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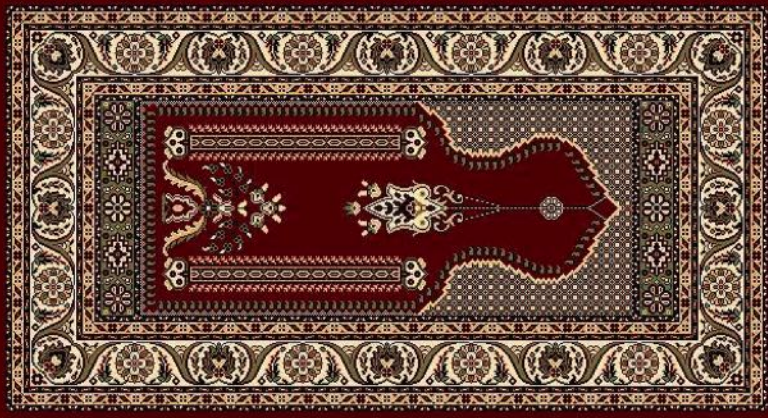


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◆ CHAPTER 4: ◆

PRAYER



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Chapter 4

Prayer

The Arabic term *salah*, which is normally translated as ‘prayer’, originally means ‘supplication’. In Islamic context it is defined as ‘an act of worship that includes saying specific words as well as doing specific actions, starting with the glorification, *Allah-u akbar*, and concluded with *salam*.’¹⁷¹

It is prayer that builds a Muslim’s character: it keeps his heart pure and consolidates his faith. It helps a person to organize his affairs, giving him stronger motivation to maintain good conduct, be charitable and participate in good causes. As such, prayer has a clear positive role in organizing society.

Prayer points out the way of divine guidance and adds real meaning to life. It ensures that man does not feel loss, as it guides him along the way followed by all Prophets (peace be upon them all).

Prayer is a demonstration of man’s gratitude for the numerous great blessings Allah has bestowed on him. It is also an unmistakable manifestation of man’s servitude to Allah. In prayer, a person speaks directly to Allah, shows humility before Him, and addresses Him with reciting the Qur’an, glorification and supplication.

¹⁷¹ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 43.

Moreover, in prayer man feels his bond with Allah, which elevates him over the material world in order to give him clearer vision and reassurance. When the concerns and temptations of life become too strong, prayer helps man to regain his proper perspective, enabling him to see the truth and giving him a sense of what is greater and beyond. He will realize that life could not have been so perfect, and that things could not have been made subservient to man, in order to leave him living on the margin, caring nothing except for immediate enjoyments.¹⁷²

Prayer provides light in this life and in the life to come. It is a cause for bestowing Allah's mercy on man and increasing his provisions. It also ensures forgiveness of sins, increase of good deeds and elevating man's position with Allah.

Prayer provides spiritual nourishment. When we wish to rise to a higher level, we should fulfil all our duties, particularly prayer. When a person performs the ablution and stands up in full humility to pray, addressing Allah, supplicating in hope and looking forward for Allah's grace, he will enjoy inner comfort and reassurance because he has assigned all his cares and concerns to the One who is ever merciful, the One to whom all dominion belongs and who is able to accomplish everything.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Salih al-Sadlan, *Risalah fi al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 33.

¹⁷³ Mustafa al-Khalaf, *Al-Asrar a-Tibiyah li Salat al-Layl*, pp. 29–52; Ali M. Dukhail, *al-Ayat al-Ilmiyyah fi al-Qur'an*, p. 186.

The call to prayer

The Arabic term, *adhan*, originally means ‘making an announcement’, and it is used in this sense in verse 9: 3 of the Qur’an. In an Islamic context it means ‘an announcement in specific wording at designated times informing people that prayer is due,’ while *iqamah* informs people in specific wording given by the Legislator that they should rise to pray.¹⁷⁴

Status: Both the *adhan* and the *iqamah* are collective duties, which means that when they are performed by some people, the rest are not accountable. Both are clearly apparent Islamic rituals and, therefore, it is not permissible to neglect them.¹⁷⁵

Conditions

1. They must be done by a sane Muslim man. If they are done by an unbeliever, a mad or drunken person, or one who is too young then they are invalid. These are common requirements for all types of Islamic worship.
2. The *adhan* must be done at the time when the prayer falls due. If it is done earlier, it is invalid. The *iqamah* should be done just before starting the prayer.
3. Both should be done in the right order, without gaps.

¹⁷⁴ Al-Shawkani, *Nayl al-Awtar*, vol. 2, p. 31; A. al-Ghunaymi, *Al-Lubab fi Sharh al-Kitab*, vol. 1, p. 62; al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qināʿ*, vol. 1, p. 266.

¹⁷⁵ Al-Bahuti, *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 278; Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 1, p. 417; al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 45.

4. Both should be done in Arabic and in the specific wording explained in the Sunnah.

Women are not required to do either of these duties, but a number of eminent scholars, such as al-Shafi [i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal say that it is perfectly acceptable if they do or not. [A’ishah reports that she used to ‘call the *adhan* and the *iqamah* and then lead the women in prayer, standing in the middle of the first row.’¹⁷⁶

Qualities the caller to prayer should possess

1. He should be an honest, trustworthy person, because he is referred to in the matter of prayer and fasting.
2. He should be a sane adult. However, if a boy who is aware of his actions calls the *adhan*, his action is valid.
3. He should know the times for prayer, so as to make sure to call the *adhan* on time. If he is not fully aware of the relevant times, he may be in error.
4. He should have a loud voice.
5. He should purify himself after any discharge that invalidates ablution.
6. He should say the *adhan* facing the *qiblah*.
7. He should place his forefingers in his two ears and turn his face to the right when saying *hayy [ala al-salah* and to the left when saying *hayy [ala al-falah*. However, if he is giving the Athan via loudspeakers as in the case of

¹⁷⁶ Related by al-Bayhaqi. Sabiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, vol. 1, p. 120.

modern mosques, turning left and right would weaken the sound and hence one shouldn't do it.

8. He should elongate the *adhan* and be quick with the *iqamah*.

What is to be said:

It was narrated that ‘Abdallah ibn Zayd said: When the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) ordered that a bell should be made so that it could be struck to call the people to prayer, a man walked around me whilst I was sleeping [i.e., in a dream], carrying a bell in his hand. I said, “O slave of Allah, will you sell this bell?” He asked, “What will you do with it?” I said, “We will call the people to prayer.” He said, “Shall I not tell you of something better than that?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “Say: *Allah-u akbar* (four times); *Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah* (two times); *Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah* (two times); *hayy [ala al-salah* (two times); *hayy [ala al-falah* (two times); *Allah-u akbar Allah-u akbar*; *La ilaha illa Allah.*’ Then he went a short distance away from me and said: “And when the prayer is about to begin (*iqamah*), say: *Allah-u akbar Allah-u akbar*; *Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah*; *Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah*; *hayy [ala al-salah*; *hayy [ala al-falah*; *Qad qamat al-salah qad qamat al-salah*; *Allah-u akbar*; *La ilaha illa Allah.* The following morning, I went to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and told him what I had seen. He said, “This is a true dream, in sha Allah. Get up with Bilal and teach him what you saw, for he has

a more melodious voice than you.” So I got up with Bilal and taught him, and he gave the call to prayer. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab heard that in his house and he came out, dragging his lower garment and saying, “By the One Who sent you with the truth, O Messenger of Allah, I saw the same as he saw!” The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “To Allah be praise.”¹⁷⁷ The wording means: ‘Allah is supreme; I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah; I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah’s messenger; come to prayer; come to success; Allah is supreme; there is no deity other than Allah.’

