

Pray as You Have Seen Me Pray

صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُنِي أُصَلِّي

‘Pray as you have seen me pray.’

Bukhārī (631).

Pray as You Have Seen Me Pray

The spiritual meaning, practical method and Hanafī proofs of prayer

Abū Sulaym

Masjid-e-Umar, Gloucester

Pray as You Have Seen Me Pray

First edition

[Publisher name and address]

[Year of publication]

© [Rights holder]. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission.

[ISBN placeholder]

Typeset in EB Garamond and Amiri.

Contents

Preface.....

A Note on Transliteration and References.....

Transliteration Table.....

Part One: Foundations.....

The Place of the Madhhab.....

Understanding Hadith Evidence.....

The Early School and the Later Hadith Corpus.....

The Inner Life of Prayer.....

Why Prayer Matters.....

Khushū‘: Presence of Heart.....

Preparing to Pray.....

A Complete Wudū’.....

Wiping Over Footwear.....

The Inner Meaning and Sunna of *Wudū’*.....

Adhān: The Call to Prayer.....

Dressing for the Meeting.....

The Etiquette of the Masjid.....

Women and Congregational Prayer.....

Training the Attention.....

Removing Distractions Before Prayer.....

Calmness and Proportion.....

Reciting the Qur’an Well.....

The Legal Shape of Prayer.....

Part Two: The Prayer and Its Proofs.....

Intention, Dress and Standing.....	
<i>Intention</i>	
<i>Dress for Prayer</i>	
<i>The Feet and the Row</i>	
<i>Where to Look</i>	
Opening the Prayer.....	
<i>Raising the Hands</i>	
The Opening Takbīr and Folding the Hands.....	
<i>The Opening Praise</i>	
<i>Seeking Refuge and the Basmala</i>	
Recitation.....	
<i>Al-Fātiḥa and an Additional Passage</i>	
<i>Saying Āmīn</i>	
<i>Recitation Behind the Imam</i>	
Bowing and Rising.....	
<i>Moving into Rukūʿ</i>	
<i>The Posture of Rukūʿ</i>	
<i>Rising from Rukūʿ</i>	
Stillness in Each Posture.....	
Prostration and Sitting.....	
<i>Going into Sajda</i>	
<i>The Seven Points of Prostration</i>	
<i>Sitting Between the Two Prostrations</i>	
<i>Standing for the Next Rakʿa</i>	
The Final Sitting and Salām.....	
<i>The Tashabbud</i>	
<i>The Index Finger</i>	

<i>Blessings and Supplication</i>	
<i>The Salām</i>	
The Prayer of Women.....	
Dress and Standing.....	
Rukū‘ and Qawma.....	
Sajda and Sitting.....	
After the Prayer.....	
<i>Seeking Forgiveness and Remembering Allah</i>	
The Tasbīḥ of Sayyidatuna Fāṭima (may Allah be pleased with her).....	
<i>Āyat al-Kursī After Prayer</i>	
<i>Supplication for Constancy in Worship</i>	
<i>Protection After Maghrib and Fajr</i>	
Personal Supplication After the Obligatory Prayer.....	
Raising the Hands After Prayer.....	
Collective Supplication.....	
Wiping the Face After Supplication.....	
<i>The Voluntary Prayers</i>	

Part Three: Understanding What We Recite.....

Sūrat al-Fātiḥa.....	
<i>Virtues</i>	
<i>Arabic Text, Transliteration and Translation</i>	
<i>The Movement of the Heart</i>	
<i>A Conversation with Allah</i>	
The Short Sūras.....	
<i>Sūrat al-‘Aṣr</i>	
<i>Sūrat al-Humaza</i>	
<i>Sūrat al-Fil</i>	

<i>Sūrat Quraysh</i>	
<i>Sūrat al-Māʿūn</i>	
<i>Sūrat al-Kawthar</i>	
<i>Sūrat al-Kāfirūn</i>	
<i>Sūrat an-Naṣr</i>	
<i>Sūrat al-Masad</i>	
<i>Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ</i>	
Sūrat al-Falaq and Sūrat <i>an-Nās</i>	

Closing Note.....

Bibliography and Further Reading.....

Preface

Prayer is the most regular meeting a believer has with Allah. It accompanies us through every stage of life: in ease and difficulty, strength and weakness, and in moments when the heart feels alive as well as those when it feels distant. Five times each day, the call to prayer draws us away from everything temporary and reminds us why we are here.

Allah Most High says:

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

‘Establish prayer for My remembrance.’

Qur’an 20:14.

Prayer is therefore more than a sequence of movements and recitations. It is remembrance, submission, gratitude, humility and conversation with our Creator. Every standing, bowing and prostration has an outward form, and each carries an inward meaning. The body faces the *qibla*, while the heart turns towards Allah. The tongue recites His words, while the servant tries to remain conscious of the One before whom those words are being recited.

For many Muslims, however, prayer can become a source of uncertainty. A person may have prayed in the same way since childhood, only to hear someone question the position of his hands, the movement of his finger, the saying of *Amin*, the recitation behind the imam, or the placement of his feet. What was once performed with

calmness may then become clouded by doubt. Instead of thinking about Allah during prayer, the worshipper begins to wonder whether his hands are too high, his feet too close, his voice too quiet, or his movements somehow deficient.

This is deeply unfortunate. A believer should approach worship with humility and remain willing to learn, yet humility does not require constant anxiety. Our acts of worship should be performed with care, reverence and informed confidence. One of the great benefits of following a recognised *madhhab* is that it gives the worshipper a coherent and inherited method, rather than leaving every individual to reassess the evidences afresh each time a question is raised.

The four Sunni schools of law did not arise from disregard for the Qur'an and *Sunna*. They are the fruit of generations of learning, transmission, analysis and careful judgement. Their scholars gathered the relevant texts, studied the practice of the Companions, reconciled narrations that appeared to differ, and applied consistent legal principles to them. The result was not four different religions, but four recognised paths within the same inherited tradition.

This book is written from within the Hanafi school. Its purpose is to explain the Hanafi method of prayer, present the evidence upon which its practices are based, and help the reader worship with greater confidence and understanding. It has not been written to antagonise those who follow another recognised school, nor to turn prayer into an argument. Its aim is to replace unnecessary uncertainty with informed peace of mind.

Most differences found in the outward form of prayer concern preferred methods rather than the validity of the prayer itself. One school may prefer raising the hands at several points, while another preserves the practice of raising them at the beginning. One may say *Amin* audibly, while another says it quietly. One may encourage recitation behind the imam in certain prayers, while another gives greater weight to attentive listening. Each position emerged from evidence and scholarly reasoning.

A person who follows a recognised school should not feel that his prayer is somehow separated from the *Sunna*. The Hanafi school, like the other Sunni schools, is an organised understanding of the Qur'an, hadith and the inherited practice of the early Muslim community. Later Hanafi scholars devoted considerable effort to gathering and explaining the narrations that support the rulings transmitted within the school. Their work shows that practices sometimes dismissed as lacking evidence are often rooted in known reports, Companion practice and established juristic principles.

Evidence, however, should never become a weapon. Learning the proofs of prayer should deepen confidence without producing pride. It should make a person more settled in worship and more respectful towards others. Knowledge that produces contempt has missed something of the character of sacred knowledge.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُنِي أُصَلِّي

‘Pray as you have seen me pray.’

Bukhārī (631).

The Companions observed his prayer carefully and transmitted what they saw. At times, they preserved different aspects of his practice. Some witnessed an action on one occasion, while others described what they saw more regularly. The jurists studied these narrations and differed over which practices were most continuous, most widely transmitted, or most suitable to be adopted as the regular form of prayer. Their differences should lead us to appreciate the breadth of the *Sunna*, rather than to assume that only one group cared about following it.

This book therefore has two connected aims. The first is to explain the outward prayer: its preparation, recitations, postures, congregational form and evidences. The second is to remind the reader that the outward form serves an inward purpose. Correct posture matters, and so do stillness, sincerity, reverence and awareness. A person may know every proof relating to the placement of the hands and yet remain distracted throughout the prayer. Another may possess little technical knowledge but stand before Allah with a heart full of humility. The complete prayer brings sound outward practice and inward presence together.

The reader will find detailed discussions of matters that have sometimes caused disagreement, including wiping over footwear,

folding the hands, saying *Amin*, recitation behind the imam, raising the hands, entering prostration, the position of the feet, the movement of the index finger, women's prayer and supplication after the obligatory prayer. These subjects are included because people ask about them and because uncertainty about them can disturb worship. They are not the heart of prayer, but explaining them may remove the distraction they have caused.

