. Sleeping, no matter what the circumstances. However, if one is sitting down — as for instance in the mosque awaiting the prayer — and is overcome by drowsiness, in such a case the ablution is not invalidated.
- c. Fainting or becoming unconscious for any reason, be it madness, drunkenness, or drug taking, invalidates the ablution.
- d. Deliberately touching a woman for reasons of lust.
- e. Touching the sexual organs intentionally directly and unclothed.
- f. Vomiting.

Note: If, knowing with certainty that you have performed the ablution, you entertain misgiving that you might have committed one of the above actions, but cannot be certain that you have done so, then your ablution is not invalidated because doubt does not prevail over certainty.

6. Total Ablution

Total ablution is douching the body with pure water, pouring it over the whole body and the hair of the head. A good healthy bath is also a pleasant way of cleaning the body, purifying it of the dirt which clings to it, and refreshing it.

7. What Necessitates Total Ablution

Total ablution is obligatory in the following cases:

- a. After the ejaculation of semen because of a carnal act -- even the thought of it.
- b. After sexual intercourse. Total ablution is obligatory even if there was no orgasm.
- c. Following a dream, by a man or woman, of an erotic nature. Total ablution is obligatory if the dreamer should find any trace of semen on his clothes or bed. However, should he see in his dream that which would require his total ablution, yet on waking find no trace on his clothes or bed, then he is not required to carry out a total ablution. For a woman it is the same as for a man. If she should see any fluid, total ablution is obligatory, otherwise not. According to the tradition, "fluid necessitates fluid."
- Equally, should a person on waking find the signs even though he has not had a dream, he is required to perform total ablution.
- d. Following menstruation a woman must carry out total ablution.
- e. At the end of forty days after childbirth, a woman is required to carry out total ablution. If, however, the hemorrhaging of childbirth ceases before forty days have passed, she may carry out total ablution and thus purify herself. There is no requirement that forty days must elapse.
- f. When a person newly accepts Islam he should be instructed to carry out total ablution following his proclamation of acceptance.

8. How to carry out Total Ablution

Having prepared the water or entered the bath with the object or remove the ritual impurities, tradition requires that you begin by washing your hand three times followed by a cleansing of the private parts. Following this one should proceed as in the ritual ablution except that the legs should be left until the rest of the body has been washed.

Next pour three handfuls of water on your head and pass your fingers through the roots of your hair. You should then pour the water liberally

over the body, leaving no part of it untouched. It is also desirable that, with the exception of the private parts, you give your body a good rub down with your hands.

Having made the Resolve to perform the total ablution, it may be performed by immersion in a river or water and accompanied by rinsing of the mouth and inhalation of water into the nostrils. You may also stand under a shower-bath. Having finished pouring water on your body, finally wash your legs and then begin to dry yourself, praising God and giving thanks to Him for this blessing by saying:

“O Lord, make me repentant, make me clean.”

Two points to bear in mind:

a. Whoever performs the major ritual ablution must cover himself. Only when alone and in private or when immersed in water which covers the private parts is nakedness permitted.

b. Copious amounts of water are not permitted to be used for ritual or total ablution, even when at the side of a river. This is forbidden by the Law so that people will not get into the habit of wastefulness, thus following the dictates of Satan and not God, who commands in His Law that we must be moderate in all things.

9. *Purification with Earth*

One of the dispensations of Islam is that God does not impose upon the spirit that of which it is incapable. Because of the importance of prayer as a pillar of Islam, religion does not permit the abandonment of prayer nor the neglecting or delaying of it.

Purification, as you have learned, is a basic requirement and water is the essential cleanser. However, if you have no water, whether you are on a journey or in an inhabited area, or there is water, but you are ill and fear that its use will harm you, the condition being that probable harm is severe and certain or if you are not ill but on awakening in a state of major impurity, are fearful that total ablution may cause you to perish or suffer the gravest consequences due to severe cold; in these circumstances God has substituted good clean earth (or sand) for water. Thus cleansing by the use of earth smooths your path, allays your fears, and demonstrates concern for prayer, that sturdy pillar of your religion. Read this verse carefully and attentively. Almighty God says:

“O ye who believe, when ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces and your hands to the elbows; rub your heads and your feet to the ankles.

If ye are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bath your whole body. But



if ye are ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from the offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth and rub therewith your faces and hands. God doth not wish to place you in difficulty but to make you clean, and to complete his favor to you that ye may be grateful." (Q. 5:7)

The word which the Arabs use for this action means "*intention*." Hence, when the Muslim cannot find water he uses earth, sand, or dust with the "intention of cleansing himself", and it is not required of him that he cover his hands and face with it. If there should be any dust adhering to your hands at the time of purification with earth, first blow it off and then proceed with the purification.

God's purpose is to provide a substitute for ritual or total ablution so that you will not forsake prayer from time to time and thereby fall into the habit of abandoning it or becoming lazy in its performance. He demonstrates its importance to us, for even though there is no water and even though one may be ill, it is still our duty to perform it.

If a man is revolted at the thought of using earth or dust and it is contrary to his principles of hygiene, for to put it on the face or on the eyes is something which reason cannot accept, then a Muslim should say to him: "Islam stipulates above all that the dust or earth be clean, wholesome, and unadulterated. This is not harmful even if it gets into the eyes." To some extent the unclean dust which is swirled and carried by the wind blows into a man's eyes every day, but during purification none of it enters the eyes. Purification with earth, sand, or dust, is prescribed only in cases of necessity. It comes as a balm to the soul of the believer who counts it as one of God's blessings to the community, a blessing which God has conferred, thereby making it easier for us to follow our religion and enduring as one of its special characteristics:

"God doth not wish to place you in difficulty but to make you clean, and to complete his favor to you, that ye may be grateful." (Q. 5:7)

When forced to purify yourself with earth because there is no available water, look for wholesome dust, either sand or salt sand. First resolve upon purification by earth, then pronounce the name of God saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful"

and put your open hands, with fingers outstretched, on the dust. Strike the dust with your hands, then raise them. Blowing off the dust which adheres to them, wipe your hands over your face and over the back of the

hands up to the wrists. By this action you will be able to perform the prayer, and it will be as if you had carried out the ritual ablution.

If you should awaken in a state of major impurity and there is no water to be found, purifying yourself by earth in this way will absolve you from defilement and from total ablution. However you must resolve in your heart to be rid of defilement and pronounce the name of God when purifying yourself.

Purification by earth has the same validity as has ritual ablution, but becomes invalid when water is found. Until your ritual purification is broken or until water is found it is lawful for you, with one purification by earth, to perform any of the obligatory or voluntary prayers. Some theologians hold the opinion that purification by earth should be done by striking the dust twice, once for the face and once for the hands.

10. Removing Dirt

He who would perform the prayer must perform it wearing clean clothes. In addition, the place in which the prayer is to be performed should be as clean as his body. Should there be dirt on any of these things he must remove it with water, cleaning it and removing the stain. Foulness which must be removed includes urine, excrement, fresh semen (dry semen may be brushed off), the saliva of dogs and pigs, blood, and suppurative matter.

A woman must remove all traces of her menstrual period when it ends and perform total ablution. She must do the same after childbirth. Prayer is not performed during her menstrual period. As regards the fast of *Ramadan*, she must observe it. Similarly a woman in childbirth does not perform the prayer even though the time of post-natal hemorrhage lasts forty days. However, she must observe the Fast.

A man may not have sexual intercourse with his wife during her menstrual period or following childbirth as this is harmful to them both. The most modern views concerning hygiene are those which have always been held by Islam. Almighty God says:

“They ask thee concerning women’s courses. Say: they are a hurt and a pollution so keep away from women in their courses, and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves ye may approach them, in any manner, time or place ordained for you by God. For God loves who keep themselves pure and clean.” (Q. 2:222)

B. THE TIMES OF PRAYER

1. General

A Muslim may not perform the obligatory prayer until the arrival of the

proper hour as stated in the Law. God says:

“Prayer is enjoined on Believers at stated times.” (Q. 4:103)

This means that there is a preestablished obligatory religious duty for which the *Qur'an* has set fixed times. The arrival of the time for prayer is a fundamental condition for performing it. The times are:

- a. *The Morning Prayer.* This prayer begins at true dawn, which occurs in the east when the light first appears from the darkness of night and extends until the sun rises. He who has completed one *rak'a* of the morning prayer before sunrise has performed the prayer on time. He who oversleeps and awakens after the time for prayer should perform it immediately upon waking and not delay his duty. Furthermore, he must not oversleep intentionally or be lazy in getting out of his bed for whoever does this suffers manifest loss.
- b. *The Noon Prayer.* This prayer is recited when the sun has reached its highest point in the sky. This will normally be at twelve o'clock, but the time varies in different countries. The time for the noon prayer lasts until the time for the afternoon prayer.
- c. *The Afternoon Prayer* is enjoined when the shadow of an object is equal to its own length plus the length of its noontime shadow. The time for this prayer extends until sunset. He who has completed one *rak'a* of the afternoon prayer has performed the prayer in time, but one is not permitted to delay the prayer until the sun turns yellow (or red or orange). Should the time for this prayer be over, his efforts will be rendered valueless, as is stated in tradition. The afternoon prayer is the “middle prayer” which is mentioned in the verse
“Guard strictly your prayers, especially the Middle Prayer, and stand before God with all devotion.” (Q. 2:238)
- d. *The Sunset Prayer* may be performed from sunset until the end of twilight. Twilight is the redness which remains on the horizon after the sun sets and lasts until the onset of darkness. The interval allowed for the sunset prayer is the shortest of all and it is advisable to lose no time in performing the prayer.
- e. *The Evening Prayer* begins when twilight ends, although the interval for this prayer extends until daybreak. He who has completed one *rak'a* before daybreak has performed the prayer in time. The Prophet disliked sleeping before this prayer or conversing after it. Conversation after dark was permitted only for the sake of acquiring knowledge and to honor a guest, and it was preferable to delay the evening prayer until a third of the night has passed. However, if it is feared that the time for prayer will be

missed should it be delayed, it must be performed at once.

The time for the five prayers has been laid down by Islam. They never change nor do they vary with the seasons of the year.¹ Perhaps you may be able to regulate the afternoon hours by the calls of the *muezzins* in the mosques which keep you informed of the times for prayer in both summer and winter.²

Note: If the time for the evening pray has arrived, but the evening meal is ready, eat it and perform the prayer afterwards with a peaceful and tranquil mind. Note also that the Prophet has forbidden that you go to prayer while needing to relieve yourself.

2. *The Call to Prayer*

The call to prayer is the signal that the time for prayer has arrived. Through the use of prescribed words the Muslim community is summoned to attend the prayers which will lead to their prosperity in this life and the hereafter.

The Call to Prayer is itself an act of worship which precedes the prayer and as such is one of the most important religious ceremonies in Islam and the most widely recognized characteristic of the religion. It was introduced in the first year of the *Hijra*¹ following which the Prophet observed it night and day, whether at home or travelling. On no occasion until the day of his death was it known of him to break the custom, nor is there any known instance in which he granted a dispensation from the rule. The Companions continued to observe the rule until it became a duty — or the equivalent of a duty — because of the Prophet's order which is preserved in a number of traditions.

3. *A Description of the Call to Prayer*

The Call to Prayer, as is stated in authentic traditions, is as follows:

God is great, God is great, God is great, God is great.

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللهُ أَكْبَرُ، اللهُ أَكْبَرُ

I bear witness that there is no god But God.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ،

I bear witness that there is no god but God.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

¹The *Hijra* denotes the date of the Prophet's emigration from Mecca to Medina and the start of the Muslim era by which the Muslim calendar is now reckoned, i.e., "A.H." equals After the Hijra.

²This is in Muslim countries. In non-Muslim countries consult your prayer time table.

I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ،

I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ،

Come to prayer. Come to prayer.