Anas reports that ‘Bilal was instructed to repeat the wording twice in *adhan* and once in *iqamah*, with the exception of the phrase denoting readiness to start the prayer.’¹⁷⁸

These are the preferred forms of *adhan* and *iqamah*, but if in *adhan* one repeats the phrases testifying Allah’s oneness and the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) message, or repeats the phrases of *iqamah* twice, there is no harm because this is an acceptable difference between scholars. In the *adhan* for Fajr (i.e. dawn) prayer, it is mandatory to add the phrase *assalatu khayrun min al-nawm*, which means ‘prayer is preferable to sleep’, as Abu Mahdhurah mentions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed him to do so.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Related by al-Albaani in Saheeh Abi Dawood, *hadith* No. 469.

¹⁷⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 605; Muslim, *hadith* No. 378.

¹⁷⁹ Related by al-Nassa’i; *hadith* No. 628.

What to say when hearing the *adhan* and after it

It is recommended when hearing the *adhan* to repeat what it says, as Abu Sa[īd al-Khudri reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘When you hear the call to prayer, repeat what the caller says.’¹⁸⁰ One exception, however, is that when the caller says ‘*hayy [ala al-salah; hayy [ala al-falah;*’ we should say: *la hawla wala quwwata illa billah*, which means ‘no power works except by Allah’s permission’.¹⁸¹ In Fajr prayer, when the caller says ‘prayer is better than sleep’, anyone who hears him is recommended to say the same. This is not recommended for *iqamah*. After the *athan*, it is recommended to say: ‘Peace be to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his household. My Lord, the Lord of this perfect call and the due prayer, grant Muhammad the means and give him the honourable station You promised him.’¹⁸²

Conditions for the validity of prayer

Linguistically speaking, the word *shart*, which is translated as ‘condition’, means ‘mark’, but in Islamic contexts it means ‘what is necessary for something to exist but does not form part of it.’¹⁸³ The following nine conditions must be met for the prayer to be valid:

1. Islam: Prayer is not valid if performed by an unbeliever.

¹⁸⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 621; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,093.

¹⁸¹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 385.

¹⁸² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 614. The *hadith* includes that ‘whoever says this will benefit from the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) intercession on their behalf on the Day of Judgement.’

¹⁸³ Al-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami*, vol. 1, p. 722.

2. Sanity: Prayer is not valid if performed by an insane person, because it is not required of the insane.
3. Puberty: Praying is not required of a child until he or she attains puberty. However, a child should be instructed to perform the prayer when it is seven years of age. The order may be coupled with gentle beating if the child does not pray after reaching 10 years of age. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Order your children to pray when they are seven, and beat them gently for not praying after they are ten.’
4. Purification: This includes both types of purity; purity from najasah (impurities) on one’s body, clothes and the prayer area and it also includes uplifting the ritual state of impurity through wudhu or dry ablution.
5. Appropriate time: Each prayer has its appointed time range and for a prayer to be valid, it has to be offered within that time range. Allah says: ‘Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.’ (4: 103). A *hadith* mentions that the angel Gabriel led the Prophet (peace be upon him) in offering all five prayers on two consecutive days, choosing the beginning of the time of every prayer on the first day, and the end of its time range on the second day. He then told the Prophet (peace be upon him): ‘Prayer is valid between these two times.’¹⁸⁴ This means that prayer is invalid before its time is due, or after it had lapsed, except for a valid reason.

¹⁸⁴ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 3,081; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 393; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 149; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 526.

6. Covering the *[awrah]*. The Awrah of a man in prayer is the area from his navel to his knees. The woman's awrah in prayer is her full body except her face and hands. The cover must not be transparent. Allah says: 'Children of Adam, dress well when you attend any place of worship' (7: 31). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Allah does not accept the prayer of any woman who has attained puberty unless she has a head cover.'
7. Facing the *qiblah* (i.e. the direction towards the Ka [bah]) when one is able to do so. Allah says: 'Turn your face, then, towards the Sacred Mosque' (2: 144). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When you want to pray, do the ablution well, then face the *qiblah*.'¹⁸⁵
8. Intention: This is a condition that cannot be omitted in any situation. A *hadith* reported by [Umar quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'Actions are but by intention.' The intention is a mental process and need not be vocalized.

The essentials in prayer

Prayer has 14 essentials,¹⁸⁶ i.e. *rukun*, and these cannot be omitted intentionally, unintentionally or out of ignorance. They are:

1. Standing up: This applies in obligatory prayers for everyone who is able to stand up. Allah says: 'Stand up

¹⁸⁵ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 6,251; Muslim, *hadith* No. 397.

¹⁸⁶ Muhammad ibn [Abd al-Wahhab, *Thalathat al-Usul wa Shurut al-Salah wal-Qawa [id al-Arba*], p. 31.

before Allah in devout obedience’ (2: 238). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to [Imran ibn Husayn: ‘Pray standing up; but if you are unable to do so, then sitting down; and if you are unable to do that, then pray reclining.’¹⁸⁷

2. Allah’s glorification at the beginning of prayer: This is to say *Allah-u akbar*, which means ‘Allah is supreme’. Nothing other than this glorification is acceptable. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) saw a man praying wrongly, he told him: ‘When you stand up to pray, say *Allah-u akbar*.’¹⁸⁸ He also said: ‘The consecration of prayer is to say *Allah-u akbar* and it ends with *salam*.’¹⁸⁹ This means that prayer is not entered into without this particular glorification (takbeer).
3. Reading the first surah, *Al-Fatihah*, in every *rak[ah]*, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘A person who does not read *al-Fatihah* has not prayed.’¹⁹⁰
4. Bowing, i.e. *ruku[]*, in every *rak[ah]*: Allah says: ‘Believers! Bow down and prostrate yourselves’ (22: 77). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the person who did not pray well: ‘Then bow down until you have bowed well.’¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,117.

¹⁸⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 793; Muslim, *hadith* No. 397.

¹⁸⁹ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 1,006; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 61; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 3; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 275.

¹⁹⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 756; Muslim, *hadith* No. 394.

¹⁹¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 757; Muslim, *hadith* No. 397.

5. & 6. Standing up after bowing and making sure to stand erect: The Prophet (peace be upon him) told the person who did not pray well: ‘Then rise until you stand erect.’¹⁹²
7. Prostration: Allah says: ‘Believers! Bow down and prostrate yourselves’ (22: 77). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the person who did not pray well: ‘Then prostrate yourself until you have prostrated well.’ Two prostrations are essential in every *rak[ah*, and the prostration must be by placing seven parts of the body on the ground, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘I have been commanded to prostrate myself on seven bones: my forehead (including the nose as he pointed to his nose as well), two hands, two knees and my feet.
8. & 9. Lifting one’s head after prostration, sitting between the two prostrations and standing up after the second. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught the one who prayed wrong: ‘You then sit comfortably.’
10. Taking a comfortable position in all *rukns*, which signifies being still. This is equivalent to the time it takes to say what is required in every *rukna*. We note that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the one who did not pray well to ensure this in every *rukna* and to repeat his prayer because it was lacking in his first prayer.
11. The last sitting for *tashahhud*. Ibn Mas[ud said: ‘Before the *tashahhud* was made obligatory to us we used to say “*Salam* to Allah from His servants, (i.e *Assalamu [ala Allah min [ibadih*)”, but the Prophet (peace be upon

¹⁹² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 793; Muslim, *hadith* No. 397.

him) said: “Do not say ‘*Salam* to Allah’, but say ‘Greetings to Allah (i.e. *at-tahiyyatu lillah*)’”.¹⁹³ The fact that Ibn Mas‘ud said ‘Before it was made obligatory’ makes clear that it is obligatory.

12. Sitting down for the last *tashahhud*, because this was consistently done by the Prophet (peace be upon him), and he said: ‘Pray as you have seen me pray.’¹⁹⁴
13. *Salam* at the end, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that the prayer ‘ends with *salam*.’ This means that when a worshipper finishes his prayer, he turns his face to the right and says *Assalamu [alaikum wa rahmatullah*, and turns to the left and says the same.
14. Doing all the *rukns* in the right order, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did them in this order and said: ‘Pray as you have seen me pray.’ Furthermore, when he taught the person who did not pray well, he explained every *rukhn* and said ‘then’ before mentioning the next one. This indicates that the *rukns* should be done in order.