The greater purpose remains the prayer itself: to stand before Allah with recognition, recite His words with care, bow with humility, place the most honoured part of the body upon the ground, and leave the prayer in a better state than the one in which we entered it.

Allah Most High says:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

'Indeed, prayer restrains from shameful and wrongful conduct.'

Qur'an 29:45.

A prayer performed properly should leave a mark upon the believer. It should soften the heart, discipline the limbs and create a greater awareness of Allah beyond the prayer mat. The measure of our prayer is found not only in how we stand during it, but also in how we live after it.

It is hoped that this book gives the reader reassurance in the inherited method of worship, a clearer understanding of its evidences, and a renewed desire to improve the quality of prayer. It should be read with

an open heart, without searching for arguments and without looking down upon those who follow another recognised opinion.

All success is from Allah. We ask Him to accept our prayers despite their shortcomings, grant us sincerity and attentiveness, and make prayer the comfort of our hearts and the light of our lives.

A Note on Transliteration and References

Arabic terms are transliterated according to the Turath Publishing system. Long vowels are shown by ā, ī and ū; the letters ‘ayn and hamza are represented by ‘ and ’. This edition uses one consistent house convention for tā’ marbūṭa: it is rendered as *ah* at the end of a word and as *at* when the word forms the first term of an *iḍāfa* construction.

Transliterated Arabic terms are italicised throughout. Turath consonants and long-vowel marks are retained consistently, while this edition follows its adopted forms for final *tā marbūṭa* and established English usage. Words are capitalised normally when they begin a sentence or heading.

British spelling and single quotation marks are used throughout. Qur’anic references appear in the form Qur’an 2:51-53. Hadith references give the collection and number where available, for example Bukhārī (457). Added explanatory words are placed in square brackets. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and later scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) are given the appropriate honorifics.

Transliteration Table

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	
ء	’	ض	
ب	b	ط	

ظ	t	ت	
ع	th	ث	
غ	j	ج	
ف	ḥ	ح	
ق	kh	خ	
ك	d	د	
ل	dh	ذ	
م	r	ر	
ن	z	ز	
و	s	س	
ه	sh	ش	
ي	ṣ	ص	

Part One: Foundations

Why we pray, how scholarship guides us, and what gives the prayer life

The Place of the Madhhab

The starting point is simple: prayer must be prayed. Congregational prayer increases its reward and fulfils a communal responsibility, but the value of the prayer is not confined to its visible form. Preparation, presence of heart and physical discipline belong together. The juristic details matter because they protect the form taught by the Prophet ﷺ, they are not a substitute for humility, repentance and attention.

The recognised schools of law preserve the work of generations of jurists who gathered, compared and reconciled the Qur'an, hadith, the practice of the Companions and the principles of legal reasoning. Following a *madhhab* is therefore an act of humility. It gives the non-specialist a consistent method and protects worship from being rebuilt according to personal preference each time a new quotation is encountered.

The one who has reached the rank of independent legal reasoning, and whose qualification is recognised by the imams, is not permitted simply to imitate. The beginner, however, cannot exercise independent legal reasoning merely because he has memorised the Qur'an or a large part of it. How can he fly before his wings have grown?

Dhahabī, Siyar a'lām an-nubalā', in the biography of Ibn Ḥazm.

The claim that a person follows only the Qur'an and *Sunna* conceals an unavoidable question: whose understanding of the Qur'an and *Sunna*? Texts must be authenticated, classified, reconciled and applied. The conduct of the Companions must be considered, as must abrogation, general and particular wording, differing contexts and the established practice of the *Umma*. The jurists did not replace revelation; they served it through disciplined methods.

Legitimate difference is not evidence that the tradition failed. It often reflects the breadth of the transmitted practice. A jurist may give greater weight to one set of reports, understand a command differently, or reconcile two narrations through a principle inherited from his teachers. Most differences in the form of prayer concern what is preferable and more complete, not whether the prayer exists at all.

Understanding Hadith Evidence

The words *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍaʿīf* describe the strength of a chain according to scholarly criteria, but a legal ruling is not produced by the label alone. A sound report may be abrogated, restricted, interpreted through another text, or understood as describing a particular circumstance. A weaker report may be supported by several routes, the practice of the Companions or the continuous application of the jurists. This is why hadith scholarship and law have always worked together.

The *Ṣaḥīḥayn* of Imam Bukhārī and Imam Muslim occupy their recognised place of authority within the Sunnī tradition. At the same time, many authentic reports are found outside them, and legal chapters frequently draw on the *Sunan*, the Muṣannafs and the

transmitted practice of the early generations. The task is not to collect isolated quotations but to understand the whole body of evidence through qualified scholarship.

The Early School and the Later Hadith Corpus

Imam Abū Ḥanīfa (80–150/699–767) belonged to an early generation in which hadith was already memorised, taught, written and used in law, but before the later canonical collections and the technical vocabulary of hadith criticism had reached their mature, standardised form. Imam Bukhārī was born in 194/810, more than forty years after Imam Abū Ḥanīfa's death, and the other famous compilers likewise worked in later generations. The chronology must therefore be handled carefully: the hadiths existed and circulated before the books that later gathered them under familiar chapter headings and numbers.

For that reason, it is not always possible to state with certainty that a particular hadith, in the precise wording and chain now printed in a later collection, was the exact report personally cited by Imam Abū Ḥanīfa for a particular ruling. The school's early legal positions were transmitted through teachers, students, regional practice, Companion learning and reports whose routes were not always preserved in the same form in which later specialists recorded them.

Later Ḥanafī jurists and hadith scholars inherited both the school's early rulings and a far more extensively documented hadith corpus. Scholars such as Imam Ṭaḥāwī, Zayla'ī and 'Aynī gathered, assessed and reconciled narrations that support or explain those transmitted

rulings. It is therefore sound to say that these hadiths provide the evidential basis by which the school's position is understood and defended today. It is more cautious than claiming, without historical proof, that every one of them was the exact text or chain originally cited by the founding imam.

The Inner Life of Prayer

The Prophet ﷺ taught the outward form of prayer, but he also warned against a prayer emptied of calmness and attention. The Qur'an describes prayer as a protection from indecency and wrongdoing. Its effect is strengthened when the worshipper leaves sin, prepares carefully, understands the words being recited and remembers that he is standing before Allah.

إِذَا قُمْتَ فِي صَلَاتِكَ فَصَلِّ صَلَاةَ مُودِّعٍ

When you stand for prayer, pray as one who is bidding farewell.

Ibn Mājah (4171).

To pray as though it were the final prayer changes the pace of every movement. The raising of the hands becomes a surrender, the bowing becomes an acknowledgement of greatness, and the prostration becomes a confession of need. Distraction may still come, but it is resisted rather than welcomed.

أَسْوَأُ النَّاسِ سَرِقَةً الَّذِي يَسْرِقُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ،
وَكَيْفَ يَسْرِقُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ؟ قَالَ: لَا يُتِمُّ رُكُوعَهَا وَلَا سُجُودَهَا.

The worst thief is the one who steals from his prayer. They asked, 'How does he steal from his prayer?' He replied, 'He does not complete its bowing or its prostration.'

Aḥmad (22642).

Every person must stand before Allah twice: once when he stands before Him in prayer, and once when he stands before Him on the Day he meets Him. Whoever fulfils the first standing as he should will find the second made easy; whoever is heedless in the first will find the second difficult.

Ibn al-Qayyim, Kitāb al-fawā'id, p. 200.

Imam Ghazālī (may Allah have mercy on him) compares the outward movements without an inward spirit to a body without life. The opposite is also incomplete: sincere feeling does not excuse a careless form. The heart is the home of the prayer, while the body gives that prayer its shape. Purity of clothing and limbs should therefore lead towards repentance, restraint and purity of heart.

Why Prayer Matters

The First Matter of Reckoning

The seriousness of prayer is shown by its place in the final accounting.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا يُحَاسَبُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ صَلَاتُهُ، فَإِنْ صَلَحَتْ
فَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ وَأَنْجَحَ، وَإِنْ فَسَدَتْ فَقَدْ خَابَ وَخَسِرَ

‘The first action for which a servant of Allah will be held accountable on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayers. If they are in order, he will have prospered and succeeded. If they are lacking, he will have failed and lost.’

Tirmidhī (413).