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ ، حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ

Come to prosperity. Come to prosperity.

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ ، حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

God is great. God is great.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

There is not god but God.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

In the Morning Prayer only, after saying "Come to prosperity" but before saying the second "God is great" the *muezzin* says:

"Prayer is better than sleep. Prayer is better than sleep."

• الصَّلَاةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّوْمِ ، الصَّلَاةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّوْمِ .•

Then he continues with:

"God is great. There is no god but God. There is no God But God."

When you hear the sound of the Call to Prayer reverberating in the air, let your heart be filled with the magnificence of the call and the glory of Him in whose name the call is made. Remember the prosperity and success to which you are summoned. Realize that apart from God, all things great are as nothing. Should you think that there is something in the universe which is great remember — only god is Great, only God is Great.

When you hear the *muezzin*, give heed to him. Repeat what he says in your heart with all the power you possess until he says, "Come to prayer, Come to prosperity."

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ ، حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

Here say, "There is no power and no strength except in God. There is no Power and no strength except in God.

لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله .

Listen to the tradition of the glorious messenger of God as related to Al-Bukhari. The Prophet says:

"When the muezzin says 'God is great, God is great' each one of you says 'God is great, God is great.' Then he says 'I bear witness that there is no god but God.' Say, 'I bear witness that there is no god but God.' Then he says 'I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God.' Say 'I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God.' Then he says, 'Come to prosperity.' Say 'There is no power and no strength except in God.' Then he says 'God is great, God is great.' Say 'God is great, God is great.' Then he says 'There is no god but God. There is no god but God.' Say 'There is no god but God.' If his is said from the heart, he will enter paradise."

When you have finished answering the muezzin, ask the blessing of the Prophet. Then request God's favor for him in the words of the traditional private prayer. Turn your mind to the humility of the glorious Messenger, all of whose sins God has forgiven. He calls on his people to bless him and entreat Him to grant His favor to him after each call to prayer so that mankind will turn to God and God alone and learn that all things are for God to do as He wishes and as He chooses, for man, no matter how exalted his rank or authority, is but the slave of the Compassionate, the Merciful, or whom he is always in need. 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, as related by Muslim, said that he had heard the Messenger of God say:

"When you hear the *muezzin*, say what he says, then ask a blessing for me. Whoever asks a blessing for me once, God will bless ten times. Then ask God for His favor to me, which is a position in paradise which can only be aspired to by a slave of God. Would that I am the one. He who asks God's favor for me, for him will I intercede."

The traditional private prayer which is said after each call to prayer is that which our Prophet has taught us and is:

"O God, Lord of all supplications and steadfast prayer grant Muhammad the most favored and excellent position. Admit him to the praise worthy place that You have promised him."

اللَّهُمَّ رَبِّ هَذِهِ الدَّعْوَةُ التَّامَّةُ ، وَالصَّلَاةُ الْقَائِمَةُ

آتِ مُحَمَّدًا الْوَسِيلَةَ وَالْفَضِيلَةَ وَأَبْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا الَّذِي وَعَدْتَهُ ،

Then say,

“Bestow upon us his intercession, for You do not fail in Your promise.”

« وَأَرْزُقْنَا شَفَاعَتَهُ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ . »

4. THE SECOND CALL (*iqama*)

After the *muezzin* has made the call to prayer, it is the traditional law that there shall be an interval until the second call during which a person should make ready for the prayer. He who makes the call to prayer also makes the second call. The second call begins when all the necessary conditions for performing the prayer are fulfilled. When this is done and all has become ready for prayer, stand facing the direction of the *Ka'ba*, make the second call, and then perform the prayer.

5. HOW TO MAKE THE SECOND CALL

There are two correct methods of saying the second call.

1. This consists of eleven phrases:

God is great. God is great.

الله أكبر ، الله أكبر .

I bear witness that there is no god but God.

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله .

I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God.

أشهد أن محمداً رسول الله .

Come to prayer.

حي على الصلاة .

Come to prosperity.

حي على الفلاح .

The prayer is to be performed. The prayer is to be performed.

قد قامت الصلاة ، قد قامت الصلاة .

God is great. God is great.

الله أكبر ، الله أكبر .

There is no god but God.

لا إله إلا الله

b. The second method consists of seventeen phrases with the first "God is great" being repeated four times and all other phrases but the last being said twice. Finally the phrase "There is no god but God" is said once. Here is the full call:

God is great. God is great. God is great. God is great.

الله أكبر ، الله أكبر . الله أكبر ، الله أكبر .

I bear witness that there is no god but God.

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله .

I bear witness that there is no god but God.

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله .

I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God.

أشهد أن محمداً رسول الله .

I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God.

أشهد أن محمداً رسول الله .

Come to prayer. Come to prayer.

حي على الصلاة . حي على الصلاة .

Come to prosperity. Come to prosperity.

حي على الفلاح . حي على الفلاح .

The prayer is to be performed. The prayer is to be performed.

قد قامت الصلاة ، قد قامت الصلاة .

God is great. God is great.

الله أكبر ، الله أكبر .

There is no god but God.

لا إله إلا الله .

Notes

1. It is traditional that the *muezzin* should make the call to prayer in a slow and unhurried fashion with a pause between each two phrases, and that the second call should be made rapidly and that there should be no talking during it.
2. During the call to prayer one should face towards the *Ka'ba*, saying it aloud, even though one is alone in the desert.
3. If you miss the prayer due to oversleeping or forgetfulness, then you should recite to yourself both the call to prayer and the second call when you perform the prayer. If you have missed a number of prayers it is preferable that you recite at least the call to prayer and the second call for the first prayer, but only the second call for each of the other prayers.
4. The call to prayer and the second call are not obligatory for women but if they should say them then there is no harm in it. The *Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal* related:

“If they do so there is no harm done, and if they do not do so, it is permitted.”

'A'isha, as related by *Al-Bayhaqi*, used to make the call to prayer and the second call, leading the women in prayer and standing in their midst.

5. The listener should repeat the words of the *muezzin* in the second call as he does in the first call to prayer, except where the *muezzin* says “Come to prayer. Come to prosperity.”

حَيِّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ ، حَيِّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

Here the listener says “There is no power or strength except in god.”

لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله .

When the *muezzin* says “the prayer is to be performed”

قد قامت الصلاة

the listener says “May God raise it up and make it last forever.”

أقامها الله وأدامها .

C. FACING THE DIRECTION OF THE KA'BA

1. General

Islam is the religion of unity and monotheism. There is one God, one Prophet, one Book, and one direction to face. Muslims of the East and of the West look not only with their eyes but with their hearts towards the *Ka-ba*, the symbol of unity, the source of the radiant light of Muhammad (peace be upon him). All who perform the prayer must face towards the

Ka'ba in the holy city of *Mecca* in accordance with the word of God.

“So whence so ever thou startest forth, turn thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: And wheresoever ye are turn face thither.”

(Q. 2:150)

He who can actually see the *Ka'ba* should look directly at it. All that one can do, if it is not visible, is to face in its direction, for God does not place an undue burden upon anyone. Our forefathers in every country have determined the direction of the *Ka'ba* and have pointed the *Qibla* of the mosques towards it. You can therefore determine the direction of the *Ka'ba* in your house by reference to the mosque. Alternatively you may use a compass or the stars at night. When you face the Pole star, for instance, you always face north and the direction of the *Ka'ba* may be worked out from this.

2.THE RULE WHEN THE DIRECTION OF THE KA'BA CANNOT BE DETERMINED

Anyone who is unable to find the direction of the *Ka'ba* because, for instance, of clouds or darkness, must ask someone who does know to point him in the right direction. But if there is no one to ask, then he must decide for himself which is the right direction and perform the prayer facing that way. His prayer will still be correct and will not require repetition should it be discovered, after the prayer is completed, that he was in error. Should the mistake be pointed out while the prayer is in progress, he should turn towards the proper direction without interrupting his prayer.

Should you be performing the prayer in the direction which you think most likely to be correct, and someone sees you and says that you should face such and such a direction, then turn to it. This movement and change of direction will not render the prayer invalid. This has been established by *Ibn 'Umar*, as related by *Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*, who said:

“While the people of Quba' were performing the morning prayer a man came upon them and said ‘Last night, the *Qur'an* was revealed to the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) and he was commanded to turn towards the *Ka'ba*. So turn towards it.’ They were facing Syria¹ so they turned towards the *Ka'ba*.”

If the direction of the *Ka'ba* remains unknown for a long time, one should ascertain the direction each time he performs the prayer. Should he change his mind he should then follow his new decision, but those prayers already performed need not be repeated.

¹Jerusalem

3. **WHEN THE DIRECTION OF THE KA'BA IS NOT FACED**

Facing in the direction of the *Ka'ba* is a religious duty which may not be dispensed with except in certain circumstances:

1. When in fear, peril, or sickness, it is permitted to perform the prayer in a direction other than that of the *Ka'ba* should it be impossible to face it absolutely. The religion of Islam is not burdensome. The Prophet says, "If I command you to do something, do what you are able."

"If ye fear pray on foot, or riding." (Q. 2:239)

Al-Bukhari relates that *Ibn 'Umar* said, "(Pray) facing the direction of the *Ka'ba* or otherwise."

2. The supererogatory prayer for the rider. It is permissible for a rider to perform a supererogatory prayer on his animal by making the motions of bowing and prostrating. The motions which indicate the prostrations should be lower than those of the bows. The direction he faces is that of the animal he is riding. The same thing holds for a passenger on a ship, or airplane, or train. He begins to pray by facing the direction of the *Ka'ba* and continues the prayer in the same position even though the direction in which he is travelling changes.

Imam Ahmad, *Al-Tirmidhi*, and *Muslim* all relate that the Prophet used to perform the prayer on his riding beast when travelling from Mecca to Medina regardless of the direction he faced. Thus has the lord revealed:

"Whithersoever ye turn there is the presence of God." (Q. 2:116)

This was the Prophet's custom with supererogatory prayers but not with the obligatory ones.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW THE PRAYER IS PERFORMED

I. General

We have seen what is to be done before commencing the prayer. These things have been done since the time of the Prophet and are the inheritance of those who came after him. Now that we wish to begin the prayer, what are our duties and how do we perform it?

Having fulfilled all the conditions for cleanliness and having covered the private parts, the time for the prayer has arrived. Stand with your eyes facing towards the *Ka'ba* and your heart facing towards God. Dedicate your intentions and actions to Him and resolve upon the prayer to Him.

Prepare your heart and let your soul be in fear of the Lord, for you are about to stand before the Master of Heaven and Earth. Call to your mind the majesty and glory of God. In the measure you call Him to mind, in such measure will be your dread. Then do the following:

1. Commence the prayer with the Words of Greatness, that is, "God is great" while at the same time raising the open hands and placing the thumbs behind the lobes of the ears.
2. Then place the right hand over the left and put them together on your chest.
3. After this recite the private prayer which is called the Opening and Facing God Prayer. This may be any of those with which the Prophet used to open the prayer after saying the Words of Greatness and before reciting the *Ka'ba*.

Here are three of the private prayers which the Prophet used. You should memorize one of them and use it as the Opening Prayer each time the prayer is performed.

a. *The first private prayer*

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ ، وَبِحَمْدِكَ ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ ،
وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ .

"Praise and glory be to God. Blessed be Your name. Exalted by Your majesty and glory. There is no god but You."

b. *The second private prayer*

«اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ
 الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ ، اللَّهُمَّ تَقَيَّ مِنْ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا يُنْتَقَى
 الثَّوْبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْنِي مِنْ
 خَطَايَايَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ^(٢) .»

“O Lord, separate me from my sins as You have separated the east and the west.

“O Lord, cleanse me of my sins as the white robe is cleansed from dirt.

“O Lord, wash away my sins with water, snow, and hail.”

c. *The third private prayer*

«وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ، إِنَّ صَلَاتِي
 وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ،
 وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ .»