Duties in prayer

Nine duties (obligatory acts) must be observed in prayer, and if they are deliberately omitted, the prayer is invalid. If any is forgotten, it is compensated for by two prostrations at the end of prayer. If they are omitted out of ignorance, the prayer is valid. These eight duties are as follows:

¹⁹³ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 3,920; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 968; al-Nassa’i in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 899; al-Daraqutni, *hadith* No. 1,327.

¹⁹⁴ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 631.

1. All the glorifications (takbeer), i.e. *Allah-u akbar*, other than the initial one that is for consecration. These are called the glorification of moving on. Ibn Mas'ud said: 'I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying *Allah-u akbar* every time he moved up or down, every rising and every sitting.'¹⁹⁵ The Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to do so throughout his life and he ordered us to pray in the same way he prayed.
2. The imam leading the prayer and a person praying alone says *sami [a Allah liman hamidah* (i.e. 'may Allah answer the prayer of the one who praises Him') when standing up after bowing. Abu Hurayrah said: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say *Allah-u akbar* when he started the prayer and when he bowed, then he said *sami [a Allah liman hamidah* when he rose after bowing. Then when he was in the upright position he said: *Rabbana wa lak alhamd* i.e. "You are our Lord and all praise is due to You"¹⁹⁶.
3. Every worshipper in the congregation says only *Rabbana wa lak alhamd*, while the imam leading the prayer and a person praying alone says it after saying *sami [a Allah liman hamidah*. This is clear in the above-quoted *hadith* reported by Abu Hurayrah, and in the other *hadith* reported by Abu Musa in which he quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) saying that when the imam says

¹⁹⁵ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 3,736; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 253; al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 1,149.

¹⁹⁶ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 392.

sami [a *Allah liman hamidah*, the ones in the congregation should say *Rabbana wa lak alhamd*.¹⁹⁷

4. When bowing, one should say *subhana Rabbiy al-A'theem*, which means “I praise my Lord the great and exonerate Him from any fault or defect.” The duty is to say it at least once.
5. In prostration one should say *subhana Rabbiy al-a[la*, which means “I praise my Lord the most high and exonerate Him from any fault or defect.” Hudhayfah reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ‘used to say *subhana Rabbiy al-A'theem* when he bowed and *subhana Rabbiy al-a[la* in his prostration.’¹⁹⁸ It is recommended to say these glorifications at least three times in each bowing and prostration.
6. When sitting between the two prostrations one should say *Rabb ighfir li*, i.e. ‘My Lord, forgive me.’ Hudhayfah reported that ‘the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say *Rabb ighfir li*, *Rabb ighfir li*, in between the two prostrations.’¹⁹⁹
7. The first *tashahhud*, except for people in the congregation when the imam forgets this *tashahhud* and rises for the next *rak[ah*. Those in the congregation are exempt from it because they have an overriding obligation to follow the imam. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) forgot this *tashahhud* he did not go back to perform it. He only

¹⁹⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 689; Muslim, *hadith* No. 411.

¹⁹⁸ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 23,240; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 871; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 262; al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 1,046; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 888.

¹⁹⁹ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 2,375; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 874; al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 1,145; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 897.

prostrated himself at the end in compensation for forgetting it.²⁰⁰ This *tashahhud* requires saying: *At-tahiyyatu lillah, was-salawatu wat-tiyyibat. Assalamu [alayka ayyuha-nnabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh. Assalamu [alayna wa [ala [ibadi-llahis-salihin. Ashhadu an la ilah illa Allah, wa ashadu anna Muhammad-an [abduhu wa rasuluh.* This means: ‘Greetings are offered to Allah, and blessings and all good things belong to Him. Peace be to you, Prophet (peace be upon him), with Allah’s grace and blessings. Peace be to us and to all good servants of Allah. I bear witness that there is no deity other than Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.’

8. To sit down for this first *tashahhud*, as stated in the *hadith* reported by Ibn Mas[ud, quoting the Prophet (peace be upon him): ‘When you are seated after each two *rak[ahs* say the *tashahhud*.’²⁰¹ Another *hadith* reported by Rifa[ah ibn Rafi[quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: ‘When you sit down in the middle of the prayer, sit comfortably, putting your left thigh underneath you and then say the *tashahhud*.’²⁰²
9. The salutation upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) in the last *rak’ah* known as *Assalatul Ibrahimiyah*

²⁰⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,230; Muslim, *hadith* No. 570.

²⁰¹ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 4,160; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 1,163.

²⁰² Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 860; al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu[jam al-Kabir*, *hadith* No. 4,528.

What is recommended (*Sunnah*) in prayer:

These are of two types: actions and words.²⁰³

The *Sunnah* words of the prayer are as follows:

- 1- Saying after the opening takbeer, “*Subhaanaka Allaahumma wa bi hamdika, wa tabaaraka ismuka, wa ta’aala jadduka wa laa ilaaha ghayruka* (Glory and praise be to You, O Allah; blessed be Your name, exalted be Your Majesty, and there is no god but You).” This is called *du’aa’ al-istiftaah* (opening *du’aa’*)
- 2- Seeking refuge with Allah
- 3- Saying *Bismillaah*
- 4- Saying *Ameen*
- 5- Reciting a surah after *al-Faatihah*
- 6- Reciting out loud, in the case of the imam or individual in the first two rak'ah of Fajr, Maghreb and Isha
- 7- Saying after the *tahmeed* (*Rabbana wa laka'l-hamd*): “*Mil’ al-samawaati wa mil’ al-ard wa mil’ ma shi’ta min shay’in ba’d* (Filling the heavens, filling the earth, and filling whatever else You wish).”
- 8- Saying the *tasbeeh* (when bowing or in prostration) more than once, such as a second or third time or more
- 9- Saying “*Rabb ighfir li* (Lord forgive me)” more than once between the two prostrations

²⁰³ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina* [, vol. 1, p. 455; Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 1, p. 462.

- 10- Saying the recommended du'aa' after offering the salutation upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his family known as Assalatul Ibrahimiyah.

Sunnah actions which are postures:

- 1- Raising the hands when saying the opening takbeer
- 2- Raising the hands when bowing
- 3- Raising the hands when rising from bowing
- 4- Raising the hands after the first tashahud while standing up for the 3rd rak'ah.
- 5- Placing the right hand over the left on the chest while in the standing position
- 6- Looking towards the place of prostration
- 7- Standing with the feet apart
- 8- Holding the knees with fingers spread apart when bowing, holding the back straight and making the head parallel with it.
- 9- Placing the parts of the body on which one prostrates firmly on the ground. Keeping the elbows away from the sides, and the belly from the thighs, and the thighs from the calves; keeping the knees apart; holding the feet upright; placing the hands level with the shoulders with the fingers spread.
- 10- Sitting between the two prostrations and in the first tashahud in a way that is known as Iftirash. This is sitting on the left foot while raising the right foot. In the last rak'ah of a 3 or 4 rak'ah prayers, the Sunnah is to sit in what is known as Tawarruk. This is to sit on the left hip while placing the left foot underneath the right leg.

- 11- Placing the hands on the thighs with the fingers together between the two prostrations, and in the tashahhud, except that in the latter the pinkie and ring fingers should be held in, a circle made with the middle finger and thumb, and one should point with the forefinger while shaking it in its place when in the tashahhud position.
- 12- Turning to the right and left when saying the salaam to conclude the prayers.

What invalidates the prayer:

A prayer becomes invalid in several cases that are summed up as follows:²⁰⁴

1. Whatever invalidates purification also invalidates prayer, because purification is a condition for the validity of prayer. The absence of this condition renders the prayer invalid.
2. Loud laughter: This is universally agreed,²⁰⁵ because it is like speaking, if not worse. Such laughter indicates total disrespect and is totally inconsistent with prayer and the need to show humiliation before Allah, who commands us: ‘Stand up before Allah in devout obedience’ (2: 238). A mere smile, however, does not invalidate prayer, as reported by Ibn al-Mundhir and others.