Among the final words of the Prophet ﷺ

كَانَ آخِرُ كَلَامِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الصَّلَاةُ الصَّلَاةُ، اتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ فِيمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ

‘The final words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were: ‘Safeguard the prayer, safeguard the prayer! Fear Allah regarding those under your custodianship.’

Abū Dāwūd (5156).

The Most Beloved of Actions

Prayer performed within its prescribed time is among the deeds most beloved to Allah.

سُئِلَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: أَيُّ الْعَمَلِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: الصَّلَاةُ لَوَقْتِهَا، وَرِءُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ، ثُمَّ

الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

Someone asked: 'Which deed is the most beloved to Allah?' The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: 'Performing the prayer at its prescribed, fixed time.'

'What next?' He replied: 'Dutifulness to the parents.' 'What next?' He replied: 'Striving in the cause of Allah.'

Bukhārī (527).

The path of nearness to Allah

Nearness begins with the obligations before it is adorned by voluntary worship.

وَمَا تَقْرَبُ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ
عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ

Allah Most High said: 'My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved to Me than the religious duties I have obligated upon him. And My servant continues to draw near to Me through voluntary acts until I love him...'

Bukhārī (6502).

A River That Washes Away Sin

The five prayers repeatedly cleanse the marks left by daily sin.

أَرَأَيْتُمْ لَوْ أَنَّ نَهْرًا بِيَابِ أَحَدِكُمْ، يَغْتَسِلُ فِيهِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ خَمْسًا، مَا تَقُولُ
 ذَلِكَ يُبْقِي مِنْ دَرْنِهِ؟ قَالُوا: لَا يُبْقِي مِنْ دَرْنِهِ شَيْئًا. قَالَ: فَذَلِكَ مِثْلُ
 الصَّلَوَاتِ الْخَمْسِ، يَمْحُو اللَّهُ بِهَا الْخَطَايَا

The Prophet ﷺ said: 'If there was a river at the door of any of you and he took a bath in it five times a day, would any dirt remain on him?' They said: 'Not a trace of dirt would be left.' He said: 'That is the example of the five prayers, by which Allah blots out sins.'

Bukhārī (528).

The Plea of the People of the Fire

The abandonment of prayer is among the first reasons confessed by the people of the Fire.

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ ۖ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

'What has put you into Saqar (Hell)?' They will say, 'We were not of those who prayed.'

– Qur'an 74:42-43.

A Means of Gratitude

Every prayer is both gratitude for what has been given and a request for what is still needed.

Prayer is how we show gratitude to Allah for every favour He has poured upon us, and it is also the way we ask Him for further grace.

Every standing is an act of thanks, every bowing an acknowledgement, and every prostration a return to the One from whom every blessing came.

Prayer is never abandoned. In sickness it may be performed sitting or lying down; during travel it may be shortened; and even in the fear and disorder of battle the prayer of fear preserves it. The outward form bends to genuine need, but the bond itself is never broken.

Punctuality becomes easier when the day is organised around the prayer rather than the prayer being fitted into whatever time is left over. It helps to approach each prayer as though it might be the last, bringing to it the urgency one would feel in a final standing before Allah, and to receive it as a gift from the King who grants His servant an audience five times a day, rather than as a task to be cleared from a list. When the prayer is given the standing of an appointment that cannot be moved, kept whether or not one feels inclined towards it, and especially when one does not, consistency follows. The company of those who are themselves punctual makes that consistency contagious, and a few simple arrangements remove the friction on which delay feeds: a reliable timetable or reminder that keeps the times in view, a prayer mat left ready in the room, the car, the bag and the office, and a settled knowledge in advance of where one will pray at work, while studying, while travelling and while out, so that nothing is left to chance.

Khushū‘: Presence of Heart

Khushū‘ is the stillness and humility of a heart that knows it is standing before Allah. It is inward, but it leaves signs upon the body: the gaze settles, unnecessary movement falls away and the words are no longer hurried past.

The Meaning of Khushū‘

Khushū‘ begins in the heart and then appears in the body. At its root it is the softness of the heart, its being gentle, still, submissive, needy and yearning; and when the heart is in that state, the limbs follow it into stillness. Imam Ṭabarī described it in the same order, moving from the inward submission to its outward signs:

When a servant humbles himself to Allah in the prayer, the humility of his submission is seen in the stillness of his limbs, his focus upon his obligation, and his leaving of what he has been commanded to leave within it.

Ṭabarī, in his commentary on Qur’an 23:2.

Khushū‘ in Practice

The lives of the Prophet ﷺ and the early Muslims show how deeply the prayer could gather both body and heart. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood to pray, he would incline his head and lower his gaze towards the ground.

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا صَلَّى طَاطَأَ رَأْسَهُ وَرَمَى بَصَرَهُ نَحْوَ الْأَرْضِ

‘When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed, he would lower his head and cast his gaze toward the ground.’

Ḥākim, Mustadrak, 2:393; Bayhaqī, Sunan al-kubrā, 2:283.

So complete was his absorption that a single verse could hold him through an entire night.

قَامَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ بِآيَةٍ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ لَيْلَةً

Sayyidatuna ‘Ā’isha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: ‘The Prophet ﷺ stood the whole night in prayer reciting only a single verse from the Qur’an.’

Nasā’ī (1010).

At times the recitation would move him to weeping.

أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ وَهُوَ يُصَلِّي وَلَجَوْفَهُ أَزِيزٌ كَأَزِيزِ الْمَرْجَلِ — يَعْنِي: يَبْكِي

‘Abdullāh ibn al-Shikhhār said: ‘I came to the Prophet ﷺ while he was praying, and from his chest came a sound like the bubbling of a cauldron — meaning, he was weeping.’

Abū Dāwūd (904).

The Companions inherited the same stillness. It was said of Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr that sparrows would settle upon his back as he prostrated, rising and falling as though he were part of a wall.

كَانَ ابْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ إِذَا سَجَدَ وَقَعَتِ الْعَصَافِيرُ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ تَصْعَدُ وَتَنْزِلُ، لَا
تَرَاهُ إِلَّا جِذْمَ حَائِطٍ

Yahyā ibn Wathāb said: 'When Sayyiduna Ibn al-Zubayr prostrated, sparrows would land on his back, coming and going – they would see him as nothing more than a piece of a wall, due to his absolute stillness.'

Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya wa-l-nihāya, 8:332–345, biography of Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr.

The Fruits of Khushū‘

Presence in prayer carries fruits in this life and the next. It is the very mark of the successful believer.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

‘Successful indeed are the believers – those who are humble in their prayer.’

– *Qur’an 23:1-2.*

Through it, the prayer that weighs heavily upon others becomes light.

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ۚ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ

‘And seek help through patience and prayer – and indeed, it is difficult except for those with khushū’; those who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that to Him they will return.’

– Qur’an 2:45-46.

To perfect its bowing, prostration and humility is to hold a covenant of forgiveness with Allah.

نَحْمُسُ صَلَوَاتٍ اقْتَرَضْنَهُنَّ اللَّهُ، مَنْ أَحْسَنَ وُضُوءَهُنَّ وَصَلَاهُنَّ لَوْقَتِهِنَّ وَأَتَمَّ رُكُوعَهُنَّ وَسُجُودَهُنَّ وَخُشُوعَهُنَّ كَانَ لَهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَهْدٌ أَن يَغْفِرَ لَهُ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَهْدٌ، إِنْ شَاءَ غَفَرَ لَهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَذَّبَهُ

‘Allah, the Exalted, has made five prayers obligatory. Whoever performs ablution for them well, offers them at their right time, and perfects their bowing, prostration, and submissiveness – has a covenant with Allah that He will forgive him. Whoever does not, has no such covenant; if Allah wills He will forgive him, and if He wills He will punish him.’

Abū Dāwūd (425).

And two rak‘as prayed with heart and face turned wholly towards Allah make Paradise necessary for the worshipper.

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَتَوَضَّأُ فَيُحْسِنُ وُضُوئَهُ، ثُمَّ يَقُومُ فَيُصَلِّي رَكَعَتَيْنِ مُقْبِلًا
عَلَيْهِمَا بِقَلْبِهِ وَوَجْهِهِ، إِلَّا وَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ

‘Whoever performs wudū’ and perfects it, then prays two rak‘as in which his heart and his face are fully turned toward Allah – Paradise becomes necessary for him.’

Muslim (234).

What Is Lost Through Heedlessness

A distracted prayer may remain legally valid while much of its reward is lost. A worshipper may complete his prayer with only a fraction of it recorded in his favour, in proportion to the presence he brought to it.

إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَنْصَرِفُ وَمَا كُتِبَ لَهُ إِلَّا عَشْرُ صَلَاتِهِ، ثُعْهَا، ثُمْنَهَا،
سَبْعُهَا، سُدْسُهَا، خُمْسُهَا، رُبْعُهَا، ثُلُثُهَا، نِصْفُهَا

‘Indeed, a man may turn away from his prayer and nothing is written for him except a tenth of it – or a ninth, an eighth, a seventh, a sixth, a fifth, a fourth, a third, or a half.’

Abū Dāwūd (796).

The early Muslims feared its slow disappearance. Sayyiduna Ḥudhayfa (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘The first thing you will lose of your religion will be **khushū**’, and the last thing you will lose of your religion will be prayer itself. There may be a person praying – yet there is no goodness in him. Soon a time will come when you will enter a

large masjid and not find a single person with **khushū'**.' (Aḥmad, Kitāb al-Zuhd (1292)).

Degrees of Presence

The struggle for attention is not all or nothing; worshippers move through recognisable degrees of presence. At the lowest, a person is negligent, present in body but absent in heart, and stands accountable for what he has thrown away. Above this is the distracted worshipper, whose mind wanders off and drifts back without resistance, gaining and losing little. Higher still is the one who fights for his attention, hauling his mind back each time it strays and rewarded for the very struggle. Above him is the worshipper who has been granted focus, for whom the prayer has become a joy rather than a burden. At the summit stands *iḥsān*: to worship Allah as though one sees Him, knowing that though one does not see Him, He surely sees His servant. This ladder of describing presence, indebted to the teaching of Shaykh Asim Khan, is offered not to rank worshippers against one another but to help each person recognise where he stands and in which direction he is climbing.

Preparing to Pray

A Complete Wudū'

Preparation begins before the first *takbīr*. A careful *wudū'* is not merely a condition to be cleared; it is a cleansing through which the believer approaches the prayer. Water must reach every required limb, without waste, haste or obsession.

إِذَا تَوَضَّأَ الْعَبْدُ الْمُسْلِمُ فَغَسَلَ وَجْهَهُ خَرَجَ مِنْ وَجْهِهِ كُلُّ خَطِيئَةٍ نَظَرَ
 إِلَيْهَا بِعَيْنَيْهِ مَعَ الْمَاءِ، فَإِذَا غَسَلَ يَدَيْهِ خَرَجَ مِنْ يَدَيْهِ كُلُّ خَطِيئَةٍ بَطَشَتْهَا
 يَدَاهُ مَعَ الْمَاءِ، فَإِذَا غَسَلَ رِجْلَيْهِ خَرَجَتْ كُلُّ خَطِيئَةٍ مَشَتْهَا رِجْلَاهُ مَعَ
 الْمَاءِ، حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ نَقِيًّا مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ.

When a Muslim servant performs ablution and washes his face, every sin committed by his eyes leaves with the water. When he washes his hands, every sin committed by his hands leaves with the water. When he washes his feet, every sin towards which his feet walked leaves with the water, until he emerges cleansed of sins.

Muslim (244).

The *miswāk* belongs naturally to this preparation. The Prophet ﷺ said that, were it not for the hardship it would cause, he would have commanded its use for every prayer (Bukhārī (887); Muslim (252)). The supplication after *wudū'* completes the preparation and carries the promise that the eight gates of Paradise will be opened to the one who perfects his ablution and bears witness to faith (Muslim (234); Tirmidhī (55)).

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ، اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ، وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ.

*I bear witness that there is no god except Allah alone, with no partner,
and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger. O
Allah, make me among those who repent often and those who purify
themselves.*

Muslim (234); Tirmidhī (55).

Wiping Over Footwear

The concession to wipe is established beyond dispute for leather footwear (*khuffayn*). It is reported by many Companions and accepted by all four Sunnī schools. The decisive question is therefore not whether wiping is a *Sunna*, but what kind of footwear shares the legal quality of the *khuff*.

كُنْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فِي سَفَرٍ، فَأَهْوَيْتُ لِأَنْزَعُ خُفَّيْهِ، فَقَالَ: «دَعُهُمَا؛
فَإِنِّي أَدْخَلْتُهُمَا طَاهِرَتَيْنِ»، فَمَسَحَ عَلَيْهِمَا.

*I was with the Prophet ﷺ on a journey and reached down to remove his
leather socks. He said, 'Leave them, for I put them on while in a state of
purity,' and then he wiped over them.*

Bukhārī (206); Muslim (274).

This report establishes both the object of the concession and the condition attached to it: the footgear was the *khuff*, and it had been put on after a complete ablution.

بَالَ جَرِيرٍ، ثُمَّ تَوَضَّأَ فَفَسَحَ عَلَى خُفَّيْهِ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ: أَتَفْعَلُ هَذَا؟ فَقَالَ: نَعَمْ؛
رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ بَالَ، ثُمَّ تَوَضَّأَ، فَفَسَحَ عَلَى خُفَّيْهِ.

Sayyiduna Jarīr performed ablution and wiped over his leather socks. When he was asked about it, he replied, 'Yes. I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ relieve himself, perform ablution and wipe over his leather socks.'

Muslim (272).

Sayyiduna Jarīr (may Allah be pleased with him) accepted Islam after *Sūrat al-Mā'idā* had been revealed. The Companions therefore regarded wiping over leather footgear as a continuing Prophetic concession, rather than a ruling displaced by the command to wash the feet (Tirmidhī (94)).

The narration attributed to Sayyiduna Mughīra that the Prophet ﷺ wiped over *jawrabayn* and sandals is cited by scholars who extend the concession to non-leather socks. Its transmission, however, was disputed by major hadith critics. Imam Abū Dāwūd records the following observation immediately after narrating it:

كَانَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ مَهْدِيٍّ لَا يُحَدِّثُ بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ؛ لِأَنَّ الْمَعْرُوفَ عَنْ
الْمُغِيرَةِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ مَسَحَ عَلَى الْخَفَيْنِ.

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī would not narrate this report, because the well-known narration from Sayyiduna Muḡhīra is that the Prophet ﷺ wiped over the leather socks.

Abū Dāwūd, following hadith 159.

The existence of this hadith discussion is one reason the jurists did not treat every item called a sock as automatically equivalent to leather footgear. The legal name follows the effective qualities of the object, not the modern label printed on its packaging.

All four schools permit wiping over genuine leather *khuffs*. Their differences concern whether a non-leather item truly possesses the legal qualities of a *khuff* and may therefore share its concession.

The Ḥanafī school. The relied-upon position permits wiping over a non-leather sock only when it is substantial: it must cover the ankles, conceal the skin, remain on the foot without being tied, withstand ordinary outdoor walking for about three miles, and be thick enough that water from a wet hand does not immediately reach the foot. Ordinary dress socks do not fulfil these conditions.

The Mālikī school. The relied-upon position confines the concession to leather footgear, including a textile sock that is covered with leather. An ordinary cotton or wool sock is not treated as a *khuff* merely because it covers the ankle.

The Shāfiʿī school. The material itself need not always be leather, but the footwear must cover the entire required area, withstand the walking ordinarily needed by a traveller and prevent water from reaching the foot under the school's prescribed test. Modern thin cotton dress socks do not meet the relied-upon conditions.

The Ḥanbalī school. Classical authorities permit a substantial sock that is opaque, remains firmly on the foot and can be continuously walked in. Ibn Qudāma expressly describes the qualifying sock as thick and not liable to fall when walked in. Some later scholars adopted a broader view, but the classical formulation does not make every thin modern sock equivalent to a *khuff*.

The common ground is therefore extensive. Leather *khuffs* are accepted by all four schools, while ordinary thin cotton socks fall outside the relied-upon position of the majority. A thick non-leather sock may qualify in more than one school, but only because its construction gives it the effective qualities of protective footwear, not simply because it is sold as a sock.

Ḥanafī: Shurunbulālī, Marāqī al-falāḥ, p. 57; Marghīnānī, Hidāya, 1:107. Mālikī: Saḥnūn, Mudawwana, 1:143; Ibn Abī Zayd, Risāla, chapter on wiping over leather socks. Shāfiʿī: Nawawī, Majmūʿ sharḥ al-muhadhdhab, 1:495–500; Ibn an-Naqīb, ʿUmdat as-sālik, section e6.4. Ḥanbalī: Ibn Qudāma, Muḡnī, 'Wiping over a thick sock that does not fall when walked in.' See also Darul Ifta Birmingham, fatwa 03316; Egypt's Dar al-Ifta, fatwa 6540.