“I turn my face to Him who has created heaven and earth, a true believer and a Muslim, not one of the polytheists. My prayer and my devoutness belong to God, Lord of the worlds, Who has no partner.

Therefore am I commanded and therefore do I submit.”

We will content ourselves with this portion of the prayer. The Prophet used to recite it at the voluntary evening prayer only, but the tradition in full (as related by *Imam Ahmad* and *Muslim*) concludes:

«اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الْمَلِكُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، أَنْتَ رَبِّي
 وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ ، ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ، وَأَعْتَرَفْتُ بِذُنُوبِي فَأَغْفِرْ لِي
 ذُنُوبِي جَمِيعًا ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ،

Related by *Muslim* and *Al-Bukhari*.

وَأَهْدِنِي لَأَحْسَنَ الْأَخْلَاقِ، لَا يَهْدِي لِأَحْسَنِهَا إِلَّا
 أَنْتَ، وَأَصْرِفْ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا، لَا يَصْرِفُ عَنِّي سَيِّئَهَا
 إِلَّا أَنْتَ، بِسُوءِكَ وَسَعْدَ بَيْتِكَ، وَالْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي يَدَيْكَ
 وَالشَّرُّ لَيْسَ إِلَيْكَ، وَأَنَا بِكَ وَإِلَيْكَ، تَبَارَكْتَ
 وَتَعَالَيْتَ أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ⁽¹⁾،

“O Lord You are the King. There is no god but You. You are my Master and I am Your slave. I have done wrong. I acknowledge my sins. Only You can forgive sins. Guide me to the finest moral character. Only You can guide me to the best. Turn away an evil nature. Only You can turn away its evil. I obey You and rejoice in You. All prosperity is in Your hands and there can be no evil in You. I am Yours and belong to You. You are blessed and exalted. I seek Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance.

4. Having said the Opening Prayer, seek the protection of God before beginning the recitation of the *Qur'an*. “I seek the protection of God from the accursed Satan.” This is to be said only at the start of the first *rak'a*.¹

اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

In subsequent *rak'as* it is sufficient to say “In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful”,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

which should also be said after seeking God's protection from Satan.

5. Then recite the Opening Verse of the *Qur'an*, reflecting and pondering on its meaning.

(الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ، مَالِكِ

يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ، إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ، إِهْدِنَا
الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ، صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ، غَيْرِ
الْمَغضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ ، وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ .

“Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgement. Thee do we worship and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight path. The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.”

(Q. Chapter 1)

It is the traditional law that each person performs the prayer, be he an *Imam*, accompanied by an *Imam*, or by himself, say “*Amen*” immediately after reciting this chapter. Say it aloud where the prayer is said aloud and whisper it when the prayer is said quietly. The mosques used to shake and resound to the cry of “*Amen*” coming from the throats and hearts of the devout slaves of God. “*Amen*” is itself a prayer which means “O Lord, answer my prayer.”

6. After reciting the Opening Verse of the *Qur'an*, tradition requires you to recite one of the short chapters such as CIII (“The Declining Day”), CX (“Help”), CXII (“Unity”), CXIII (“Daybreak”), or at least three verses of the *Qur'an*. Tradition also requires that this recitation take place after reciting the Opening Verse in the two *rak'as* of the morning prayer, the two *rak'as* of the Friday prayer, the first two *rak'as* of the noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening prayers, and in every *rak'a* of the supererogatory or voluntary prayers.

7. At the end of the recitation of the Open Verse of the *Qur'an* and whatever you might recite after it, say the Words of Greatness, then bow. It is preferable to raise your hands¹ alongside your ears and during the bow to lower them down to the knees. Tradition holds that the head should be level with the buttocks, supporting yourself by putting your hands on your knees, keeping them away from your sides. The fingers on the knees and legs should be wide apart and your back should be straight. While bowing speak the name of God saying “Praise be to my glorious Lord” three times.

¹It is preferable that the worshipper raises his hands on four occasions: first, when saying the opening “God is Great”; second when bowing; third when he stands upright after bowing, fourth when he stands up for the third *rak'a*. Al-Bayhaqi, relating from Al-Hakim says: “We know of no traditional law on which the four caliphs, the ten who were promised paradise, and the Companions who came after him — in spite of their being scattered in distant lands — were more agreed that it had emanated from the Prophet, than this.”

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ)

8. Rise upright from the bow. It is recommended that you raise your hands alongside your ears. While raising your body say, whether you are the *Imam*, with the *Imam*, or alone, "May God hear he who praises Him."

(سَمِعَ اللهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ)

When you are upright say, "Our Lord be praised."

(رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ)

This is the minimum to which you may confine yourself in words of praise when straightening up from the bows and it is preferable to add to these words that which has been established by genuine tradition.

"May God hear he who praises Him."

سمع الله لمن حمده .

"Our Lord be praised, with much praise, goodness and blessing."

سَمِعَ اللهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ ، رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ

مِلءَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ، وَمِثْلَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَبَعْدُ .

"May God hear he who praises Him. O Lord, the praise which fills heaven and earth, all which is between them, and whatever You wish to be filled, is Yours."

9. Having straightened from the bow, sink to the ground in prostration, first onto the knees, then the hands well in front of them, then the forehead, then the nose. Place the palms of your hands on the ground with the fingers close together in a natural position and put your forehead between your hands. Your feet should be upright during the prostration and must not be raised from the ground. The tips of the toes must point towards the *Ka'ba* and the bottom of the toes must be in contact with the ground. Do not let the upper part of the foot touch the ground. You must prostrate yourself with absolute humility, remembering always that you have come close to your Lord. While you are prostrated say, "Praise be to my exalted Lord" three times.

(سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى)

You may not recite this fewer than three times, however you may say it more if you are alone, in which case it is recommended that you say it ten times.

It is also recommended that you should not confine yourself to this phrase but should add a private prayer. This is because the Prophet said:

“The slave is nearest to his Lord when prostrating himself. Therefore increase the private prayer.”

These are some of the private prayers the Prophet used to say while prostrating himself.

١- اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ سَجَدْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ وَلَكَ أَسَلْتُ،
سَجَدَ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي خَلَقَهُ فَصَوَّرَهُ ، فَأَحْسَنَ
صُورَهُ فَشَقَّ سَمْعَهُ وَبَصَرَهُ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ

- a. “O Lord, I prostrate myself before You, in You I believe and to You I submit. I bow down my face to Him who has created and fashioned it, Who has made its form good, Who has brought hearing and sight to it. God be praised to the most excellent of Creators.”¹

٢- رَبِّ أَعْطِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا، وَزَكَّهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ
مَنْ زَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيَّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا^(٢).

- b. “O Lord, give my soul devoutness. Purify it. No-one but You can purify it. You are its Lord and Master.”²

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ ،
وَأَعُوذُ بِعَافَاكَ مِنْ مُعَاقِبَتِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ
لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ^(١).

- c. “O Lord, I seek the protection of Your favor from Your wrath. I seek refuge in Your protection from Your punishment. I seek refuge in You from Yourself. I cannot count the praises of You, for You have praised Yourself.”³

¹Related by *Ahmad* and *Muslim*.

²Related by *Imam Ahmad*.

³Related by *Muslim*.

٤- اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي خَطِيئَتِي ، وَجَهْلِي وَإِسْرَافِي فِي
 أَمْرِي وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي جَدِّي
 وَخَطِيئَتِي ، وَعَمْدِي وَكُلَّ ذَلِكَ عِنْدِي ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي
 مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ ، وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ ، وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُ ،
 أَنْتَ إِلَهِي ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ .

d. "O Lord, forgive me my sins, my ignorance, my excesses, add that of which you know more than I do. O Lord, forgive me my wealth, my error, my intention, and all that is in me. O Lord, forgive me for what I have done and what I have not done; for what I have kept secret and what I have done openly. You are my God. There is no god but You."

These then are some of the private prayers which the Prophet used to say during his prostrations. It is recommended that you should learn some of them by heart and say them, following the example of the great Messenger of God. Also, during your prostration, you should pray privately about religious and other matters which concern you.

10. After the tranquility of the prostration, the person performing the prayer raises his head saying "God is great." **الله أكبر**

Then, laying the left foot flat on the ground he sits back on it, keeping his right foot in its original position with the tips of the toes pointing towards the *Ka'ba*. He puts his right hand on his right thigh and his left hand on his left thigh, with his fingers in a natural position close to the knees. He sits composedly then prostrates himself, again saying "God is great."

This second prostration, the words which are said, and the private prayer, are exactly the same as in the first prostration.

It is recommended that you say the following private prayer between the two prostrations:

اللهم اغفر لي، وارحمي، واعف عني، وعافني، وارزقني،
 واجبرني، واسترني .

"O Lord, forgive me, have mercy upon me, pardon me, heal me, provide for me, console me, and be a shield for me."

11. When you have completed the second prostration, raise your head saying "God is great."

This prostration completes one *rak'a*.¹

Note: Learn the elements of the *rak'a* by heart until you have mastered them in every detail for they are the very essence of the prayer. Whatever we will be saying and explaining about the prayer is based on your thorough understanding of these details.

II. The Five Prayers

God has prescribed that Muslims perform the prayer five times daily. In this way they are cleansed and their hearts are purified. They are linked with Almighty God, keeping Him in their minds constantly and everlastingly. Only the devout and pious enjoy the rapture of this meeting and taste the sweetness of faith and worship. God has promised that whoever performs these prayers will enter paradise. He who does not perform the prayers has no such promise and God will punish him or forgive him as He wishes. The five prayers are as fifty and good deeds are rewarded tenfold.

The five prayers contain both the obligatory religious duties and the voluntary prayers imposed by tradition. The obligatory duties comprise seventeen *rak'as* a day; two at the morning prayer, three at the sunset prayer, and four each at the noon, afternoon, and evening prayers. For the performance of these prayers one is justly rewarded; for their neglect one is rightfully punished. These are the prayers which are prescribed by the holy *Qur'an*.

III. The Voluntary Prayers

The voluntary prayers number twelve *rak'as*, six at the noon prayer and two at each of the morning, sunset and evening prayers. Through these prayers man will be rewarded and through them he draws closer to God. However, one will not be punished for their neglect. The Prophet always paid strict attention to the voluntary prayers. In him we have a fine example and must ourselves pay attention to and be guided by him — for this God has commanded us to do:

"So take what the Apostle Assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you." (Q. 59:7)

We shall now explain in detail the five prayers together with the number of obligatory and voluntary *rak'as*.

¹This Arabic word is retained since the English language contains no equivalent to signify the complete ritual of one bow and two prostrations. For the first reference to the term see above p. 42, and also Translator's preface.

IV. The Morning Prayer

A. GENERAL

On waking in the morning say the Words of Witness: "I bear witness that there is no god but God. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God." Then praise God who gives you life after death saying

الحمد لله الذي أماتني ثم أحياي وإليه النشور

"Praise be to God who has caused me to die and then restored me to life. He is the resurrection." Then make ready for the prayer. Having fulfilled all the conditions — the details of which have already been mentioned — turn towards the *Ka'ba* and perform the two voluntary *rak'as* of the dawn, of which the Prophet said, "The two dawn *rak'as* are better than this world and all that is in it." It is a confirmed tradition that the Prophet observed these two *rak'aseven* when he was travelling. After the two voluntary *rak'as*, perform the two obligatory *rak'as* which might be prolonged by the recitation, aloud, of passages from the *Qur'an*. Through this prayer one may feel the glory of Islam and enjoy with the coming of dawn the sweetness of the *Qur'an*:

"The dawn recital carries their testimony." (Q. 17:78)

Greet the new day with mercy and praise, beginning with a recitation from the *Qur'an* which will illuminate your soul. It will shine in the divine light of the tender dawn which is filled with everlasting mercy.