²⁰⁴ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina* [, vol. 1, p. 465.

²⁰⁵ Ibn al-Mundhir, *Al-Ijma* [, p. 40.

3. Deliberate normal speech for any purpose other than that of the prayer itself.²⁰⁶ Zayd ibn Arqam reports: ‘We used to speak during prayer, with a man talking to the one next to him in the row. Then the order was revealed: “Stand up before Allah in devout obedience” (2: 238). We were commanded to be silent and forbidden to speak.’²⁰⁷ If one is unaware of the prohibition, or is in a state of oblivion and speaks, his prayer is not invalidated.
4. Deliberate exposure of one’s *Awrah*.
5. Turning one’s back towards the *qiblah*, because facing the *qiblah* is a condition for the validity of prayer.
6. Contact with impurity: When the worshipper is aware of any contact with impurity, or when he starts the prayer forgetting having had such contact then remembers it during the prayer, and does not immediately remove it, this invalidates prayer.
7. Deliberately omitting an essential duty, whether it is a pillar, an obligatory act or a condition of the prayer without a valid reason.
8. Doing any of several things that are not related to the prayer, such as eating and drinking.
9. Leaning against something without any legitimate reason, because standing up is a condition for the validity of prayer.
10. Deliberately adding a *rukhn* that involves an action, such as doing more than one bowing or more than two prostrations in one *rak [ah]*. Needless to

²⁰⁶ Ibn al-Mundhir reports that this is universally agreed by scholars in *Al-Awsat*, vol. 3, p. 234.

²⁰⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 4,534; Muslim, *hadith* No. 539.

say, this alters the form of prayer and as such, the prayer becomes invalid according to the universal view of scholars.

11. Deliberately changing the order of *rukns*, because following the proper order is itself a *rukhn* as we have already noted.
12. Deliberately saying *Assalamu [alaikum* before prayer is finished.
13. Deliberately changing the meaning when reciting *al-Fatihah*, as its recitation is a *rukhn*.

What is reprehensible in prayer:

The following are discouraged in prayer:²⁰⁸

1. Reciting only the first surah, *al-Fatihah*, in the first two *rak [ahs* because this is against the Prophet's (peace be upon him) practice and guidance.
2. Repeating the surah, *al-Fatihah*, in the same *rak [ah*, because this is also against the Prophet's (peace be upon him) practice. However, if one repeats it for a reason, as in the case of someone who has read it mechanically the first time and wanted to reflect on its meaning by reciting it again, then there is no harm, provided this does not lead to obsession.

²⁰⁸ Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 1, p. 495.

3. Turning one's face slightly during prayer, without a reason, is also discouraged. When asked about this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'This is a time stolen by Satan from a person's prayer.'²⁰⁹ If turning is for a reason, as in the case of someone who starts to have disturbing doubts about his prayer and needs to make the spitting gesture three times to the left during prayer, this is acceptable. In fact the Prophet (peace be upon him) recommended it in such a case. The same applies to a woman who is worried about a young child or a toddler who might be wandering around and she fears that the child might be lost. All this applies to slight turning, but if a person turns with his whole body, or turns his back towards the *qiblah*, then the prayer becomes invalid, unless there is a legitimate reason such as strong fear, etc.
4. Closing one's eyes in prayer, because this would be imitating the worship of the Majians, and it is also said that this is similar to what the Jews do. We, Muslims, are commanded not to be like the unbelievers.
5. Placing one's arms, up to the elbows, on the floor during prostration. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Let your body be in the right position when you prostrate yourself, and let not any of you place his arms on the floor like a dog does.' It is, therefore, important to lift one's arms above the floor, so as not to take a posture like an animal.
6. Making many movements, because this is contrary to the humble appearance required in prayer.

²⁰⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 751.

7. Placing one's hands over one's waist on both sides. Abu Hurayrah said: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited that a man puts his hands over his waist on both sides.'²¹⁰
8. Praying without having anything covering a man's shoulders. Also it is disliked to pray while covering one's mouth without a legitimate reason.²¹¹
9. Starting movements before the imam in congregational prayers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'If anyone lifts his head before the imam, does he not fear that Allah may make his head like the head of an ass or may make him look like an ass?'²¹²
10. Clapping one's fingers together. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told someone who performed the ablution and came to the mosque for prayer that he should not do so,²¹³ and it stands to reason that it is even worse in prayer.
11. Folding one's hair or clothes. Ibn [Abbas reports: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to place seven bones on the floor in prostration and not to fold his clothes or hair.' This means one shouldn't fold his sleeves or clothes for prayer but rather leave it loose to bow and prostrate with him and also not to gather the hair if it is long in a bun for example for prayer.

²¹⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,220; Muslim, *hadith* No. 545.

²¹¹ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 643; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 378; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 966.

²¹² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 691; Muslim, *hadith* No. 427.

²¹³ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 562; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 386.

12. Praying when food is present or when one has the urge to go to the toilet. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Prayer is not preferred when food is around or when one feels the urge to go to the toilet.’²¹⁴ Praying is discouraged when food is around only if one is hungry and wants to eat and can have it.
13. Raising one’s eyes to the sky. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Those people who lift their eyes to the sky in prayer should stop, or their sights might not be safe.’²¹⁵

Congregational prayer: its importance and status

Muslims are agreed that offering the five obligatory prayers in mosques is one of the best acts undertaken in obedience to Allah. Allah has given the Muslim community the opportunity to meet at certain times, such as the five daily prayers, the Friday prayer, the prayer on the two Eid days, and the prayer when there is an eclipse. These are great meetings and they serve the interests of the Muslim community, as people meet and discuss their affairs, as well as the affairs of other Muslim communities. Allah says: ‘O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.’ (49: 13).

²¹⁴ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 560.

²¹⁵ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 429.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed the Muslims to attend congregational prayers at all time, explaining that it earns much greater reward. He says: ‘Prayer in a congregation is 27 grades better than praying alone.’²¹⁶ He also said: ‘When a person prays in congregation his prayer gives him a reward which is 25 times the reward of his prayer at home or at his place in the market. This is so because when he performs the ablution at home, then goes out to the mosque for no reason other than attending the prayer, he is given a grade and forgiven a sin for every step he makes. When he is actually engaged in prayer, the angels bless him as long as he is at his place of worship.’²¹⁷

Status: Congregational prayer is a duty for Muslim men, and this is clear in both the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Allah says in the Qur’an: ‘When you are with the believers and about to lead them in prayer, let one group of them stand up with you’ (4: 102). The formula, ‘let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you’ is expressed in the Arabic text in the imperative form, and this form clearly indicates obligation. It is true that this verse refers to a situation when the Muslim community is in a state of fear, as in a situation where an enemy force may attack them. Needless to say, the order applies even more clearly in a state of peace.

The evidence from the Sunnah is found in the *hadith* reported by Abu Hurayrah: ‘Allah’s messenger said: “The prayers found

²¹⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* Nos. 645 and 646; Muslim, *hadith* No. 650.

²¹⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 647.

too hard by the hypocrites are [Isha' and Fajr. Had they known how much goodness they bring, they would have come crawling to join them, even though they would have to crawl. I have even thought of ordering the prayer to be held and ordering one of you to lead the prayer, then I would go with some men carrying bundles of firewood. We would go to some people who abstain from coming to prayer and I would burn their homes.”²¹⁸ The *hadith* clearly indicates that the congregational prayer is a duty, because: 1) the Prophet (peace be upon him) described those who do not attend it as ‘hypocrites’, but a person who does not perform a Sunnah, or a recommended practice, is never considered hypocrite. This means that they have abstained from a duty. 2) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said that he had thought of punishing them severely for staying away from the congregational prayer. Punishment is only inflicted for failing to do a duty. What stopped him from acting on this idea was that punishment by fire is only inflicted by Allah. Some scholars also say what stopped him from punishing them in this way was the fact that there were women and children in those homes, and these are not required to attend congregational prayers.