For a Ḥanafī worshipper, the practical rule is straightforward: wipe over leather *khuffs*, or over non-leather footwear that clearly satisfies the school's classical conditions. Ordinary everyday cotton socks should be removed and the feet washed. Where another worshipper follows a recognised broader view, the disagreement should be handled with knowledge and good manners rather than suspicion.

The Inner Meaning and Sunna of *Wuḍū'*

Ablution cleanses the limbs and prepares the mind. Each stage should be performed carefully, without haste and without allowing caution to become obsession.

Mindfulness in *Wuḍū'*

Sayyiduna Abū Umāma (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'When a man performs his ablution intending to pray, and he washes his hands – the sins of his hands fall down with the first drop. When he rinses his mouth and nose – the sins of his tongue and lips fall down with the first drop. When he washes his face – the sins of his hearing and sight fall down with the first drop. When he washes his arms to his elbows and his feet to his ankles – he is purified from every sin and fault, like the day he was born from his mother. If he stands for prayer, Allah will raise his status by a degree. If he sits, he will sit in peace.'

— *Aḥmad (22267).*

The Mark of Wuḍū' on the Day of Rising

‘Abdullāh Sayyiduna Ibn Mas‘ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: It was said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, how will you recognise those of your nation you have never seen?’ He ﷺ said: ‘Their limbs will be radiant from the traces of ablution.’ (Ibn Mājah 284)

Ibn Mājah (284).

The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘I love to see my brothers.’ The companions said: ‘Are not we your brothers, O Messenger of Allah?’ He said: ‘You are my companions. Our brothers are those who have not yet come into the world.’ They said: ‘How will you recognise those of your Umma who have not yet been born?’ He said: ‘Suppose a man had horses with white blazes on their foreheads and legs among horses which were all dark – would he not recognise his own? They will come with shining faces and arms and legs from ablution, and I will arrive at the Ḥawḍ (the Pond) before them.’

— Muslim (249).

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ ، اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

‘I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, alone with no partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His servant and Messenger. O Allah, make me among those who repent often, and make me among those who purify themselves.’

Muslim (234); Tirmidhī (55).

Whoever performs ablution in the best manner and says this, the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him – he may enter through whichever he wishes. – Tirmidhī 55

Tirmidhī (55).

Following the *Sunna* method

Niyya → Bismillāh → hands to the wrists → *miswāk* → mouth → nose → face → beard → arms → wiping the head → ears → feet → toes → supplication after ablution. Preserve the order, complete each washing and avoid both waste and anxious repetition.

On the *Miswāk*

‘If I were not afraid of overburdening my Umma, I would have commanded them to use the siwāk for every prayer.’

Bukhārī (887).

‘The siwāk purifies the mouth and pleases the Lord.’

Nasā’ī (5).

Common Errors

Skipping the elbows. The arms must be washed to and including the elbows. Missing the ankles and heels. Water must reach every part – including the back of the heel where it often gets missed in haste.

وَيْلٌ لِّلْأَعْقَابِ مِنَ النَّارِ

‘Woe to the heels from the Fire!’ – said the Prophet ﷺ to those who had performed wuḍū’ hastily, leaving dry patches on their heels. Do wuḍū’ properly.

Bukhārī (96); Muslim (241).

Adhān: The Call to Prayer

The call to prayer gathers the community and announces that the time for meeting Allah has arrived.

How the Prayer Was Legislated

The *adhān* was legislated in Madīna in the early days after the Hijra. Before it existed, the Muslims would gather and try to guess when the time for prayer had come.

Sayyiduna Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ‘When the Muslims came to Madīna, they used to come together and try to find out if the time for prayer had come, for there was no call to prayer. One day they were talking about that, and some of them said, ‘Let us use a bell like the bell of the Christians.’ Others said, ‘Let us use a horn like the horn of the Jews.’...’

— Bukhārī (569).

Then a Companion, Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn Zayd (may Allah be pleased with him) – saw a dream in which the words of the adhān were taught to him. He came to the Prophet ﷺ who confirmed the dream as true, and Sayyiduna ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported having seen the same dream. The Prophet ﷺ then chose Sayyiduna Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ (may Allah be pleased with him) – for the beauty and reach of his voice – to be the first mu’adhdhin of Islam.

Abū Dāwūd (499).

إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ أَدْبَرَ الشَّيْطَانُ وَلَهُ ضُرَاطٌ حَتَّى لَا يَسْمَعَ التَّأْذِينَ، فَإِذَا
قَضَى النِّدَاءَ أَقْبَلَ، حَتَّى إِذَا ثُوبَ بِالصَّلَاةِ أَدْبَرَ، حَتَّى إِذَا قَضَى التَّوْبَةَ
أَقْبَلَ حَتَّى يَخْطُرَ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَنَفْسِهِ، يَقُولُ: اذْكُرْ كَذَا، اذْكُرْ كَذَا — لِمَا
لَمْ يَكُنْ يَذْكُرُ، حَتَّى يَظِلَّ الرَّجُلُ لَا يَدْرِي كَمْ صَلَّى

‘When the call to prayer is announced, Shayṭān turns his back and runs, passing wind, to avoid hearing it. When the call is finished, he turns back – until the iqāma is announced, then he turns away again. When the iqāma is finished, he returns and casts thoughts into a man, saying: ‘Remember this, remember that’ – bringing to mind what was not on his mind – until the man no longer knows how much he has prayed.’

Bukhārī (608); Muslim (389).

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah (× 2)

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ، أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah (× 2)

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ ، حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ

Come to prayer (× 2)

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ ، حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

Come to success (× 2)

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest (× 2)

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

There is no one worthy of worship except Allah

Abū Dāwūd (499).

مَنْ سَمِعَ الْمُؤَذِّنَ فَقَالَ مِثْلَ مَا يَقُولُ فَلَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ

Sayyiduna Mu'āwiyā (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: 'Whoever hears the mu'adhdhin and repeats what he says, will receive a similar reward as him.'

Ṭabarānī, Mu'jam al-kabīr, 19:346 (802).

We repeat each phrase word-for-word – except when he says حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ · حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ ('Come to prayer · Come to success'). At those two phrases we instead say:

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

There is no power and no strength except with Allah

Muslim (385).

The Reward of Responding to the Call

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'Whoever says these words from his heart upon hearing the mu'adhdhin shall enter Paradise.'

Muslim (385).

Du'ās after the *adhān*

وَأَنَا أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ ، رَضِيتُ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا ، وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولًا ، وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا

'I too bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, alone with no partner, and that Muḥammad ﷺ is His servant and Messenger. I am content with Allah as my Lord, with Muḥammad ﷺ as my Messenger, and with Islam as my religion.'

Muslim (386).

Whoever says this on hearing the mu'adhdhin, his sins will be forgiven.

Muslim (386).

Sending Blessings after the *Adhān*

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'When you hear the mu'adhdhin calling for the prayer, repeat his words, then send blessings upon me. The one who sends blessings upon me once, Allah will send ten blessings upon him.'

Muslim (384).

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الدَّعْوَةِ التَّامَّةِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْقَائِمَةِ ، آتِ مُحَمَّدًا الْوَسِيلَةَ
وَالْفَضِيلَةَ ، وَابْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا الَّذِي وَعَدْتَهُ

‘O Allah, Lord of this perfect call and established prayer, grant Muhammad ﷺ the Wasīla (the highest station in Paradise) and the eminence, and raise him to the praiseworthy station that You have promised him.’

Bukhārī (614).

Whoever says this after the adhān shall receive my intercession on the Day of Judgement.

Bukhārī (614).

Dressing for the Meeting

Clothing does not create sincerity, but outward care can help the worshipper approach the prayer with dignity and seriousness.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَمِيلٌ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ

‘Indeed Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty.’

Muslim (91).

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ

‘O Children of Ādam, beautify yourselves at every masjid.’

– Qur’an 7:31.

How do we dress when we have an important occasion – a wedding, an interview, meeting someone we want to honour? There is nothing more important than a meeting with Allah.

Sayyiduna Abū Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: Someone asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about praying in a single garment. He ﷺ said: 'Does each of you not possess two garments?'

Muslim (515).

A Note on Attention

'*Encllothed cognition*' is a psychological phenomenon where the clothing a person wears influences their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Galinsky & Adam, 2012). The way you dress for prayer is not only outward respect – it shapes your inner state.