B. HOW THE TWO RAK'AS ARE PERFORMED

We have already described in detail how to perform the first *rak'a*.

At the end of the second prostration of the first *rak'a* stand up and say, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." Then recite the Opening Verse and a further short part of the *Qur'an* and follow this with the bow and prostrations which you performed in the first *rak'a*. At the end of the second prostration remain seated on your left foot. While sitting in this position your left foot is laid flat on the ground and the right foot remains upright with the tips of the toes pointed towards the *Ka'ba*. Place your right hand on your right knee with the fingers together except for the index finger and thumb which remain outspread. Placing your left hand on your left knee, recite the Words of Witness and ask for the blessing of the Prophet, saying:

«التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ . السَّلَامُ
عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ . السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا

وَعَلَىٰ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ .

“Greetings, prayers, and the good things of life belong to God. The peace, mercy and blessing of God be upon you O Prophet. Peace be upon us and on the devout slaves of God. I bear witness that there is no god but God¹ and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا
صَلَّيْتَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ، وَبَارِكْ عَلَىٰ
مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُّبِجِدٌ .

“O Lord, bless Muhammad and his family as You Blessed Abraham and his family. Give Your blessing to Muhammad and his family as You gave Your blessing to Abraham and his family in the worlds. You are the most praised, the most wonderful.”

These two verses together are known as the Words of Greeting.

After this, it is permitted to the worshipper to make those private supplications which obtain for him the good things of this world and of the next. Indeed this is the very time which is recommended for private prayer, whether the prayer be traditional or not. However, the traditional prayer is preferable and three prayers follow which the Prophet used to say after the last Words of Witness and before the Words of Peace with which the ritual prayer ends.

1. *’Ali* said that when the Prophet used to stand in prayer. The last thing he said between the Words of Witness and the Words of Peace was:²

¹At this point the forefinger of the right hand is raised in a slight movement, a symbolic indication of the Oneness of God.

²Related by *Muslim*

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخْرَجْتُ وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُ،
 وَمَا أَسْرَفْتُ، وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي، أَنْتَ الْمَقْدَمُ
 وَأَنْتَ الْمُوْخِرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ .

“Oh Lord, forgive me for what I have done and what I have not done; for what I have kept secret and what I have done openly; for my excess and of that which you know more than I do. You provide and You take away. There is no god but You.”

2. 'Abd Allah B. 'Amru said taht Abu Bakr said to the Prophet, “Teach me a private prayer that I may say during the ritual prayer.” The Prophet said:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ظُلْمًا كَثِيرًا
 وَلَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ فَاغْفِرْ لِي مَغْفِرَةً مِنْ
 عِنْدِكَ وَأَرْحَمْنِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ .

“O Lord, I have done great wrong. Only You can forgive sins. Grant me forgiveness and mercy. You are the All Merciful, the All Forgiving.

٣- اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ وَالْكَسْلِ
 وَأُرْذَلِ الْعُمْرِ وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ وَفِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ .

“O Lord, I seek your protection from meanness, from laziness, from a base life, from the torment of the grave, and from the trial of living and dying.”

There are many other prayers but for now let us content ourselves with these in the hope that they will be sufficient to avail us with God.

After the Words of Greeting and the private prayer, conclude the prayer with the Words of Peace. First turn your head to the right saying “The peace and mercy of God be upon you.”

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله

Then turn your head to the left saying "The peace and mercy of God be upon you."

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله .

Although this concludes the prayer, it has been related that the Prophet, after saying the Words of Peace twice, would say a private prayer. It is therefore traditional that the Muslim memorize this prayer and, taking God's great messenger as an example, also say the private prayer. Here is what he used to say:

1. *Thawban* said: "The Messenger of God, when he had finished his prayer asked God's forgiveness three times, saying,

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ ،
تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

'O God, You are peace and peace comes from You. Blessed be the possessor of Majesty and Reverence.'

2. It is related by '*Abd Al-Rahman b. Ghanam* that the Prophet said:

٢ - عن عبد الرحمن بن غنم ان النبي ﷺ قال :

مَنْ قَالَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْصَرِفَ وَيَبْنِي رِجْلَهُ مِنْ صَلَاةِ
الْمَغْرِبِ وَالصُّبْحِ ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ .
لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ . عَشْرَ مَرَّاتٍ . كُتِبَ لَهُ بِكُلِّ وَاحِدَةٍ
عَشْرُ صَدَقَاتٍ وَوُجِّهَتْ عَنْهُ عَشْرُ سَيِّئَاتٍ وَرَفِعَ لَهُ
عَشْرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَكَانَتْ حِرْزًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكْرُوهٍ وَحِرْزًا
مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ، وَلَمْ يَحُلَّ لِذَنْبٍ يُدْرِكُهُ ^(١) إِلَّا
الشُّرْكَ . فَكَانَ مِنْ أَفْضَلِ النَّاسِ عَمَلًا إِلَّا رَجُلًا
يَفْضُلُهُ بِقَوْلٍ أَفْضَلَ بِمَا قَالَ .

“Whosoever says before turning away from the evening and morning prayers,

“There is no god but God, He is One. He has no partner, His is the dominion and his is the praise. In His hand is prosperity. He brings life and death. He has power over all things: whoever says this ten times, to him is it ordained that each time shall count as ten almsgiving, ten sins shall be wiped out; he will be raised ten ranks. It will be a talisman against all adversity, a talisman against the accursed Satan. No sin will consume him but that of polytheism. He will become the finest of men in his deeds, being bettered only by one who says anything better than he himself has said.”

3. *Al'Mughira b. Shu'ba* relates that the Prophet used to say at the end of every obligatory prayer.

وعن المغيرة بن شعبة : أن النبي ﷺ كان
يقول دُبْرَ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ مَكْتُوبَةٍ : لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ اللَّهُمَّ لَا مَانِعَ لِمَا أَعْطَيْتَ وَلَا مُعْطَى لِمَا
مَنْعْتَ ، وَلَا يَنْفَعُ ذَا الْجَدِّ مِنْكَ الْجَدُّ .

“There is no god but God. He is One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and His the praise. He has power over all things. O Lord, none may withhold what You have given and none may give what You have withheld. His fortune will in no way serve the rich man in Your eyes.”

At the end of each prayer the Prophet used to recite the verse of the *Throne* which is:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ
وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا
الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا

خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ
 كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ
 الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ .

“God; there is no god but Him, the Living, the Self-sustaining Eternal. No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there who can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they bypass aught of his knowledge except as He willeth. His throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them, for He is the Most High, the Supreme.” (Q. 2:254)

You should memorize it well and recite it immediately after each prayer. Whoever recites it after his prayer is in God’s protection until the next prayer.

The Prophet used to recite the chapter of the *Qur’an* which begins “I seek refuge . . .” and which is entitled “Daybreak”, also “Men”, immediately after the prayer. To these he added the chapter entitled “Unity.”¹ He also used to say

اللهم أجبرني من النار

“O Lord, preserve me from the fire” seven times immediately after the morning prayer and likewise after the sunset prayer before speaking to anyone. To this he used to add, seven times, the words

اللهم اني أسألك الجنة

“O Lord, I ask you for paradise.”

Not only this, but he used to say the Words of Glory (Glory be to God),

the Words of Praise (Praise be to God), سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

The Words of Greatness (God is Great), اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

each thirty-three times and to make up a hundred phrases he would add:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ،

¹CXIII, CXIV, and CXII respectively.

لَهُ الْمَلِكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ .

"There is no god but God. He is One. He has no partner. His is the dominion and His the praise. He has power over all things." He would run them all together saying,

وَيَجْمَعُنْ بِقَوْلِهِ : اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ .

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ .

"God is great, glory be to God, praise be to God, God is great, glory be to God, praise be to God," and so on until he had said each phrase thirty-three times.

In this manner the Prophet brought his prayer to an end, saying the Words of Peace, Glory, Greatness, and Praise; seeking His forgiveness and making private supplication to Him. His tongue was always moist with the constant mention of the name of God, whether he was standing, sitting, or lying on his side. He would meditate on the creation of heaven and earth. Each thought was a lesson, each silence a thought, and every word a mention of the name of God.

It is fitting that we should do as he did; say a private prayer when he did; and copy him in his virtuous habits, word for word:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

لِمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

"Ye have indeed in the Apostle of God a beautiful pattern for anyone whose hope is in God and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of God." (Q. 33:21)

V. *The Noon Prayer (Zuhr)*

A. *GENERAL*

When the day is half done a man, stricken with fatigue and weary from work, seeks spiritual relief. It is at this time that he performs the noon prayer, an ablution which helps to restore his bodily vigor. He then turns towards the *Ka'ba* and is alone with his Lord. In spiritual communication with his Maker, he forgets his labor and his spiritual vigor is restored. Upon leaving the prayer his lassitude will have been shaken off and he will return to his work with renewed vigor and determination.

The noon prayer has four traditional *rak'as* that precede the obligatory prayer. According to one confirmed tradition, two traditional *rak'as* are

performed before the obligatory prayer (which has four *rak'as*) and two after it. The recitation during the whole of the noon prayer is said to oneself, not aloud, whether one is leading the prayer, being led in prayer, or alone.;

B. HOW TO PERFORM THE FOUR RAK'AS

We have described the morning prayer which consists of two *rak'as*, in detail. If you know it well it will be easy for you to perform all the prayers. When the prayer consists of four *rak'as* it is the noon, afternoon, or sunset prayer.

When you have performed the first two *rak'as* sit back and recite the Words of Witness for the first time. After you are seated, recite the Words of Greeting as far as the Words of Witness, that is:

والتَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ ، السَّلَامُ
عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا
وَعَلَىٰ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

“Greetings, prayers, and the good things of life belong to God. The peace, mercy, and Blessing of God be upon you O Prophet. Peace be upon us and on the devout slaves of God. I bear witness that there is no god but God and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.

After this rise to your feet, place the right hand over the left and continue the prayer, performing the third and then the fourth *rak'a* during which you should recite only the Opening of the *Qur'an*. At the end of the fourth *rak'a* sit back and recite the first and last parts of the Words of Witness — that is, the whole of the Words of Greeting including the Words of blessing — then make your private prayer, and end with the Words of Peace. The obligatory prayer is followed by two traditional *rak'as* and with these the noon prayer is complete.

C. IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you arrive at the mosque and see that the prayer has begun and that the *Imam* is praying with the people, do not perform any voluntary prayer but join the congregation and follow the *Imam*. The Messenger of God said that once the prayer is being performed, no prayer except the obligatory

prayer is permitted. This applies to all prayers and is not specifically for one time rather than another. According to the command of the Prophet you must follow the *Imam* even if you know that there is sufficient time for the voluntary prayer and that you can then catch him up.

VI. The Afternoon Prayer ('Asr)

Almighty God says:

“Guard strictly your prayers, especially the Middle Prayer, and stand before God with all devotion.” (Q. 2:238)

According to most authorities, the middle prayer is the afternoon prayer. It consists of four obligatory *rak'as* which are carried out exactly as the four *rak'as* of the noon prayer. During the first two *rak'as* recite the Opening Verse of the *Qur'an* and another chapter with it, then sit back for the first Words of Witness. In the second two *rak'as* recite only the Opening Verse of the *Qur'an* and at the end of the fourth *rak'a* sit back for the final Words of Witness, concluding with the Words of Peace.

The performance of voluntary prayers in the afternoon is not a confirmed tradition, however there are four voluntary *rak'as* to be carried out before the obligatory ones although this also is not supported by tradition. Two *rak'as* may also be performed.

Recitation during the afternoon prayer is performed silently to oneself throughout all the *rak'as*. Until the time comes for the sunset prayer, performing prayer after the afternoon prayer is to be avoided.