Another report mentions that a blind man asked the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) permission to offer his prayers at home. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him whether he could hear the *adhan* when he was at home. He affirmed that he could. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘You have to

²¹⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 644; Muslim, *hadith* No. 651.



respond. I cannot find any excuse for you.’²¹⁹ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: ‘Whoever hears the call must respond; his prayer away (from the mosque) is invalid unless he has a good reason.’²²⁰ Ibn Mas[ud said: ‘There we were, and only a person who was well known as a hypocrite would stay away (from the congregational prayers).’²²¹

Congregational prayer is a duty that is applicable to men, but not to women or children who have not yet attained puberty. In reference to women, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Their homes are better for them.’²²² However, there is no reason to prevent women from attending congregational prayers at the mosque, provided they go out properly dressed, fearing nothing. It is correct to say that attending congregational prayers at the mosque is binding on those to whom it applies. For a person who does not attend the congregational prayer, choosing instead to offer his prayers alone, his prayer is valid but he incurs the sin of failing to do a duty if he were in the vicinity of a masjid.

The person to lead the congregational prayer in the mosque is the regular imam, or the one who knows the Qur’an best. It is acceptable that a young person or a blind man should lead the prayer. It is permissible for a person offering an obligatory prayer to lead another offering a voluntary prayer, or the reverse. Likewise, a traveller may lead the prayer, with

²¹⁹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 653.

²²⁰ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* 551; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 793; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 245.

²²¹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 654.

²²² Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 567; Ahmad, *hadith* No. 2/76; al-Hakim, vol. 1, p. 209.

residents behind him, or a resident leads with travellers behind him. A person who performed the normal ablution may lead the one who had only dry ablution, or the reverse. An imam may lead the prayer even when there are in the congregation one or more people who are better qualified to lead it.

It is preferable when there is a group of women offering a prayer that one of them should lead the prayer. [A'ishah used to lead a group of women in prayer, standing among them in the first row. Umm Salamah also used to do the same. The Prophet (peace be upon him) appointed Waraqah to do the *adhan* for her, and ordered her to lead the members of her household in obligatory prayers. However, if a man leads the prayer when there are only women in the congregation, this is acceptable.

Friday prayer

Friday prayer is obligatory to every male, as Allah says: 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on Friday, go straightaway to the prayer and leave off your trading. This is best for you, if you but knew it' (62: 9). The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Attending Friday prayers is obligatory to everyone who has attained puberty.' He also said: 'Some people shall cease to absent themselves from Friday prayer, or else Allah will seal their hearts and they would then be counted among those who are oblivious.'²²³ Al-Nawawi said: 'This

²²³ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 865.

hadith makes clear that Friday prayer is obligatory to every individual (male) Muslim.²²⁴ As the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Friday prayer is a duty binding on every Muslim...’²²⁵

On whom it is binding

Friday prayer is a duty binding on every Muslim male who is free, sane, having attained puberty and is present in the area where he resides. This means that a person to whom any of these does not apply is exempt from Friday prayer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Friday prayer with a congregation is a duty binding on every Muslim, except four: a slave, a woman, a child or an ill person.’ It is not binding on a person who is travelling because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not offer Friday prayer on any of his travels. When he offered the pilgrimage, it happened that the day of attendance at Arafat was a Friday, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not offer Friday prayer then. He offered *Thuhur* and combined it with [Asr. A traveller who finds himself in a town where Friday prayer is offered should offer it with the Muslim community. Moreover, if a slave, a woman, a child, an ill person or a traveller attends it, it is acceptable and replaces *Thuhur* prayer.

²²⁴ Al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, vol. 6, p. 152.

²²⁵ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 1,067; al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 5,578.

Timing

Friday prayer is offered at the same time as Thuhur prayer, i.e. just after the sun has started to move down at midday, up until the shade of any object is equal to its height. Anas reports; ‘The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to offer Friday prayer when the sun had started to go down.’²²⁶ This is what is reported to have been done by the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Companions.²²⁷ It was also reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray it before that. Some scholars say that it is permissible to pray it about half an hour before thuhur time when needed.

The sermon

Giving a sermon is a *ruk'n* of Friday prayer, and it is invalid without it, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did it all the time, never omitting it. It is of two parts that must be completed before the prayer.²²⁸ The Imam must praise Allah, say the testimony of Tawheed and salutation and to recite at least one ayah.

What is recommended in respect of the sermon:

It is recommended to include in the sermon, or *khutbah*, a supplication for the Muslim community praying to Allah to grant them what gives them a happy life in this world and in the

²²⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 904.

²²⁷ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vol. 2, p. 450.

²²⁸ Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 2, p. 294.

life to come, and to pray to rulers to be God-fearing and guided towards what benefits their communities. This is following the Prophet's (peace be upon him) practice, because 'the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to supplicate when he gave the *khutbah* on Friday, and as he supplicated, he would point out with his finger.'²²⁹ It is also recommended that one person gives both parts of the *khutbah* and leads the prayer, raising his voice, and standing up when giving the *khutbah*. Allah mentions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave the *khutbah* standing up: 'When people see some trade or entertainment, they head off towards it, leaving you standing there' (62: 11).

Jabir ibn Samurah reported: 'Allah's messenger used to give the *khutbah* standing up, then he sat down, then stood up and continued the *khutbah*. If anyone tells you that he gave the *khutbah* seated, he does not tell you the truth.'²³⁰ It is recommended that the imam should stand on a pulpit or at a high spot so that people could hear and see him better. He is recommended to sit down briefly between the two parts of the *khutbah*, as [Abdullah ibn [Umar said: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to give two *khutbahs* standing up, separating them by sitting down.'²³¹

It is also recommended that both *khutbahs* should be short, and the second should be shorter than the first. [Ammar quotes the

²²⁹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 874.

²³⁰ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 862.

²³¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 928; Muslim, *hadith* No. 861; al-Daraqutni, *hadith* No. 160.

Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: ‘When a man makes his prayer long and his *khutbah* short, he demonstrates his good understanding. Therefore, make your prayer long and your *khutbah* short.’²³²

It is also recommended that the imam should offer the greeting of *salam* to the congregation when he stands on the pulpit facing them. Jabir reports: ‘When the Prophet (peace be upon him) stood up on the pulpit, he would offer the *salam* greeting.’²³³ He is also recommended to sit on the pulpit until the *adhan* is completed. Ibn [Umar reported: ‘The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to give two *khutbahs*, he would sit on the pulpit until the call for prayer is finished, then he would stand up and give the *khutbah*.’²³⁴

What is forbidden in Friday prayer

When the imam is giving the *khutbah* it is forbidden for people in the congregation to talk. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Whoever talks on Friday when the imam is giving the *khutbah* is like an ass carrying books...’²³⁵ He also says: ‘If on Friday when the imam is delivering the *khutbah* you say to your friend, “listen”, then you have said what is unacceptable.’²³⁶

²³² Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 869.

²³³ Related by Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,109.

²³⁴ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 1,092.

²³⁵ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 2,033; al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, *hadith* No. 12,563.

²³⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 394; Muslim, *hadith* No. 851.

It is also forbidden to walk forward, stepping over people's shoulders as they sit to listen to the *khuṭbah*, in order to reach a place in front. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to someone who did just that: 'Sit down. You have hurt people and caused them inconvenience.'²³⁷ Needless to say, to do so hurts people and diverts their attention from listening to the *khuṭbah*. Only the imam may do so if he cannot otherwise reach his place. It is also reprehensible to separate two people and sit between them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Whoever takes a bath on Friday [...] then he goes to the mosque, without separating between two people and he offers his obligatory prayer [...], he is forgiven whatever he might have done in between the (last) two Fridays.'²³⁸

Minimum requirements

If one arrives at the mosque with the Friday prayer already in progress, he is deemed to have joined the prayer correctly if he joins completing at least the second *rak[ah]*. He will need then to add another *rak[ah]* after the imam has finished. Abu Hurayrah quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'Whoever completes one *rak[ah]* of Friday prayer (with the imam) is considered as having offered this prayer.'²³⁹ If he prays with the imam less than one *rak[ah]*, he completes his prayer as *Thuhur* prayer, i.e. 4- *rak[ahs]*.