The Etiquette of the Masjid

The masjid has its own manners. They protect the worship of others and train the believer to enter a sacred space calmly and attentively.

Du'ā entering and leaving. Ask for His mercy when entering; ask for His sustenance and blessings when leaving. Right foot in, left foot out. The *Sunna* mindset – honour what is honourable. Walk calmly to prayer. Be dignified; Allah is watching. Silence your phone. Ringtones and notifications steal *khushū'* – yours and everyone else's. Pray two *rak'as* on arrival. Tahīyyat al-Masjid – greeting the masjid – and the Prophet ﷺ said that for whoever consistently prays the *sunan rawātib*, '*Allah builds a palace in Paradise.*' Do not disturb other musallīn.

Lower your voice; mind your movement. Intend optional I'tikāf. Even for a few minutes – extra reward for the same time spent. Do not step over people's shoulders when the *jamā'a* has settled in. Sutra – use a barrier if you are in an awkward position, or simply as a focal point in front of you. Straighten the rows. Stand close together. When the ṣaff is straight, hearts unite.

Women and Congregational Prayer

Women are not barred from the masjid, while the transmitted guidance also recognises the particular virtue of prayer in greater privacy.

Women in the Congregation

لَا تَمْنَعُوا نِسَاءَ كُرِّ الْمَسَاجِدِ ، وَيُوتِهِنَّ خَيْرَ لِهْنٍ

Sayyiduna Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'Do not prevent your womenfolk from the masjids – though their homes are better for them.'

Abū Dāwūd (567).

Privacy and Reward in a Woman's Prayer

Sayyidatuna Umm Ḥumayd (may Allah be pleased with her), the wife of Sayyiduna Abū Ḥumayd Sā'idī (may Allah be pleased with him), came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I love to pray with you.' He ﷺ said: 'I know that you love to pray with me. But your prayer in your room is better for you than your prayer in your courtyard; and your prayer in your courtyard is better than your prayer in the

open part of the house; and your prayer in your house is better than your prayer in your local masjid; and your prayer in your local masjid is better than your prayer in my masjid (Masjid al-Nabawī).’ So she ordered that a prayer-place be prepared for her in the furthest, darkest part of her house – and she prayed there until she met Allah.

Aḥmad (27090); Ibn Khuzayma (1689).

The reward of a woman’s prayer is multiplied by the very privacy that the world today often dismisses. What feels hidden is, in the sight of Allah, the most honoured.

Training the Attention

Concentration in prayer is strengthened by the habits cultivated outside it. A mind trained to scatter all day cannot be expected to become still immediately at the *takbīr*.

Why we cannot focus

Multitasking scatters the mind. The brain is not built to split attention. What feels like efficiency is actually a slow erosion of our ability to think deeply – and it carries long-term costs.

Focus is a trained capacity. Like a muscle that’s never been lifted, it cannot be summoned on demand. It has to be built – small reps, over time.

The attention economy is real. Phones, apps, and social media are engineered to capture your focus because your attention is their product. They profit from your distraction; they do not care about

your cognitive health. Even Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg famously restricted their own children's screen time.

What helps

Prioritise ruthlessly. Drop tasks instead of juggling them. Laser your focus onto one demanding thing rather than scattering it across many.

Train the focus muscle. Read long-form books. Sit through complex arguments. Practise staying with one task when the urge to switch arises.

Take real breaks from your phone. Turn off notifications. Set genuine offline blocks of time, not just intentions.

Use device wellbeing features. – screen-time limits, app blockers, greyscale mode – to create a healthier balance.

Consume media that demands attention. Choose content that asks you to follow a thread of thought, not content that flashes past you.

Get comfortable with silence. Take a walk with no audio. Sit without a podcast. Let your mind settle on its own.

From an Islamic lens

Distraction is the first step toward sin. *Ghafla* – heedlessness – is what *shayṭān* works with. A scattered mind makes a soft target.

Cultivate *Murāqaba*. Mindfulness in the Islamic sense: the constant awareness that Allah is watching. This is *taqwā* lived in real time.

Make *dhikr* a habit. – and let it move from the tongue into the heart. Remembrance is the antidote to forgetfulness.

Prayer itself is part of the cure. Five times a day, by design, the believer disconnects from the noise of the world and reconnects with the Lord. Attention is not recovered in one dramatic moment; it is rebuilt through these repeated returns.

Fasting sharpens focus. – clinical research is increasingly catching up with what believers have long known.

Removing Distractions Before Prayer

Khushū' in prayer is only attained by the one who has emptied his heart totally for it, who occupies himself fully for it and does not pay attention to anything else besides it, and who prioritises it over everything else. At that point it becomes a source of comfort and intense joy.

— Ibn Kathīr (may Allah have mercy on him).

Practical steps

Phone on silent. Keep notifications off – especially between *Sunna* and *fard*. Do not invite the world in. Clear urgent tasks first. Finish what's pressing – cooking, eating, the reply that's nagging at you. A busy mind cannot empty itself on command. Choose a comfortable space. Quiet, good temperature, clean, somewhere you can settle. Remove visual distractions. Clear your immediate field of view. Watch out for patterns or text on clothing in front of you – even small things pull the eye.

Calmness and Proportion

Every posture must be given enough time to settle. The obligation is not fulfilled by touching the position and immediately leaving it. The famous report of the man who prayed badly shows that calmness is part of the prayer itself, not an optional decoration.

ثُمَّ ارْكَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ رَاكِعًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَعْدِلَ قَائِمًا، ثُمَّ اسْجُدْ حَتَّى
تَطْمَئِنَّ سَاجِدًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ جَالِسًا.

Then bow until you are at rest in bowing; rise until you are standing upright; prostrate until you are at rest in prostration; then rise until you are at rest while sitting.

Bukhārī (757); Muslim (397).

Reciting the Qur'an Well

Correct recitation is a central part of prayer. The duty is to pronounce the letters as accurately as one is able, to distinguish letters whose confusion changes the meaning, and to observe pauses that preserve the sense. Technical terminology is useful, but the aim is not to recite rules by memory while leaving the actual recitation unchanged. Improvement requires listening, correction and regular practice with a competent teacher.

الْمَاهِرُ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَعَ السَّفَرَةِ الْكِرَامِ الْبَرَّةِ، وَالَّذِي يَقْرَأُ الْقُرْآنَ وَيَتَتَعُّهُ
فِيهِ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِ شَاقٌّ لَهُ أُجْرَانِ.

*The one who is proficient in the Qur'an will be with the noble and
righteous scribes, while the one who recites it with difficulty and struggles
through it will have two rewards.*

Bukhārī (4937); Muslim (798).

Understanding the words adds another layer of presence. The worshipper who knows what is being declared in the *takbīr*, requested in *al-Fātiḥa* and confessed in the *tashahhud* is no longer repeating sounds without meaning. The prayer becomes a conversation, a pledge and a plea.

The Legal Shape of Prayer

The jurists classify actions so that the worshipper knows what cannot be left, what must be repaired if omitted and what completes the beauty of the prayer. A *fard* is established decisively and forms part of the prayer's essential structure. A *wājib* must also be performed, though its evidential level differs. An emphasised *Sunna* was maintained by the Prophet ﷺ and should not be treated lightly. Recommended acts increase completeness, while disliked and forbidden acts diminish or invalidate worship according to their degree.

The prayer can then be followed through its principal actions: intention, standing, the opening *takbīr*, recitation, bowing, the

standing after bowing, prostration, sitting between the prostrations, the final sitting, the supplications and the *salām*. The following chapters move through these actions in order.

Part Two: The Prayer and Its Proofs

A step-by-step account of the Ḥanafī method

Intention, Dress and Standing

Intention

Intention is the inward knowledge of the prayer being performed. It distinguishes one act of worship from another and prevents a prayer from being changed midway into a different prayer. The intention belongs to the heart; speaking it is not required, though a quiet verbal formulation may help a person gather his attention without being treated as part of the prayer.

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَىٰ.

Actions are only according to intentions, and every person will have only what he intended.

Bukhārī (1); Muslim (1907).

In congregation, the prayer of the follower is joined to the prayer of the imam. The imam is appointed to be followed, and the follower does not move ahead of him. Where women are included in a congregation, the imam should intend their following him so that the legal relationship of the congregation is clear.

إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ الْإِمَامُ لِيُؤْتَمَّ بِهِ؛ فَإِذَا كَبَّرَ فَكَبِّرُوا، وَإِذَا رَكَعَ فَارْكَعُوا، وَإِذَا رَفَعَ فَارْفَعُوا.

The imam has only been appointed to be followed. When he says the takbīr, say the takbīr; when he bows, bow; and when he rises, rise.

Bukhārī (689); Muslim (411).

Dress for Prayer

The clothing must first cover what the law requires, but the Qur’anic instruction reaches beyond bare validity. Prayer is a meeting with Allah, and respectable, clean clothing reflects that awareness. Clothing associated with sleep or neglect should not become the normal dress for prayer when better clothing is readily available.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ.

Children of Ādam, take your adornment at every place of prayer.

Qur’an 7:31.

Clothing That Is Fit for Prayer

The minimum legal requirement is that the ‘awra is properly covered with clothing that is opaque and secure. The wider etiquette of prayer asks for more than bare validity. Clean, loose and dignified clothing helps the worshipper approach the meeting with Allah with care. Clothing that is transparent, extremely tight, marked with distracting images or inscriptions, or associated with sleep and neglect should not

become the normal dress for prayer when better clothing is readily available.

The ruling is not that every worshipper must wear one ethnic style of clothing. The principle is to cover what must be covered, avoid distraction and indecency, and adopt the kind of presentable dress one would consider appropriate when standing before someone honoured.

The Cap, Kufi or Topi

A cap, *kufi* or *topi* is not a condition of prayer, and a prayer offered bareheaded is valid. Head covering nevertheless has a recognised place in the dress of the Prophet ﷺ and the early Muslim community. The relevant reports establish the wearing of caps and turbans; they do not justify declaring an uncovered prayer invalid. The balanced Hanafi presentation is therefore that head covering is a dignified and established form of Muslim dress, especially in prayer, while its omission does not by itself nullify the worship.

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَلْبِسُ قَلَنْسُوَةً بَيْضَاءَ .

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to wear a white cap.

Ṭabarānī, Muʿjam al-kabīr (13920); Haythamī, Majmaʿ az-zawāʿid, 5:121; ʿAzīzī, Sirāj al-munīr, 3:183, who regarded its chain as sound.

كَانَ الْقَوْمُ يَسْجُدُونَ عَلَى الْعِمَامَةِ وَالْقَلَنْسُوَةِ.

The people used to prostrate while wearing turbans and caps.

Statement of Ḥasan Baṣrī: Bukhārī, before hadith 385; ‘Abd ar-Razzāq, Muṣannaf (1566); Ibn Abī Shayba, Muṣannaf (2754).

The authentic report of the Prophet ﷺ delivering a sermon in a black turban provides further evidence for head covering as part of his dress (Muslim (1359)). Deliberate contempt for a recognised Sunna is a separate matter from a person praying without a cap because of circumstance, local custom or personal choice. This subject should encourage dignity, not become a means of inspecting or belittling other worshippers.

The Feet and the Row

When praying alone, the feet face the *qibla* and are placed in a composed, balanced position. A widely cited Ḥanafī recommendation is a gap of about four finger-breadths. Other later authorities did not insist upon a fixed measurement and allowed the worshipper to stand in the position that is naturally steady. The point is moderation: the heels are not pressed together, nor are the feet spread so widely that the posture becomes strained or inconveniences another worshipper. Women, in the relied-upon Ḥanafī description, keep the feet close together as part of their more compact posture.

The four-finger measure is a juristic recommendation rather than the wording of a specific Prophetic hadith. It should therefore guide a

natural stance, not become a ruler by which people inspect one another.

إِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ فَلَا يَضَعُ نَعْلَيْهِ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَلَا عَنْ يَسَارِهِ، فَتَكُونُ عَنْ
يَمِينٍ غَيْرِهِ، إِلَّا أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ عَنْ يَسَارِهِ أَحَدٌ، وَلَيَضَعُهُمَا بَيْنَ رِجْلَيْهِ

When one of you prays, he should not place his sandals to his right or his left, where they would be to another person's right, unless nobody is on his left. He should place them between his feet.

Abū Dāwūd (654).

This report is not a numerical measurement for the stance, but it is consistent with a natural interval between the feet. The detailed Hanafi discussions gathered in *Fiqh al-Imam* present two strands within the school: the familiar recommendation of roughly four finger-breadths, and the broader allowance of whatever moderate distance gives stability and humility. Both reject the modern assumption that continuous forced foot contact is itself the purpose of straightening the row.

‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Yūsuf, *Fiqh al-Imam*, ‘The Distance to Be Kept Between the Feet’; Ibn ‘Ābidīn, *Radd al-muḥtār*, 1:462.

Ibn ‘Ābidīn, Radd al-muḥtār, 1:462; Qibla/IslamQA.org, ‘Placement of Feet During Prayer for Men.’

The congregational row has a separate purpose. The shoulders are aligned, the heels are kept on one line, gaps are closed and each worshipper stands close enough for the row to appear joined. The

Companions sometimes brought their shoulders and feet into contact when establishing the row. This demonstrated their care in removing gaps and correcting crookedness.

أَقِيمُوا صُفُوفَكُمْ؛ فَإِنِّي أَرَاكُمْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ ظَهْرِي. وَكَانَ أَحَدُنَا يُلْزِقُ
مَنْكِبَهُ بِمَنْكِبِ صَاحِبِهِ، وَقَدَمَهُ بِقَدَمِهِ.

Straighten your rows, for I can see you from behind my back. One of us would place his shoulder against his companion's shoulder and his foot against his companion's foot.

Bukhārī (725).

A further report describes the Companions aligning shoulder with shoulder and ankle with ankle.

فَرَأَيْتُ الرَّجُلَ مَنَّا يُلْزِقُ مَنْكِبَهُ بِمَنْكِبِ صَاحِبِهِ، وَكَعْبَهُ بِكَعْبِهِ.

I saw each one of us place his shoulder against his companion's shoulder and his ankle against his ankle.

Abū Dāwūd (662).

These reports should not be turned into a practice of chasing a neighbour's foot, forcing the ankles apart or maintaining painful pressure throughout every posture. The governing Prophetic instruction is to straighten the row and leave no disruptive gaps. Contact may help establish alignment at the beginning; the enduring requirement is a straight, close and considerate row. Classical

commentators treated the descriptions as an emphatic account of alignment, not as a command to press the feet together continuously.

Muslim (432); Ibn Hajar, Fath al-bārī, commentary on Bukhārī (725); ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Yūsuf, ‘Feet to Feet, Toe to Toe?’

Where to Look

The gaze is lowered towards the place of prostration. Looking upwards is expressly forbidden, while closing the eyes without need is normally disliked because the *Sunna* is to pray with the eyes open. Where an unavoidable distraction makes closing the eyes necessary, the purpose is still to recover attention rather than to create a new fixed practice.

مَا بَالُ أَقْوَامٍ يَرْفَعُونَ أَبْصَارَهُمْ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ؟ لِيَنْتَهَنَّ عَنْ ذَلِكَ
أَوْ لِيُخْطَفَنَّ أَبْصَارُهُمْ.

What is the matter with people who raise their eyes towards the sky in their prayer? They must stop doing so, or their sight will be taken away.

Bukhārī (750).

Opening the Prayer

Raising the Hands

At the opening *takbīr*, the hands are raised with the palms facing the *qibla* and the fingers held naturally, neither spread unnaturally nor pressed tightly together. The reports mention both the shoulders and

the ears. The Ḥanafī jurists reconcile them by placing the base of the palms near the shoulders and the thumbs near the earlobes.

رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ حِينَ قَامَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ رَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ حَتَّى كَانَتَا بِحِيَالِ
مَنْكِبَيْهِ، وَحَاذَى بِإِبْهَامَيْهِ أُذُنَيْهِ، ثُمَّ كَبَّرَ.

I saw the Prophet ﷺ when he stood for prayer raise his hands until they were level with his shoulders, with his thumbs aligned with his ears, and then he said the takbīr.

Abū Dāwūd (725).

The Opening Takbīr and Folding the Hands

The words *Allāhu akbar* mark entry into the protected state of prayer. Ordinary speech and unrelated actions are left behind until the *salām*. After the *takbīr*, the right hand is placed over the left. In the preferred Ḥanafī position for men, the hands are folded below the navel; the right palm rests over the back of the left hand, wrist and forearm.

مِفْتَاحُ الصَّلَاةِ الطُّهُورُ، وَتَحْرِيمُهَا التَّكْبِيرُ، وَتَحْلِيلُهَا التَّسْلِيمُ.