VII. The Sunset Prayer (Maghrib)

The Muslim starts the day with mercy (prayer is a mercy), praising and glorifying Almighty God, and ends his day with mercy and thanks, prayer to his Lord who changes night into day, day into night, and one thing into another.

There are three obligatory *rak'asin* the sunset prayer. The first two *rak'as* are performed by reciting aloud after which one sits back for the first Words of Witness. Then rise to your feet and perform the third *rak'a* reciting to yourself only the Opening Verse of the *Qur'an*. After the second prostration of this *rak'a* sit back for the last Words of Witness and recite the whole of the Words of Greeting. After private prayer the obligatory prayer concludes with the Words of Peace. Following the obligatory prayer are two voluntary *rak'as* which are a confirmed tradition. These two *rak'as* complete the sunset prayer.

Note: All the traditional *rak'as* (*Sunnah*) are not performed reciting aloud but to oneself. Reciting aloud only takes place during the two obligatory *rak'as* of the morning prayer and the first two obligatory *rak'as* of the sunset and evening prayers. During the remainder of the obligatory *rak'as*,

recitation is to oneself.

VIII. The Evening Prayer (Isha')

This consists of four obligatory *rak'as* which are performed in the same way as are the four *rak'as* of the noon prayer except that the recitations in the first two *rak'as* are made aloud. The obligatory *rak'as* are followed by two voluntary *rak'as*, these later in accordance with confirmed traditional practice. Before the obligatory *rak'as* it is permitted to perform two or four voluntary *rak'as*. This prayer is brought to an end by the Separate Prayer.

IX. The Separate Prayer (Witr)

The meaning of the Arabic name for this prayer is "odd" and is the name given to the single *rak'a* which is separated from all which has gone before. It may also consist of three, five, or seven *rak'as* all linked together as in the obligatory *rak'as* of the sunset prayer. It is a name given to three *rak'as* linked together.

The Separate Prayer is a confirmed traditional practice and is indeed the best attested of the traditions. According to some *Imams* it has the force of obligation.

The minimum number of *rak'as* in the Separate Prayer is one and the maximum is thirteen. The best number is three and this is what most Muslims do today.

The author of *Al-Musawa* says: "In the view of most people, the minimum number of *rak'as* in the Separate Prayer is one and the maximum is eleven or thirteen. The nearest to perfection is three, but to exceed that number is better. The Prophet used to perform three *rak'as*. During the first he would recite, after the Opening Verse, 'The Most High',¹ in the second 'The Unbelievers',² and in the third 'Unity', 'Daybreak', and 'Men'.³

The time for the Separate Prayer is from the end of the evening prayer until daybreak and it is the last prayer of the night. Since this is so, and in order that its performance shall not be a burden, many ways have been related for performing it — all of them correct:

1. The three *rak'as* are all linked together, therefore you do not sit back except after the third in which the whole of the Words of Greeting are recited, followed by the Words of Peace. This method prevents it from being like the sunset prayer. The Prophet forbade that the Separate Prayer should resemble the sunset prayer.

¹LXXXVII

²CIX

³CXII-CXIV

2. Perform two *rak'as* and round them off with the Words of Peace. Then perform a single *rak'a*, thus completing your prayer.
3. In this method the three *rak'as* are not separated by the Words of Peace, but rather by sitting back after the first two and then by saying at the third the Words of Obedience, then bowing. In each *rak'a* the Opening Verse and another is recited. If one wishes to say the Words of Obedience, first recite the Words of Greatness and then raise the hands. Either of these two private prayers are recited:

(اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْتَعِينُكَ ، وَنَسْتَغْفِرُكَ ، وَنَسْتَهْدِيكَ ،
 وَنُؤْمِنُ بِكَ ، وَنَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ ، وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْكَ ،
 وَتُفِيْ عَلَيْكَ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ ، نَشْكُرُكَ وَلَا نَكْفُرُكَ ،
 وَنَخْلَعُ وَنَتْرُكُ مَنْ يَفْجُرُكَ .

اللَّهُمَّ إِلَيْكَ نَعْبُدُ ، وَلَكَ نَصَلِّي وَنَسْجُدُ ، وَإِلَيْكَ
 نَسْعَى وَنَخْشَى ، نَرْجُو رَحْمَتَكَ ، وَنَخْشَى عَذَابَكَ ،
 إِنَّ عَذَابَكَ الْجِدِّ بِالْكَفَّارِ مُلْحِقٌ وَيَقْرَأُ مُلْحَقٌ بِالْفَتْحِ أَيْضاً .

(i) "O Lord, we seek help from You, we seek Your forgiveness, we seek Your guidance. We turn in repentance to You. We place our trust in You. We laud Your name. We give thanks to You for the prosperity You have bestowed. We do not turn from You in disbelief. We renounce and turn away from whomever disobeys You and breaks Your commandments.

"O Lord, we worship You. To You we pray and to You we kneel. To You we hasten, to work for You and to serve You. We beg for Your mercy and fear Your punishment. On whom your punishment falls is surely an unbeliever. Your punishment will overtake and strike the unbeliever."

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ ، وَعَافِنِي فِيمَنْ
 عَافَيْتَ ، وَتَوَلَّنِي فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ ، وَبَارِكْ لِي فِيمَا أَعْطَيْتَ ،

وَقِنِي شَرًّا مَا قَضَيْتَ ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ ،
 إِنَّهُ لَا يَذُلُّ مَنْ وَأَلَيْتَ ، وَلَا يَعْزُ مَنْ عَادَيْتَ ،
 تَبَارَكَتَ رَبُّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ

(ii) "O Lord, lead me to the true faith with those You have guided. Pardon me with those You have pardoned. Protect me with those You have protected. Bless me with what You have given. Keep me safe from the evil You have ordained for You decree and none degrees upon You. No-one who is in Your care is brought down and no-one is rewarded to whom You show enmity. O Lord, You are most praised, most sublime."

According to many *Imams*, the Words of Obedience (*Qunut*) are not said except in the second half of *Ramadan* but according to the *Hanafis* they may be recited throughout the year. Others, including *Imam Malik* hold that it is incorrect to say them at any time of the year.

With the ending of the Separate Prayer, the evening prayer and the five prayers are complete. In this way the Muslim spends his day and night in worship, obedience, and sincerity of purpose to God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, and goes to sleep with praise, exaltation, thanks and prayer to God, just as he awoke in the morning.

X. Some Important Notes:

1. While you are performing the prayer you must observe the proprieties and rules. You must not speak or look to your right or left nor move your limbs or body other than as custom requires. If you speak during prayer, or concern yourself with anything not connected with the prayer, or deliberately break any of the rules, your prayer is invalid and you must do it again, this time fulfilling all the required conditions.
2. When you are performing the prayer, do not raise your eyes to heaven, and do not close them. Your eyes should be open. If you are standing you should direct your gaze to the spot where you will be prostrating yourself. If you are bowing you should direct your gaze to the top of your feet. When you sit back to say the Words of greeting, look at your right hand and the finger which will be raised during the Words of Witness.
3. You are permitted to perform the prayer wearing shoes. When this is done you must first turn them over and look at the soles. Should you see any wetness or defilement wipe it off on the ground. You may then perform the prayer in them. It is a traditional practice to perform the prayer wear-

ing shoes so as to be differentiated from the Jews.

The whole earth is a mosque and ritually pure, therefore pray wherever you may be when the time for prayer arrives; but never in a cemetery, in the bathroom or where total ablution is carried out, for the prayer performed by a person in these places is invalid.

4. If you have been eating garlic, onions, leeks, or anything similar which has an unpleasant odor, you should not enter the mosque thereby causing annoyance to the worshippers, but rather wait until the odor has dissipated.

5. It is a traditional custom to say, on entering the mosque:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ
لِي ذُنُوبِي ، وَأَفْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ .

“In the name of God. Peace be on the messenger of God. O Lord, forgive me my sins and open to me the gates of Your mercy.”

You should step inside with the right foot first and leave with the left foot first, saying:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ، اللَّهُمَّ
اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي وَأَفْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ فَضْلِكَ .

“In the name of God. A blessing and peace be on the messenger of God. O Lord, forgive me my sins, and open to me the gates of Your favor.”

6. A person performing the prayer may not allow any thoughts to enter his mind which are contrary to a state of humility. On the contrary, he must concern himself only with thoughts of God and his dependence on Him. If such a thought comes to him, his prayer is not made invalid but he must put it out of mind and return to humility and thinking of the majesty of God before Whom he is standing.

7. If in the course of prayer a snake or scorpion should pass by, then kill it. This action will not invalidate the prayer. If a small child should cling to you while you are performing the prayer, either put him to one side or carry him on your shoulder and continue the prayer. If someone knocks on the door while you are performing the prayer and there is no one else in the house, go to the door and open it. These simple movements will not invalidate the prayer.

8. A Muslim may not pass in front of anyone performing the prayer no matter what inconvenience the waiting may cause. The worshipper should see that some sort of a screen is placed in front of him such as a pole, or a tree, a wall, a chair, an upright stick, or draw a line on the ground if he is unable to do anything else. It is permitted to pass on the other side of this screen. If however, anyone passes between this mark and the worshipper, the worshipper may push him away and if he refuses to go then he may fight with him, for surely the intruder is an evil.

A strange woman passing immediately in front of a worshipper invalidates the prayer except in the Sacred Mosque of the Holy City of *Mecca* where this is permitted to pass, even though the person is a strange woman.

9. If some calamity should befall the individual or the community such as an enemy attack or the onset of an epidemic, or some other emergency, then saying the Words of Obedience (*Qunut*) during each of the five prayers becomes obligatory for the worshipper, whether he be alone or in a congregation, until the calamity has passed. Then the practice ceases.

The Words of Obedience are recited only during the last obligatory *rak'a*. The worshipper raises his hands after rising from the last prostration and makes a private prayer for himself and his community, invoking God against the enemies of his people and country by any supplication that he wishes.

10. It is permitted to say the Words of Praise (*Al-Hamdu Lillahi*) during the prayer for a favor which has taken place or for a sneeze. If a worshipper should come on a verse concerning punishment, tradition requires that he should seek refuge in God from it. If he should recite

“Has not He the Power to give life to the dead” (Q. 75:40)

and other verses which ask a question of this kind, he should then say, *Bala* “Yes.” If someone should say “Peace be upon you” while you are performing the prayer, answer him with no more than a gesture.

XI. The prostration of forgetfulness.

Man is subject to forgetfulness, so if you should forget something while performing your prayer — either doing something which is not prescribed or leaving something out — you must carry out two prostrations, similar to those in the prayer, reciting the Words of Greatness while going to the ground and rising at the end of the Words of Greeting. After this recite the Words of Peace, but omitting the Words of Witness.

If you are in doubt during the performance of the prayer, whether you have completed one or two *rak'as* you should regard it as one. If you are in doubt whether you have completed two or three, you should count them as two. And if you are in doubt whether you have completed three or four,

you should count them as three. The *rak'as* about which you are in doubt should then be completed reciting the Words of Peace either before them or after them. Either way was established by the Messenger of God. If you forget to say the first Words of Witness, perform two *rak'as* and stand up for the third without sitting back. Complete the prayer, then make two further prostrations before or after the Words of Peace of the last *rak'a*. This atones for your act of forgetfulness.

If the *Imam* forgets something, both he and those following him must perform these two prostrations, but should one of those who are being led in prayer forget something, neither he nor the *Imam* need perform them.

If you are in the mosque awaiting the prayer, whether it be Friday or any other day, and you hear a reader of the *Qur'an* reciting a verse of prostration, then perform a single prostration. This is known as the Prostration of Recitation.