²³⁷ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 17,674; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 1,118; al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 1,399; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,115; al-Hakim, *hadith* No. 424.

²³⁸ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 910.

²³⁹ Related by al-Nassa'i, *hadith* No. 1,425; Ibn Khuzaymah, *hadith* No. 1,850; al-Tabarani in *Musnad al-Shamiyyin*, *hadith* No. 2,885; al-Daraqutni, *hadith* No. 1,596.

Form

Friday prayer consists of two *rak [ahs* with the imam reciting the Qur'an aloud in both. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did that, and what he did is part of his Sunnah. This is universally agreed by scholars.²⁴⁰ It is recommended that the imam recites Surah 62, *al-Jumu[ah*, after *al-Fatihah* in the first *rak [ah*, and Surah 63, The Hypocrites, in the second,²⁴¹ or Surahs 87 and 88, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that.²⁴²

Recommended in Friday prayer

1. It is recommended, i.e. a Sunnah, to go to the mosque early to earn great reward. Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever takes a bath on Friday, just like the one to remove ceremonial impurity, and goes to the mosque very early is like one who offers a camel (for charity); and whoever goes in the second hour is like one who offers a cow; and the one who goes in the third hour is like one who offers a horned ram; and whoever goes in the fourth hour is like one offering a chicken; while the one going in the fifth hour is like one offering an egg. Then when the imam starts, the angels attend to listen to Allah's praises.'²⁴³ The Prophet (peace be upon him) also says: 'Whoever cleans himself and

²⁴⁰ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina[*, vol. 2, p. 41.

²⁴¹ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 879.

²⁴² Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 878.

²⁴³ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 881; Muslim, *hadith* No. 850.

takes a bath on Friday, goes to the mosque really early, walking rather than riding, gets close to the imam, listens and says nothing frivolous, will have for every step he makes, the reward of a whole year, fasting the day and worshipping at night.’²⁴⁴

2. It is also a Sunnah that one should take a bath on Friday, as noted in the *hadith* quoted earlier and reported by Abu Hurayrah. In fact, everyone should be keen to take a bath on Friday, particularly if one is known to have an unpleasant smell. Some scholars consider it a duty, because of a *hadith* reported by Abu Sa[‘id al-Khudri, quoting the Prophet (peace be upon him): ‘A bath on Friday is a duty for every Muslim who has attained puberty.’²⁴⁵ However, the most authentic opinion is that it is highly recommended.
3. Furthermore, it is strongly recommended to wear perfume and take care of one’s cleanliness, removing whatever needs to be removed of one’s body, such as clipping one’s nails. This is more than taking a bath, as it involves removing bad smells and their causes, such as removing any hair that is recommended to be shaved, such as pubic hair, armpit hair, trimming one’s moustache. Though there is no authentic hadeeth recommending this, there are a lot of evidences stating that the companions and the scholars of different schools of thought recommended it.

²⁴⁴ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 16,172; Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 345; al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 496; al-Nassa’i, *hadith* No. 1,384; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,087.

²⁴⁵ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 879; Muslim, *hadith* No. 846.

4. It is recommended also to wear some of one's best clothes. Ibn [Umar reports: '[Umar ibn al-Khattab saw a fine suit near the door of the mosque, and said: "Allah's messenger, you may wish to buy this suit and wear it on Fridays and to receive delegations when they come."]' Al-Bukhari considers this report to indicate the preferability of wearing one's best clothes for Friday prayer. Hence, he enters it in his anthology under the heading: 'Wearing one's best clothes.' Ibn Hajar said: 'This *hadith* is treated as evidence supporting the idea of wearing good clothes for Friday prayer because the Prophet (peace be upon him) approved [Umar's idea of maintaining good appearance on Fridays. Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) says, "Anyone of you will do well to buy two garments to use on Fridays instead of the two he wears for attending to his work."']²⁴⁶
5. It is also a Sunnah to pray to Allah to grant our Prophet (peace be upon him) praise and peace on the preceding night of a Friday and during the daytime, as he told us to do so.²⁴⁷
6. Another Sunnah is to recite in the Fajr prayer Surahs 32 and 76, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) frequently did so, and to recite Surah 18, during the day. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Whoever recites Surah 18, The Cave, on Friday will have a column of light rising from underneath his feet to the sky, giving him light on the Day

²⁴⁶ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 1,078; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,095; al-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, *hadith* No. 373.

²⁴⁷ Related by Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,637; al-Hakim, vol. 2, p. 457.

of Judgement, and will be forgiven what he does in between the last two Friday prayers.’²⁴⁸

7. When one enters the mosque on Friday or any other time, he is instructed not to sit down until he has offered a prayer of two *rak [ahs]* in greeting to the mosque, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered this.²⁴⁹ If the imam is giving his speech, the entrant is advised to make his two *rak [ahs]* short.
8. Another Sunnah is frequent supplication on Friday, hoping to make his supplication at the time when prayers are answered. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘In every Friday, there is an hour in which any Muslim who happens to be standing up in prayer at that time, and prays to Allah for anything, Allah will certainly grant it to him (or her).’²⁵⁰

The Eid prayer

Muslims have two Eids a year. The Eid is an occasion of pleasure and happiness, and each of the two Eids has a religious significance. The first, Eid al-Fitr, occurs when Muslims have finished fasting the month of Ramadan, while the second, Eid al-Adha, signals the end of the first 10 days of the lunar month, Dhul-Hijjah.

²⁴⁸ Related by al-Nassa’i in *Al-Sunan al-Kubra*, *hadith* No. 10,722; al-Hakim, vol. 2, p. 399.

²⁴⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 930; Muslim, *hadith* No. 875.

²⁵⁰ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 935; Muslim, *hadith* No. 852.

Ruling: The Eid prayer is a collective duty, which means that when some Muslims offer it, the rest are not accountable for their omission. If no one offers it, then all share in the sin. This is because it is one of the clearest manifestations of the Islamic identity of the community. Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) always did it, as did his Companions after he had passed away. The Prophet (peace be upon him) even ordered that women who were in their periods, and were as a result exempt from prayer, to attend it, but were not to take part in the prayer itself. They attend to share in its blessings and in the joy of the community, which clearly indicates its importance. If the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered women who were exempt from prayer to attend, then its attendance is more strongly incumbent on men. In fact some scholars consider it mandatory on all men.

Many scholars, however, are of the view that it is a confirmed Sunnah, i.e. highly recommended, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered it regularly and ordered men and women to attend it.

Conditions: The most important conditions are that it should be offered in time, the presence of the required number of people and residence. This means that it is invalid if offered before it falls due, or if attended by less than three people. Moreover, it is not required of a person who is travelling.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina* [, vol. 2, p. 56.

Place: It is recommended to offer the Eid prayer in an open space away from residential buildings. Abu Sa[ʿid al-Khudri reports: ‘The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to go out to pray the Eid prayer of al-Fitr and al-Adha in the open space.’²⁵² Apparently this he did in order to publicize this Islamic tradition. It is permissible to offer it in a large mosque when there is need for that, such as rain, strong winds or other severe weather conditions.²⁵³

Time: The Eid prayer becomes due at the time when the Sunnah prayer known as Duha is due, which means it starts when the sun has risen in the sky about one spear’s length. This is when the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his successors used to offer it, and prior to the sun being at that height, prayer is discouraged.²⁵⁴ It is recommended to start the Eid al-Adha prayer at the beginning of its time range and to delay the Eid al-Fitr prayer because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that. People need to attend to their sacrifice after the prayer at Eid al-Adha, while the delay in Eid al-Fitr prayer helps a person who has not yet paid Zakat al-Fitr to pay it, as it must be paid up to immediately before the prayer.²⁵⁵

Description and recitation

The Eid prayer consists of two *rak[ahs]*, similar to the Friday prayer.