XII. Performing the Prayer by One who is Sick

If it is impossible for a sick person to stand, he should perform the prayer seated, bowing and prostrating himself from this position. If he is unable to bow or prostrate himself he should make a token gesture with his head, bringing it lower for a prostration than for a bow. If he is unable to sit, he should perform the prayer lying on his side facing in the direction of the *Ka'ba*. If he is unable to do that, he should perform the prayer lying on his back with his legs pointing towards the *Ka'ba* and making token gestures for the bows and prostrations. Should he be unable to do even this, then the prayer is postponed. Such is the importance of Prayer in Islam that you must perform it no matter what your condition. You may not ignore this duty even though you are sick. For this, glory be to Almighty God, the only One.

XIII. Congregational Prayer

Islam is the religion of unity and monotheism. It demands the acceptance of the Oneness of Almighty God, the existence of the one Word of God, and a tight clinging to the strong bond which links us with Him. It also requires Muslims to gather together for prayer in the mosques, to get to know each other, to be on good terms with each other, to be loyal and sincere towards each other, and to treat each other with truth and patience. Islam considers congregational prayer to be twenty-seven times better than solitary prayer, which demonstrates how glorious and important is the act of praying together. Here are some of the traditions concerning the Messenger of God regarding the superiority of praying together.

(i) *Ibn 'Umar* relates that the Prophet said "Praying together is twenty-

seven times better than the individual praying alone.”¹

(ii) *Abu Al-Darda'* heard the Prophet say: “There were never three villagers or bedouin who did not perform the prayer together and who were not overpowered by Satan. You must group together for the wolf eats the sheep which is away from the flock.”²

(iii) *Mu'adh b. Anas* quotes the Messenger of God as saying, “It is nothing but abhorrent, nothing but disbelief, nothing but hypocrisy, that whoever hears God’s caller calling to prayer, does not respond.”³

(iv) *Ibn Maktum*: “I said, ‘O Messenger of God. I am blind and my house is far away. My guide is not suitable for me. Do I not have permission to pray at home?’ He said, ‘Can you hear the call?’ I said ‘Yes’. He said, ‘There is no excuse for you.’”⁴

In another version of this tradition related by *Ahmad* and *Al-Tabrani*, the conversation went:

“O Messenger of God, my house is a long way off and I have become blind, yet I hear the call.”

“If you hear the call you must answer it even if you have to crawl and drag yourself over the ground.”

You will see from these sacred traditions, brother Muslim, the importance of congregational prayer which you must observe and which must not be avoided, even by a blind man. Treat it as a matter of conscience which must be observed. Recognise that it is a duty for all men of sound mind unless they are excused because of sickness or fear of being placed in peril, or because it will bring about undue hardship or harm. This is the most important tradition in Islam.

It is permitted for women to attend the congregation in the mosque and their husbands may not prevent them from doing so unless it is feared that harm will come to them. However, it is preferable for women to perform the prayer in the house rather than in the mosque. The reward for congregational prayer will be obtained even though there are only two, one of whom is a child or a woman, although the greater the number the better it is. Congregational prayer is the most glorious of Islamic religious practices, the greatest of religious acts, whereby the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the wretched, all stand before God with no difference between them, all the same. The best of them are those who fear God. In congregational prayer, impartiality, equality, and obedience are

¹Related by *Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.

²Related by *Abu Da'ud* and *Al-Nasa'i*.

³Related by *Ahmad*.

⁴Related by *Ahmad* and *Abu Da'ud*.

visibly evident when the rich and the poor and the ruler and the subject stand in a single row, meeting in one place. Once Muslims know its meaning and significance how can they ever abandon or neglect it? How can they complain to God that Muslims have deserted them and kept away from them?

XIV. How the Congregational Prayer is Performed

If you are a member of a group and you all wish to perform the prayer, you must perform it together and not individually. The *Imam* should be the one among you who recites the *Qur'an* best and if you are all equal in this respect then the *Imam* should be the one who is most learned and most versed in the traditions of the Messenger of God. Should you all be equal in these respects then the oldest of you shall be appointed. In the mosques, the *Imams* are well-known and they lead the prayer, but they must be chosen with care.

After choosing the *Imam*, he goes forward to perform the prayer with you and stands in front of you in the center of the row. Then he looks at the row in which the congregation is formed and straightens it out. (Straightening the row is one of the finer points of the ritual of the prayer.) After the second call the *Imam* says the Words of Greatness and performs the prayer. You say the Words of Greatness after him. A person who is being led in prayer does not follow the *Imam's* recitation of the *Qur'an* except for the Opening Verse. He follows the *Imam* in the movements of the prayer, bows after him, stands up from the bow after him, prostrates himself after him, and so on until the end of the prayer. The *Imam* says the Words of Peace and the congregation repeats them after Him. It is forbidden for a person being led in prayer to do anything before or even at the same time as the *Imam*.

The *Imam* recites aloud those parts of the prayer which are recited aloud and recites the other parts to himself. But those who are led in prayer recite only the Opening Verse and that at all times to themselves.

Congregational prayer may be held with only two people even though one of them is a child or a woman. If you wish to perform the prayer and there is only one other person with you, the one who is to be led stands to the right of the one who is leading — but not behind him. If another person comes, to follow your example, the person being led should move backwards, the third person joining him so as to form a row, with the *Imam* between them. If those who are following do not know the rule and form up on the right and left of the *Imam*, he should take them by the arm and push them back so as to form a row behind him. If a person following the

Imam is his wife or sister, she must stand behind the *Imam* and not to his right. It is permissible for a boy to be chosen to lead the men in their obligatory prayers provided he recites the *Qur'an* better than they or if he is better versed in theology than they.

He who accomplishes one *rak'a* with the *Imam* has attained the benefit of the congregational prayer. If he has omitted any part of the prayer with the *Imam* he performs it after the *Imam* has said the Words of Peace. So if you have missed anything, when the *Imam* completes the prayer and says the Words of Peace, do not do so but stand up and complete the *rak'as* which have been missed. It is required by tradition that the *Imam* shall be brief in performing the prayer because the congregation contains those who are weak, or aged, or who have urgent physical needs.

Shortening the prayer is achieved only by what is recited after the Opening verse and not in the bows, prostrations, and elevations which must be carried out without haste, for not performing them properly diminishes the prayer. The way in which some *Imams* and some people rush through the prayer today, bobbing up and down like hens pecking at the ground, is unlawful and renders the prayer void. If it is divested of humility it is void, and the goal which it has hoped to achieve is thereby missed.

It is not permitted for a man to perform the prayer standing alone behind the row. If he comes to perform the prayer and finds the row full and can find no place in which to enter it, he must gently draw a man from the last row to stand with him and together form a last row. The prayer of whom-ever prays alone behind the *Imam* is void.

It is not permitted for a person spoken of as immoral or ignorant or who is disliked by the Godfearing, to lead the people in prayer. Such a person should stand apart to permit someone who is more knowledgeable, upright, and Godfearing to come forward. Only a person who is worthy may be appointed *Imam*, for the *Imams* are our earthly link with our Lord. We would do well, therefore, to choose our representative from the best of those among us so that we will stand with sincerity before God on our behalf.

Ibn 'Abbas tells us that God's messenger said "Let your *Imams* be the best among you for they are your representatives between you and your Lord."¹ And *Al-Hakim* quotes the Prophet as saying: "If you wish to be made happy by having your prayer accepted, then your *Imams* should be the best among you, for they are your representatives between you and your Lord."²

¹Related by *Al-Darqutni*.

²In *Tarjamat Murshid Al-Farwa*.

XV. *Prayer during a Journey*

“God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties.” (Q. 2:185)

Islam is always like this. God does not impose discomfort upon anyone nor does He make commands unless they are capable of being carried out. Because of the hardships which have to be endured during a journey, God has permitted that four *rak'as* be reduced to two. Some of the genuine traditions hold that the prayer which requires two *rak'as* shall be of two *rak'as*. This has become established for a journey but the number of *rak'as* is increased again when you are settled. Therefore, if you are travelling, shorten the noon prayer to two *rak'as* instead of four and likewise the afternoon and evening prayers. But the sunset and morning prayers remain as they are and are not shortened.

The voluntary and traditional prayers may be shortened to two *rak'as* only for the Morning Prayer and the Separate Prayer. Shortening the prayer is a dispensation and gift from God to the worshippers who fear Him and they must accept the gift, for God “wants you to accept His gifts as He wants you to accept His adjurations.” You are therefore required to shorten the prayer while travelling and this is an obligatory duty. There is no difference whether you are travelling by air, by car, by ship, by train, by camel, or on foot. All those forms are called travelling and in all of them the prayer is shortened without distinction as to the mode of travel.

Shortening of the prayer lasts as long as the person is travelling. When he takes up residence in a country he should then complete the prayer with four *rak'as* but there are various views as to what constitutes a period of residence during which time the prayer is performed in full. The *Imam Al-Shafi'i* said: “If he intends to stay in a place for four days, his journey ends with his arrival.” In the book *Al-Minhaj* he says “The day of arrival and the day of departure should not properly be reckoned (as part of the term of residence).” *Abu Hanifa* said: “He continues to be a traveller unless he intends to stay in a town or village for fifteen days or more.” According to others, he may use the shortened form of prayer all the time unless he decides to stay permanently.

During the war with the *Hawazin*, in the year of the conquest of *Mecca*, the Prophet shortened his prayer for eighteen or nineteen days. If a man arrives at a town but does not intend to stay in it for any specific period saying, “I will leave tomorrow or the day after,” then delays his departure because it is not convenient to leave, his prayer continues to be shortened even though this state of affairs continues for years. If a man returns to

his own country from a journey, he performs the prayer in full even though he does not intend to stay there. If a person should miss a prayer during a journey he performs two *rak'as* in his residence. For example, if a person from *Baghdad* was in *Egypt* when the time for the noon prayer arrived but was unable to perform it because of his preoccupation with his journey, then boarded an airplane to *Baghdad* which he reached after the afternoon prayer, he would perform two *rak'as* for the noon prayer and four *rak'as* for the afternoon prayer. The reverse applies also, in that a person missing the prayer in his residence must perform four *rak'as* on his journey.

There are differing views as to what should be the period of the journey before the rules apply. Some say it should be three days and nights by camel or on foot and others say differently. The opinion of the scholars in Tradition is that there is nothing which specifies the length of the journey during which the traveller shortens the prayer. One must refer to what is defined as a journey in language and in law. The holy verse says:

“When ye travel through the earth there is no blame on you if ye shorten your prayers.” (Q. 4:100)

“Traveling the road” holds true for every journey except going for a walk or a picnic during which the prayer is not shortened. The tradition of *Shu'ba* is related from *Yahya b. Al-Hina'i*”

“I asked Anas about shortening the prayer and he said, ‘The Messenger of God, if he went three miles or three parasangs² used to perform the prayer with two *rak'as*.’”³

The traveller may not shorten the prayer until he has left the town with its suburbs and gardens completely behind him. A traveller may perform the prayer as the *Imam* of the residents where he is travelling in which case he performs two *rak'as* then says the Words of Peace, the residents completing the full prayer by themselves. It is desirable that such an *Imam* should say to the residents, after saying the Words of Peace,

أَتَمُّوا صَلَاتِكُمْ فَإِنَّا قَوْمٌ سَفَرٌ .

“Complete your prayer for I am a traveller.”

It is also permitted for a traveller to perform the prayer behind a resident, following his example. He may shorten the prayer or carry it out in full as does the *Imam* and the congregation. It is better to perform the prayer in full because of what has been previously established in the *Musnad* of

¹Not the modern measure. The mile referred to was equal to 4,000 cubits or approximately 1250 metres depending on the country.

²A parasang is about 3 1/4 miles (modern measure).

³Related by Muslim.

Ahmad as related by *Ibn 'Abbas*. He was asked "Why should the traveller perform two rakas if he is alone and four if he is with the *Imam*?" He answered "That is the tradition." *Ibn 'Umar*, as related by *Muslim*, said, "if I am with the *Imam* I perform four *rak'as*. If I am praying alone I perform two."