²⁵² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 956; Muslim, *hadith* No. 889.

²⁵³ Al-Bahuti, *Kashshaf al-Qina[*, vol. 2, p. 59.

²⁵⁴ Ibn Qudamah, *Al-Mughni*, vol. 2, pp. 232–3.

²⁵⁵ Al-Zuhaili, *al-Fiqh al-Islami*, vol. 2, p. 1,391.



In the first *rak'ah* and after the takbeer (glorification), *Allah-u akbar*, and the opening supplication, the same glorification of takbeer is repeated seven more times, after that, *al-Fatihah* and another surah are recited. In the second *rak'ah*, the same takbeer is repeated five times, other than the takbeer for standing up from *sujood* before reciting *al-Fatihah*. This is based on the *hadith* reported by [A]’ishah: ‘Allah’s messenger used to say *Allah-u akbar* in the Eid prayers of al-Fitr and al-Adha seven times in the first *rak'ah* and five in the second.’²⁵⁶ With each takbeer, it is recommended that one raise his hands, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that.²⁵⁷ Then the imam says silently *a [udhu billahi min al-Shaytan al-Rajim* (i.e. ‘I seek shelter with Allah against Satan, the accursed.’) He then recites the Qur’an aloud, reciting after *al-Fatihah* Surah *Al A’ala* (87) in the first *rak'ah* and Surah *Al Ghashia* (88) in the second, as it is reported by Jabir ibn Samurah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that. It is also authentically reported that he read Surah *Qaf* (50) in the first *rak'ah* and Surah *Al Qamar* (54) in the second.²⁵⁸ Therefore, it is good to do this in turn, looking always to make things easier for the congregation.

²⁵⁶ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 1,149.

²⁵⁷ Related by Ahmad, *hadith* No. 18,848.

²⁵⁸ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 891.

The *Khutbah*

Unlike the Friday prayer, the *khutbah* in the Eid prayer is given after the prayer. Ibn [Umar said: ‘The Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Bakr and [Umar used to offer the Eid prayer before giving the *khutbah*.’²⁵⁹

If missed

It is not recommended for anyone who misses out on the Eid prayer to offer it after it has finished, because this was not reported as suggested by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Moreover, it is a prayer for which a certain congregation gathers. It must, therefore, be offered in this fashion.

What is recommended:

1. It is a Sunnah, i.e. recommended, that the Eid prayer is organized at an open, well known space, preferably outside the village or town, so that the community can gather and perform this distinctive act of worship. However, if it is offered in mosques for one reason or another, the prayer is still valid.
2. As noted when we referred to its time, it is recommended to start the Eid al-Adha prayer early and to delay the Eid al-Fitr prayer.

²⁵⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 963; Muslim, *hadith* No. 888.

3. It is also a Sunnah to eat a few dates before going out to offer the Eid al-Fitr prayer, and not to eat anything on Eid al-Adha until the Eid prayer has finished and one eats from his sacrifice, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that on these occasions,²⁶⁰ eating an odd number of dates on Eid al-Fitr.²⁶¹
4. It is a Sunnah also to walk to the place of the prayer, and to start early, soon after finishing the Fajr prayer, so that one can sit at a convenient place near the imam, and to earn the reward for awaiting the prayer.
5. Men are recommended to take a bath before the prayer, wear perfume and put on a fine appearance, wearing some of one's best clothes. Women are the same, but must not wear perfumes or expose their adornment.
6. The imam is recommended to give a comprehensive speech, outlining the main principles of the Islamic faith.
7. It is further recommended to say: *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, La Ilaha illa Allah, wallahu Akbar Allahu Akbar walillahi Alhamd*. Allah says in the verse outlining the duty of fasting in Ramadan: 'You are, however, required to complete the necessary number of days and to extol and glorify Allah for having guided you aright and to tender your thanks' (2: 185). This takbeer is said from the sunset of the last day of Ramadan until the Imam comes out for Eid prayer, and also from the Fajr prayer on the 9th day of Thul Hijjah till the sunset of the 13th of the same month. It is announced after the Fard prayers. Men say their *Takbeer*

²⁶⁰ Related by al-Tirmidhi, *hadith* No. 542; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,756.

²⁶¹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 953.

(glorifications) aloud, while women recite them in a low voice, if they are in public.

8. Changing route. It is recommended to change one's route, going to the prayer one way and following a different route on the way back. Jabir reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that on Eid days. It is said that this is done so that both routes will, on the Day of Judgement, testify for us, or that this special act of worship is shown in different areas.

People need to congratulate one another on this occasion, saying to one another: 'May Allah accept your and my good actions.' The Prophet's (peace be upon him) Companions used to do so, showing pleasure to meet other people.

The Prayer for Rain

Offering prayers for rain (salaat al-istisqa') is a Sunnah, as confirmed by saheeh hadeeths and the practice of the early generations of Islam. Ibn Qudaamah said: Prayer for rain is a confirmed Sunnah, proven by the practice of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and of his successors.²⁶²

Abu Dawood (1165), at-Tirmidhi (558), an-Nasaa'i (1506) and Ibn Maajah (1266) narrated that Is-haaq ibn Abdillah ibn Kinaanah said: al-Waleed ibn 'Uqbah, who was the governor

²⁶² al-Mughni, 2/148

of Madinah, sent me to ask Ibn ‘Abbaas about the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) for rain (istisqa’). He said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) went out wearing modest clothes, walking humbly and beseeching Allah, until he reached the prayer place, where he ascended the minbar, but he did not give a khutbah like this khutbah of yours; rather he continued to offer supplication (du‘aa’), beseech Allah and recite takbeer, then he prayed two rak‘ahs as he used to pray at Eid.

Description and recitation

The prayer for rain consists of two *rak [ahs*, similar to Eid prayer.

In the first *rak [ah*, and after the takbeer (glorification), *Allah-u akbar*, and the opening supplication, takbeer is repeated seven more times, after that, *al-Fatihah* and another surah are recited. In the second *rak [ah* the same takbeer is repeated five times other than the takbeer for standing up from sujood before reciting *al-Fatihah*. This is based on the *hadith* reported by [A’ishah: ‘Allah’s messenger used to say *Allah-u akbar* in the Eid prayers of al-Fitr and al-Adha seven times in the first *rak [ah* and five in the second.’²⁶³ With each takbeer, it is recommended that one raises his hands. Then the imam says silently *a [udhu billahi min al-Shaytan al-Rajim* (i.e. ‘I seek shelter with Allah against Satan, the accursed.’) He then recites

²⁶³ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 1,149.

the Qur'an aloud, reciting after *al-Fatihah* Surah *Al A'ala* (87) in the first *rak'ah* and Surah *Al Ghashia* (88) in the second, as it is reported by Jabir ibn Samurah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that. It is also authentically reported that he read Surah *Qaf* (50) in the first *rak'ah* and Surah *Al Qamar* (54) in the second.²⁶⁴ Though this was for Eid prayers but prayer for rian is identical to it. Therefore, it is good to do this in turn, looking always to make things easier for the congregation.

The Prayer of Eclipse

When the sun was eclipsed at the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), he commanded someone to call out “*al-salaatu jaami'ah* (congregational prayer is about to begin)”, and he led the people in prayer. Then he addressed them and explained to them the reason for the eclipse, and declared their pre-Islamic beliefs to be null and void. He explained to them what they should do, such as praying and making du'aa' and giving in charity. He said: “The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allah; they do not become eclipsed for the death or life of anyone. If you see that then call upon Allah and magnify Him, and pray, and give in charity.”²⁶⁵

How it is prayed:

²⁶⁴ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 891.