XVI. Joining Prayers Together

A traveller may perform two prayers together at the same time. He may, for example, join the noon prayer and the afternoon prayer, delaying the noon prayer until the time comes for the afternoon prayer and performing both of them together at the latter time. Each prayer is separate from the other. In this example the afternoon prayer would be performed first followed by the noon prayer. He makes only one call for both prayers but makes separate Second Calls for each prayer. This is called the Joining of Lateness. In the Joining in Advance, the afternoon prayer might be joined to the noon prayer and performed at noon or the evening prayer might be brought forward to the time of the sunset prayer. There is disagreement between the religious jurists regarding the latter type of joining but the correct ruling is that it is permitted. Both types of joining are permitted when there is need for them.

Imam Ahmad and others relate the tradition that the Prophet, at the time of the raid on *Tabuk*, if he was starting out before the sun began to decline from its zenith, used to postpone the noon prayer until the afternoon prayer and perform them both together. If he was starting out after the sun began to decline, he would perform the noon prayer and the afternoon prayer together and then go. *Imam Ahmad* quotes *Ibn 'Abbas* to the same effect and adds to it the joining of the sunset prayer and the evening prayer.

The only prayers which may be joined are the noon and afternoon or the sunset and evening prayers. Joining the morning and the noon prayers for example, or the sunset and the afternoon prayers is not allowed. Joining is restricted to those prayers which consist of four *rak'as* and was so ordained to relieve the lot of the people.

XVII. The Friday Prayer

A. GENERAL

Islam is a great social religion. It fosters and demands that people meet. It abhors and shuns disunion. Not only does it give Muslims every opportunity to get to know each other and to be on intimate terms with each other but indeed commands that they should do so.

Friday is a glorious day in Islam. It is the finest day on which the sun

risers and is a feast day for Muslims. It is the day in which they remember God and glorify Him. In this great weekly meeting they gather in His houses, leaving aside all worldly affairs, in order to carry out their religious obligations, to listen to the sermons of the preachers, and to receive spiritual guidance from the learned.

The Friday sermon is a lesson in which the preachers deal with the daily problems of society. New problems constantly appear which demand from Muslims enlightenment from the torch of Islam. These problems affect every facet of their lives. In this way those who are closely tied to their religion retain their renown and distinction and remain so as long as they are pious and Godfearing.

Performance of the Friday prayer is one of the obligations imposed by God as is made clear in the *holy Qur'an*:

"O ye who believe, when the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of God, and leave off business. That is best for you if ye but knew, and When the prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land, and seek of the bounty of God, and celebrate the praise of God often that ye may prosper. (Q. 62:9-10)

It is an obligatory duty for every adult and free Muslim who is in residence. It applies to every group of people who live together even though they live in the smallest hamlet.

Many traditions concerning the Messenger of God and the Friday prayer have come down to us, such as "He who stays away from it should be consumed by fire." He performed the duty constantly from the time God ordained it until his death. Concerning prohibiting the abandoning of the practice, he said from his pulpit:

"Let people desist and refrain from neglecting the Friday prayers else God will make their hearts inaccessible and they will be among those who are ignored."¹

He also said:

"He who deliberately neglects three Friday prayers, God will make a mark on his heart."²

In his sermon on the day when the Friday prayer was made obligatory, he said:

"Let it be known that God has prescribed the Friday prayer for you on this spot, on this day, in this month, in this year, until the Day of Judgment. Whoever neglects it during or after my lifetime even

¹Related by *Mustam*.

²Related by *Abu Da'ud*.

though he has an *Imam* who abstains and strays from the right path, who disdains and rejects God's ordinance, may God grant him no reunification. Neither will his affairs be blessed. There shall be no prayer for him, no almsgiving, no pilgrimage, no fast. There will be no righteousness in him until he repents. To whomsoever repents to Him will God restore His grace and favor."¹

B. HOW TO PERFORM THE FRIDAY PRAYER

The Friday prayer is only permissible in the mosques wherein Muslims congregate and there their *Imam* preaches to them, giving them advice and spiritual guidance. The time for the Friday prayer is the time of the noon prayer although some have it that it is permitted before the sun has reached its zenith. It is required by tradition that on Friday you should bathe and perform the total ablution, that you should put on sweet smelling perfumes, and wear your best and cleanest clothes, then with tranquility and dignified bearing, betake yourself to the mosque.

On entering the mosque one should say, "O Lord, open to me the gates of Your mercy." Before you sit down to await the prayer, perform two *rak'as* as a traditional greeting to the mosque. The Prophet said, "If any one of you enters the mosque, do not sit until you have performed two *rak'as*." After this be seated and listen to the recitation of the *Qur'an*, meditating on the meaning of the verses. If there is no-one reciting the *Qur'an*, you can do no better than to sit down quietly, contemplating and remembering God. When the time comes to perform the prayer the *muezzin* makes the call, the recitation ends, the worshippers arise and offer up two or four voluntary *rak'as* to God before the preacher mounts the pulpit. These *rak'as* on Friday are voluntary and are not required or confirmed by tradition, as some people think. Voluntary *rak'as* are desirable at all times, but while the Prophet used to encourage them on Fridays, it was not specified or demanded that they be performed. The learned men of Islam say that voluntary *rak'as* are permitted before the Friday prayer as long as the *Imam* has not appeared; but once he has appeared there must be no praying and no speaking.

At the end of the voluntary prayer one observes the preacher going up to the pulpit. In front of him the *muezzin* makes the Call to Prayer and you answer him. You must then devote your whole attention to the sermon. You are forbidden to speak during the sermon even though you only say "Shush!" to the person beside you, otherwise the prayer will be void. Whoever speaks has not performed the Friday prayer.

¹ Related by *Ibn Maja*.

When the two sermons are finished - which the preacher separates by sitting down between them - he comes down from the pulpit, the Second Call is made, and he performs the obligatory Friday prayer of two *rak'as* as the *Imam*, the congregation following him. The Friday prayer is exactly the same as the obligatory morning prayer, differing only in the Resolve. In the morning prayer you state your intention of performing the Morning Prayer, whereas on Friday you state your intention to perform the Friday Prayer.

At the end of the two *rak'as* the *Imam* says the Words of Peace and the worshippers say them after him. After this the traditional Friday "Following Prayer" is performed. This may be done either in the mosque or upon your arrival home. It consists of four *rak'as*. Tradition holds that the Prophet said, "If any one of you performs the Friday prayer, let him perform four *rak'as* after it." It has also been related that it should be only two *rak'as*.

The traditional *rak'as* of the Following Prayer complete the obligations, traditional requirements, and proprieties of the Friday prayer. Afterwards people may go their own way in search of God's grace and favor. Almighty God said:

"And when the prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land and seek of the bounty of God, and celebrate the praise of God often that ye may prosper." (Q. 62:10)

XVIII. The Prayer of the Two Feasts

1. The Prayer of the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast.
2. The prayer of the Feast of Immolation.

Each of these prayers consists of two *rak'as* during which the *Imam* recites aloud. There is no Call to Prayer and no Second Call. No prayers of any kind are said before or after them and the time to perform them is from twenty minutes after sunrise until noon.

A. THE PRAYER OF THE FEAST OF THE BREAKING OF THE FAST (AL-FITR)

Following the obligatory fasting of the blessed month of *Ramadan*, Muslims celebrate with the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast which lasts three days. They welcome this feast with prayer, with private prayer, and by giving praise to Almighty God.

After a Muslim has performed the Morning Prayer on the first day of *Shawwal* he goes to the mosque, having first carried out the total ablution, dressed himself in his best clothes, purified himself, perfumed himself, and broken his fast even though only with a few dates. All these things follow the tradition of the Prophet during the Feast. He enters the mosque, sits

down without performing any prayer whatever, and listens to the recitation of the holy *Qur'an* until the sun rises. When the sun has been risen for twenty minutes and is clearly visible, that is the time for the Prayer of the Feast.

The *Imam* stands up to perform this blessed prayer¹ with the people. The people form themselves into rows which he straightens. He then says the Words of Greatness and the people say them after him. Then all recite the the Opening and Facing God prayer to themselves. After this the *Imam* the Words of Greatness **الله أكبر** six times, with the congregation repeating after him, on each occasion raising his hands to his ears, then putting them together on his chest. The congregation follows likewise. Between each recitation of the Words of Greatness they all recite to themselves the words

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

“Glory be to God. Thanks be to God. There is no god but God. God is Great.”

These Words of Greatness, totalling seven in all, are completed before the recitation of the *Qur'an* begins. The *Imam* then recites the Opening Verse aloud and it is recommended that he should recite the whole of the chapter beginning “Glorify the Name of thy Guardian Lord, the Most High”² after it. He then bows and makes two prostrations in the customary way for Greatness five times, separating each by the words

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

“Glory be to God. Thanks be to God. There is no god but God. God is great.” He then recites the Opening Verse aloud and it is recommended that he should recite the whole of the chapter beginning “The Disaster.”³ After this he bows and prostrates then sits back to say the Words of Witness and recite the whole of the Words of Greeting. He concludes the prayer with the Words of Peace followed by the Words of Greatness in which he is joined by the congregation saying:

الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر ، الله أكبر .

لا إله إلا الله والله أكبر ، والله أكبر والله الحمد

¹It is recommended that the *Imam* explain how this prayer is performed before it starts because being performed only twice a year it may be that many people are not very sure how to perform it.

²LXXXVII

³CI

“God is great, God is great, God is Great, God is great. There is no god but God and God is great. God is great. Praise be to God.”

These words end the prayer.

The preacher then climbs up to the pulpit to deliver the festival sermon. This should be a serious address concerning the meaning of the Feast and should deal with how Muslims should be loyal and sincere towards each other during the Feast, forbearing, exchanging visits, and rendering assistance to each other. It should deal with piety, the performance of good deeds, obedience to the All-Merciful and All-Compassionate, and the abandonment of discord, hypocrisy, inequity, and disobedience. Its message should encompass all the sublime ideals expressed by Islam, the entrusting of the realization of these ideals to Muslims, and their adherence to its values.

At the end of the sermon the preacher comes down from the pulpit and shakes hands with the congregation and everyone exchanges greetings and expressions of joy.

B. THE PRAYER OF THE FEAST OF IMMOLATION (AL-ADHA)

The Prayer of the Feast of Immolation is exactly the same as the Prayer of the Feast of Breaking the Fast in the Words of Greatness, the recitations, and the form it takes. The only difference is in the Resolve; in one you Resolve to perform the Prayer of the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast; in the other you Resolve to perform the Prayer of the Feast of Immolation.

In the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast there is no need to say the Words of Greatness on leaving one's house for the mosque, but in the Feast of Immolation, it is required by tradition that you say them from the time of leaving your house until your arrival at the mosque.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The distinguished *Imams* are all in agreement with what I have told you regarding the prayers for the two feasts with the exception that they differ concerning the exact number of times the Words of Greatness should be recited due to variations in pertinent evidence. The pattern most widely known and for which the evidence is strongest — and the opinion held by most *Imams* — is that which I have written above, that is, seven times in the first *rak'a* and five times in the second.

This may be compared with the view held by the *Hanafis* who say the Words of Greatness four times, plus once before the recitation in the first *rak'a* and three times in the second *rak'a* after the Opening Verse and the chapter of the *Qur'an* come to an end. They say the Words of Greatness for the bow. Every time they say the Words during the two feasts the *Imam* and the worshippers raise their hands. Both methods are correct and are

based upon evidence.

XIX. The Funeral Prayer (Janaza)

Islam respects a Muslim be he alive or dead. If a Muslim dies the religion commands us to bathe him, perfume him, wrap him in a shroud, pray over him, take him to his final resting place, bury him, and invoke a blessing over him.

The prayer for the dead is a collective obligation. If it is performed by some, the others will be absolved of sin. It is a mercy and honor for the dead person and takes the following form.

The deceased is laid pointing towards the *Ka'ba*. The *Imam* stands at the head and shoulder of the deceased if he is a man and at the waist if it is the funeral of a woman. The worshippers stand to the right, the left, and behind him. The *Imam* says the Words of Greatness four times and raises his hands on each occasion. The worshippers say them with him.

A. THE FIRST WORDS OF GREATNESS

The *Imam* and the congregation recite, to themselves, the private prayer of the Opening and Facing God,

« سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ ، وَبِحَمْدِكَ ،
وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ ، وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ . »

the Opening Verse and some other verses.

B. THE SECOND WORDS OF GREATNESS

The worshippers recite the Words of *Abraham* which are contained in the last Words of Witness of the Words of Greeting. They are:

« اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا
صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ، وَبَارِكْ عَلَى
مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ إِنَّكَ أَحْسَنُ مُجِيبٍ . »

“O Lord, bless Muhammad and his family as You bless Abraham and his family. Give Your blessing to Muhammad and his family as You gave Your blessing to Abraham and his family in the two worlds. You are the most praised, the most wonderful.”

C. THE THIRD WORDS OF GREATNESS

Each one says separately this private prayer:

(اللَّهُمَّ أَغْفِرْ لِحَيِّنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا ، وَشَاهِدِنَا وَغَائِبِنَا
 وَصَغِيرِنَا وَكَبِيرِنَا ، وَذَكَرِنَا وَأُنْثَانَا ، اللَّهُمَّ مِنْ أَحْيَيْتَهُ
 مَنَّا فَأَحْيِهِ عَلَيَّ الْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ تَوَفَّيْتَهُ فَتَوَفَّهُ عَلَيَّ
 الْإِيمَانِ) .

“O Lord, forgive us who are alive and those who are dead, we who are present and those who are absent, our young and our old, our men and our women. O Lord, he among us to whom You have brought life, let him live as a Muslim. He who You have caused to die, let him die in the Faith.”

D. THE FOURTH WORDS OF GREATNESS

They say this traditional private prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَحْرِمْنَا أَجْرَهُ وَلَا تَقْتِنَا بَعْدَهُ ، وَأَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلَهُ

“O Lord, do not deny us the reward which is his. Do not expose us to temptation after his death. Forgive us and forgive him.”

The *Imam* concludes the funeral prayer with the Words of Peace, moving his head from right to left saying

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

“Peace and the Mercy of God be upon you.”

After the prayer, the deceased is carried to his final resting place, escorted with dignity, respect and private prayer. At his final resting place it is required by tradition that those at the funeral should repeat the private prayer for the dead asking on behalf of the deceased for God’s forgiveness, mercy, pleasure, and steadfastness when, alone, the two angels question him about his Lord, his religion, and his Prophet. The Prophet, after an interment, used to say to the people at the funeral,

“Seek forgiveness for your brother and ask for steadfastness for him, for he is being questioned.”

At this time we also ask God to inspire us to give the correct answer when we are put to the question, for all must taste death. We ask God to have compassion for us in our exile in this world and at the time of our death, in the loneliness of the grave, and when we stand before Him. We ask Him to make easy for us the agony of death. He is All Forgiving, All Merciful.

XX. The Prayer for God's Guidance (Isstikhara)

In all his affairs the Muslim seeks the help or power of his Exalted Lord. If something should happen to him he takes refuge in the prayer in which his soul is comforted and his anxieties eased. If he must make an important decision, he turns to the prayer to seek God's guidance. If God guides him to the action, he goes forward with it, being unconcerned with the outcome, for God is with him. But if God guides him to abandon his project for another, he thinks no more about it.

The Prayer for God's Guidance is one of God's blessings. In it the worshipper faces his Lord, seeking His guidance and asking from Him that which will be to his advantage, that which God would choose for him and that which would be in his best interest.

It is a matter of tradition that the Prophet customarily taught his Companions the private Prayer for Guidance just as he taught them the verses of the *Qur'an*. If a Muslim is preparing to embark on an important task, he should pray about it and ask the guidance of his Lord. He should do as his Lord directs him, whether it means to follow or to abandon his course. The proper manner in which to perform the Prayer for Guidance is to recite two *rak'as* in addition to the obligatory duties and then, at the end of the prayer to recite the Words of Peace followed by the private prayer for guidance. Finally, one states that which he desires, and then searches his heart. If the answer is favorable to the matter, he should proceed with it; however, if the answer is that he should abandon it, he should do so. A Muslim never gives up something for God but that it is replaced with something better. Here is the tradition of the Messenger of God in which he instructs us in the Prayer for God's Guidance:

"If any one of you is concerned about a matter of importance, let him perform two *rak'as* other than the obligatory ones. Then let him say:

قال عليه الصلاة والسلام: (إذا همَّ أحدُكم
بالأمرِ فلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْفَرِيضَةِ) ثُمَّ لِيَقُلْ :
اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ
وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أُقْدِرُ ،
وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ ، وَأَنْتَ عَلَامُ الْغُيُوبِ .

اللَّهُمَّ إِن كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ (وَ يُسَمِّي
 الْأَمْرَ الَّذِي هُمْ بِفِعْلِهِ) خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي
 وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي ، أَوْ قَالَ — عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ —
 فَأَقْدُرْهُ لِي ، وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي ، ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ ، وَإِن كُنْتَ
 تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ (وَ يُسَمِّيهِ أَيْضًا) شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي
 وَمَعَاشِي ، وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي ، أَوْ قَالَ — عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي
 وَآجِلِهِ — فَأَصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَأَصْرِفْني عَنْهُ ، وَأَقْدُرْ لِي
 الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي بِهِ .

O Lord, I seek Your guidance, Your knowledge; I ask you to decide for Your glorious favor, for You decree and I do not. You know and I do not. You are He who knows the invisible.'

'O Lord, You know that this matter (and here he states the matter which concerns him) is of benefit to me in my religion, in my livelihood and in its outcome (or he says 'hasten the matter and its outcome'). Decide it for me and make it easy for me; then bless me in it. And if You know that this matter (and here he names it again) is bad for me in my religion, in my livelihood, and in its outcome (or say 'hasten the matter and its outcome'), turn it from me and divert me from it.

Decree good for me wherever it may be and make me pleased with it.'"

XXI. The Prayer for the Eclipse of the Moon and the Eclipse of the Sun

Islam has given us a fine sense of propriety. It has taught us to take refuge in God whenever something happens to us. We worship Him and we ask Him for help and assistance. We rely on Him and leave Him to decide what shall be done and how it shall be done.

The eclipses of the moon and the sun are two natural phenomena which frequently cause dismay and unrest in those who witness them. For this reason it is the tradition of Islam to perform a special prayer for these phenomena to which the faithful resort in order to confide in their Lord. They recite from His Book, and through this prayer and through confiding in God, calm their souls. Afterwards they listen to the sermon in which

the preacher speaks of the lesson to be learned from these manifestations. He draws the attention of the unmindful to the greatness of the Creator and how He is unrestricted in the universe by His power to act in any way He wishes. "The sun and the moon are some of his signs." He does not have to answer for what He does, but they do.

A. THE REASON FOR THE PRAYER FOR THE ECLIPSE

The prayer for the eclipse was prescribed during the last years of the *Hijra*. At that time Ibrahim, the beloved son of the Prophet, died. On the very same day there was an eclipse of the sun and some people said that the sun had been eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim. This rumor spread until it came to the ears of the Prophet who moved promptly to suppress the heresy and to explain the truth of such a disconcerting matter. Here is the agreed upon tradition of *Al-Mughira*:

"There was an eclipse of the sun during the time of the Messenger of God on the day that Ibrahim died. The people said, 'The sun has been eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim.' The Prophet said, 'The sun and the moon are two of Almighty God's signs which are not eclipsed because of the death of anyone, nor for his being alive. If you see an eclipse make a private prayer to Almighty God and perform the prayer until it has passed.'"¹

B. HOW TO PERFORM THE PRAYER OF THE ECLIPSE

The Prayer of the Eclipse of the Moon and the Eclipse of the Sun differ in form from the other prayers. It consists of two *rak'as* which are, preferably, performed in congregation although a person is permitted to perform the prayer alone. When it is performed in congregation the *Imam* makes his recitations aloud and at the end of the prayer preaches a short sermon in which he speaks of the lesson to be learned from situations of this nature.

The prayer begins with the Words of Greatness, then the recitation of the Opening Verse followed by a recitation of an uncomplicated and preferably long passage from the *Qur'an*. This is followed by a bow after which he stands erect and continues with the recitation before the prostration. After this further recitation, also of an uncomplicated nature, he bows again. He then straightens up and goes on to make his prostration. Each *rak'a* consist of two bows and two prostrations and this he does in both the first and second *rak'as*.

Here is the tradition of *A'isha*. It is one of the genuine traditions on which both *Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim* are agreed. *A'isha* said:

¹Related by *Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*.

“There was an eclipse of the sun during the lifetime of the Prophet. He went to the mosque where he stood and said the Words of Greatness. He set the people in rows behind him and made a long recitation. Then he said the Words of Greatness and made a long bow which is less than the first recitation. Then he raised his head and said, ‘May God hear whoever praises Him. O Lord, Yours is the praise.’ Then he stood up and made a recitation which was less than the first. Then he said the Words of Greatness and made a bow which was less than the first bow. Then he said, ‘May God hear whoever praises him. O Lord, Yours is the praise.’ Then he prostrated himself. Then he performed the other *rak’a* in the same way until he had completed four bows and four prostrations. The sun was revealed before he was finished. He then stood up and preached to the people. He then praised God for what He had made to appear and said, ‘The sun and moon are two of Almighty God’s signs which are not eclipsed for the death of anyone, nor for his being alive. If you see either one of them, hasten to prayer.’”

Malik, Al-Shafi’i, Ahmad, and a whole host of scholars hold the opinion that congregational prayer is a traditional requirement for the Prayer of the Eclipse, while *Abu Yusuf* and *Muhammad* say that congregation is optional. The *Iraqis*, among whom is *Abu Hanifa*, say that it is a prayer to be performed. It is related in *Al-Bahr* (from *Al’Itra*) that both methods are correct.

C. CHARITY AND FORGIVENESS

May God reward our Prophet, the Prophet of Islam, in greater measure than He rewards the prophet of any other community. He, God’s blessing and peace be upon him, has let no opportunity pass to further and promote the interests of his community, to seize the opportunity to do good, and to do favor to his people. On the occasion of the eclipse of the moon or the sun the Prophet urged his community to give alms, to remember God, to seek forgiveness, and to say the Words of Greatness at this strange phenomenon which is but one of God’s signs.

A genuine tradition relates that the Prophet said:

“The sun and the moon are two of Almighty God’s signs which are not eclipsed for the death of anyone, nor for his being alive.”

THE END

At the end of this book I ask God that He make it of benefit to people and that it be given to them without expectation of reward for myself in this life.

From it, my aim is to serve my religion. There is no success except in God: in Him I place my trust and to Him I turn in repentance.

“O Lord, You know what we do in secret and what we do openly. Nothing in Heaven or Earth can be hidden from God.”

“O Lord, make me and my descendants dutiful in the prayer. O Lord, accept this prayer. O Lord, forgive me my sins and those of my parents and all the faithful on the Day of Reckoning.”

Praise be to God

God Bless the Messenger and Grant him Salvation,
his family, his Companions, and whosoever
invokes Him with prayer until the
Day of Judgment.



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من كتب
الراجي عفو العظيم الباري
عبد الله بن ابراهيم الانصاري

THE MUSLIM BOOK OF PRAYER

By

Shaikh Muhammad Mahmud Al-Sawwaf

Translated into English by

Dr. Mujahid Muhammad Al-Sawwaf

*Publication done under the
supervision of:*

ABDULLAH BIN IBRAHIM AL-ANSARI