²⁶⁵ Related by an-Nasa'i, Book 16, *hadith* No. 16

Praying it is a communal obligation and it must be prayed in congregation and in the masjid. When the eclipse is visible and can be seen by people, the call is made to gather the Muslims in the mosque. The Imam leads the prayer by offering takbeer, recites the Dua'a in the beginning of the prayer, seeks refuge in Allah from Satan, recites *al-Fatiha* and then recites a long surah after it. He then bows and prolongs his ruku and then stands straight saying: *Sami'a Allahu liman Hamidah, rabana wa lakal Hamd*. He then begins to recite *al-Fatiha* again and another long surah but shorter than the first one. After that, He bows and prolongs his ruku but less than the first one and then stands straight saying: *Sami'a Allahu liman Hamidah rabana wa lakal Hamd* and prolongs his standing position. He then offers two long prostrations and also prolongs his sitting in between the prostrations. After that, he stands up and repeats the same format as the first rak'ah but shorter. He then sits for tashahud and offers Salam.

Time:

The eclipse prayer begins when the eclipse takes place, and should end once it is cleared out. One must not take the predictions of astronomers and pray without seeing it, but rather should only begin prayer once the eclise is visible. While in prayer, the Imam finishes the prayer either by estimating the time or when someone notifies him.

***Janazah* prayer: for a deceased person**

It is very important that everyone should always remember death and the end of one's life in this world, preparing for this eventuality by doing good works, repenting of sin and rectifying injustice, so as to have the right preparation for one's future, eternal life.

It is part of the Sunnah (recommended actions) to visit people who are ill and remind them of the need to repent of sin and to write their wills. When a person is known to be close to death, it is a Sunnah to remind him to say: *La ilaha illa Allah*, (i.e. there is no deity other than Allah), so that it is the last thing he says. He should not be reminded to say it again unless he speaks something else. If it was the last thing he said before dying, he will go to Paradise as our Prophet (peace be upon him) had told us.²⁶⁶ When a person dies, it is recommended to close his eyes and to take steps to prepare him for burial and bury him without delay.

Status: The prayer for a deceased person is a collective duty (*fard kifaayah*), which means that it must be done by some people, and when it is done, those who did not attend it are absolved of the responsibility. The basis of this verdict is the fact that when the body of a deceased person was brought in the mosque, and he had some debt outstanding, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to his Companions: 'Pray for your brother.'²⁶⁷ Moreover, when the Prophet (peace be upon him)

²⁶⁶ Related by Abu Dawud, Book 21, *hadith* No. 28

²⁶⁷ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 2,289; Muslim, *hadith* No. 1,619.

was given the news of the death of the *Negus*, he said to his Companions: ‘A brother of yours has passed away. Stand up and pray for him.’²⁶⁸

Conditions: The conditions for the validity of the *janazah* prayer are the same as the conditions of prayer mentioned earlier, with the exception that it is not time-bound and that the body of the deceased must be present in front of the people offering the prayer. Moreover, both the deceased and the one offering the prayer should be Muslims, and they should both be in a state of purification, even if it be dry ablution when there is need for it.

Essentials: The people offering the prayer for the deceased should stand up, as this is a prayer and standing up is required in all prayers. It consists of four takbeer (glorifications), i.e. *Allah-u akbar*, ‘because the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered it for the *Negus* with four takbeer.’²⁶⁹ Other essentials are reciting *al-Fatihah*, because the *hadith* that mentions that no prayer is valid without reciting *al-Fatihah* applies to all prayers; blessing the Prophet (peace be upon him); supplication for the deceased as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘When you pray for a deceased person, make your supplication sincere’;²⁷⁰ finishing with *salam*, because the *hadith* that makes *salam* the end of prayer also applies; and doing these essentials in the right order.

²⁶⁸ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 952.

²⁶⁹ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,245; Muslim, *hadith* No. 951.

²⁷⁰ Related by Abu Dawud, *hadith* No. 3,199; Ibn Majah, *hadith* No. 1,497.

Recommended practices

It is recommended to raise the hands with every one of the four takbeer (glorifications); to say *a [udhu billahi min al-Shaytan al-Rajim* before reciting *al-Fatihah*; to include oneself and all Muslims in one's supplication; and to say all this quietly, not audibly.²⁷¹

Time: The time to offer the *janazah* prayer starts after having washed the body of the deceased, wrapped and prepared him or her for burial. If one misses the congregational prayer, he can offer it at the cemetery.

Importance: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever takes part in a funeral until the *janazah* prayer has been offered shall have a share of the reward, and whoever takes part until the deceased has been buried shall have two shares.' People asked: 'What are these shares?' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'They are like two huge mountains.'²⁷²

How it is done

²⁷¹ Al-Nadawi, *Al-Fiqh al-Muyassar*, p. 114.

²⁷² Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 1,325; Muslim, *hadith* No. 945.

1. The imam, or the person who is offering the prayer alone, stands close to the head of the deceased male, or near the middle of the body of the deceased female, as Anas reported the Prophet (peace be upon him) did that.
2. He then says *Allah-u akbar* to start the prayer, and follows this with *a [udhu billahi min al-Shaytan al-Rajim*, then recites *al-Fatihah*— silently, even when the prayer is offered at night.
3. Then the imam says the second *Allah-u akbar*, and follows it with sending the Ibrahimic salutation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as said at the end of every normal prayer.
4. Then he says the third takbeer and follows it with supplications for the deceased. There are supplications said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) on such occasions, such as:
 - a. ‘Our Lord, forgive us all: the living and the dead; the present and the absent; the young and the old; the males and the females. Our Lord, whoever of us You keep alive enable them to live as Muslims, and those of us whose souls You gather let them end their lives as believers.’
 - b. Other supplications for the deceased include: ‘My Lord, forgive him (or her); bestow mercy on him and wipe his sins; bless his place and widen his entrance; wash him with water, snow and hail; clear him of sins as stains are removed from a white robe; place him in a home better than his home, and give him a family better than his family, and a spouse better than his

spouse. Admit him into heaven and shelter him from torment in the grave and punishment in hell.²⁷³

c. If the deceased is a child, the supplication includes: ‘My Lord, make him precede his parents (to Paradise) and a cause to give them great reward.’²⁷⁴

5. Then he says the last *Allahu Akbar* and pauses a little. It is good to add a supplication here, such as: ‘Our Lord, do not deprive us of the reward of this funeral and do not give us a hard trial after him.’²⁷⁵

6. He then finishes with *salam* once only to the right, but if he makes them two *salams*, to the right and left, this is also valid.

If one joins the prayer after it has started, he completes the prayer after the imam has finished. If one misses the prayer before the deceased is buried, one may go to the grave and pray the *janazah* prayer there, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) did when he was informed that the cleaner who used to look after the mosque had died. He went to her grave and prayed there.²⁷⁶

If the deceased is in a different town, one may offer the *janazah* prayer on being informed of his death, even if this happens a month or more later.²⁷⁷ If a woman has a miscarriage, the

²⁷³ Related by Muslim, *hadith* No. 963.

²⁷⁴ Related by [Abd al-Razzaq in *Al-Musannaf*, vol. 3, p. 529, *hadith* No. 6,589.

²⁷⁵ Related by Malik in *Al-Muwatta'*, *hadith* No. 612; [Abd al-Razzaq in *Al-Musannaf*, vol. 3, p. 488, *hadith* No. 6,425.

²⁷⁶ Related by al-Bukhari, *hadith* No. 458; Muslim, *hadith* No. 956.

²⁷⁷ ibn Qudama, *al-Mughni*, 2:323



janazah prayer is offered for the aborted embryo if the pregnancy was more than four months, though some scholars validate the *janazah* prayer for a fetus as young as forty days, based on more than one statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him).²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Related by Muslim, Book 46, *hadith* No. 4