The key to prayer is purification; its consecration is the takbīr, and its release is the salām.

Tirmidhī (3); Abū Dāwūd (61).

إِنَّ مِنَ السُّنَّةِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ وَضْعَ الْأُكْفِ عَلَى الْأُكْفِ تَحْتَ السُّرَّةِ.

It is from the Sunna in prayer to place one palm over the other below the navel.

Abū Dāwūd (756).

رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ وَضَعَ يَمِينَهُ عَلَى شِمَالِهِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ تَحْتَ السُّرَّةِ.

I saw the Prophet ﷺ place his right hand over his left in prayer, below the navel.

Ibn Abī Shayba, Muṣannaf (3959). Qāsim ibn Qutlūbughā regarded its chain as good, and Nimawī regarded it as sound; see Taʿrīf wa-l-ikhbār, 1:157, and Āthār as-sunan, p. 90.

The chain of the report in Abū Dāwūd has been discussed, but the Hanafi position does not rest on that route alone. Ibn Abī Shayba transmits the practice below the navel from Sayyiduna Wāʾil and Sayyiduna ʿAlī, and the Kūfan school preserved the same placement through its early jurists. The evidence is therefore cumulative: Prophetic and Companion reports, regional transmission and continuous legal practice. Other Sunni schools place the hands higher; the disagreement concerns the preferred position, not the validity of prayer.

Ibn Abī Shayba, Muṣannaf (3959, 3966); Ḍiyāʾ Maqdisī, Mukhtāra (771-772); Zaylāʿī, Naṣb ar-rāya, 1:314; Darul Hadith Research Centre, From Our Perspective, pp. 42-43.

The opening *takbīr* is a threshold. The ordinary world remains outside as the worshipper declares that Allah is greater than every demand competing for the heart.

Spiritual Meaning

Crossing the Threshold

The moment I say ‘*Allāhu Akbar*’, the rules change. The world I was standing in a second ago has been left behind – its concerns, its noise, its weight. This is the *Takbīrat al-Iḥrām* – the *takbīr* that forbids me from anything except Him.

‘The key to prayer is purification; its tahrīm (its sealing-off from the world) is the opening takbīr, and its taḥlīl (its release) is the taslīm.’

Tirmidhī (3); Abū Dāwūd (61).

Sins Falling from the Head and Shoulders

Imagine: all the sins I have committed are gathered up and placed on my head and shoulders. As I raise my hands for the opening *takbīr*, I throw them off me.

Sayyiduna Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘When a servant stands to pray, his sins are placed on top of his head and shoulders. Every time he bows or prostrates, they fall away from him.’

Ibn Ḥibbān (1734); Ṭabarānī, Mu‘jam al-kabīr, 13:316 (14108).

The standing of Ḥātim al-Aṣamm

When the time of Prayer approaches, I perform wuḍū' thoroughly and proceed to the place where I intend to pray. I sit there until I am fully composed. Then I stand to offer my prayer – and I picture the Ka'ba directly in front of me, the bridge of Ṣirāṭ beneath my feet, Paradise to my right, Hellfire to my left, and the Angel of Death behind me. And I believe this is my last prayer.

— Ḥātim al-Aṣamm (may Allah have mercy on him).

Words to Recite

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest.

Tirmidhī (3); Abū Dāwūd (61).

'Akbar' is not just 'great' – it is the comparative: greater than. Greater than what? Everything. Greater than the worry that brought me here, greater than the rush waiting for me after, greater than my hopes and my fears. With these two words I declare that nothing in this universe deserves my attention more than the One I now stand before.

Common Errors

Mumbling. The *takbīr* must be audible, at minimum to oneself. Many slur the words. Rushing – especially when catching the imām in *rukū'*. Many rush the opening *takbīr* in their haste to bow with the imām. But the *takbīrat al-iḥrām* is a pillar of prayer – without it being said

properly, while standing, before going into *rukūʿ*, the prayer itself is incomplete.

The Opening Praise

The opening praise is recited quietly after the hands have been folded. Several forms are transmitted; the Ḥanafī school prefers the following wording because of its widespread transmission from the Companions and its suitability for regular prayer. Other sound opening supplications remain valid, particularly in voluntary prayer.

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

Glory and praise are Yours, O Allah. Blessed is Your name, exalted is Your majesty, and there is no god besides You.

Abū Dāwūd (776); Tirmidhī (243).

The opening praise teaches the tongue how to enter the prayer: with glorification, gratitude and the rejection of every rival to Allah.

Spiritual Meaning

Before petition – praise. Before asking – acknowledgement. The opening *duʿā* establishes the etiquette of the entire conversation: I am here not to demand, but to glorify. The Name comes before everything else.

Words to Recite

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

‘How Perfect are You, O Allah, and all praise is Yours. Your Name is most blessed, Your majesty is exalted, and there is no god worthy of worship except You.’

Muslim (399).

Other authentic opening du'ās

اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ ،
اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّنِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنْقَى الثَّوبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ ، اللَّهُمَّ
اغْسِلْ خَطَايَايَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ

‘O Allah, put a great distance between me and my sins, as great as the distance You have made between the East and the West. O Allah, cleanse me of sins as a white garment is cleansed from filth. O Allah, wash away my sins with water and snow and hail.’

Bukhārī (744); Muslim (598).

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَبِيرًا ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَثِيرًا ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

‘Allah is the Greatest, the Greatest; abundant praise is for Allah; and how perfect is Allah, morning and evening.’

Muslim (601).

Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: ‘Once we were praying with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when a man said these words. After the prayer, he ﷺ asked, ‘Who said those words?’ The man replied, ‘It was me, O Messenger of Allah.’ He ﷺ said: ‘I was amazed by them – the doors of heaven were opened for them.’ Sayyiduna Ibn ‘Umar said: ‘I have not stopped saying these words since I heard that from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.’

Muslim (601).

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ

‘All praise is for Allah – abundant, sincere, and blessed praise.’

Muslim (600).

Sayyiduna Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that a man came in breathing heavily and joined the row in prayer, and uttered these words. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ finished his prayer, he asked who had said them. The man, fearing he had erred, was silent. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘I saw twelve angels competing with each other to ascend with it.’

Muslim (600).

Vary your opening *du‘ā*. Different words speak to different states of the heart – and reciting variety guards us from auto-pilot.

Seeking Refuge and the Basmala

The worshipper seeks refuge in Allah before beginning the recitation, and then recites the *basmala* quietly. In the Hanafi school it is read silently at the opening of every *rak'a*, before *al-Fātiḥa*, in audible and silent prayers alike, and it is treated as an independent verse revealed for separation between the chapters rather than as a verse of *al-Fātiḥa* itself. It is therefore recited to begin the recitation, but *al-Fātiḥa* is counted from *al-ḥamdu lillāh*. Sayyiduna Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that he prayed behind the Prophet ﷺ, Sayyiduna Abū Bakr, Sayyiduna 'Umar and Sayyiduna 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with them) and did not hear any of them recite it aloud (Muslim (399)). The Shafi'i school counts the *basmala* as a verse of *al-Fātiḥa* and recites it aloud in the audible prayers, while the Maliki school does not recite it at the head of *al-Fātiḥa* at all; the Hanbali position is close to the Hanafi in reciting it quietly. The Hanafi practice preserves it as a quiet part of the recitation, resting on the report of Sayyiduna Anas and on the transmitted practice of the Companions of Kūfa.

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ.

When you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from the accursed

Shayṭān.

Qur'an 16:98.

صَلَّيْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَأَبِي بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ وَعُثْمَانُ، فَلَمْ أَسْمَعْ أَحَدًا مِنْهُمْ

يَجْهَرُ بِبِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ.

I prayed with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Sayyiduna Abū Bakr, Sayyiduna Umar and Sayyiduna Uthmān, and I did not hear any of them recite 'In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful' aloud.

Muslim (399).

Before reciting revelation, the worshipper asks Allah to protect the recitation from whispering, pride, distraction and confusion.

Spiritual Meaning

Shayṭān is set upon the destruction of the prayer, and he works with three weapons: to make the worshipper abandon it, to make him delay it past its time, and, failing those, to steal it from within through distraction and whispering. Even the wandering of the eyes is a theft.

Sayyidatuna 'A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: 'I asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about looking around in prayer.' He ﷺ said: 'That is theft – Shayṭān steals it from a person's prayer.'

Bukhārī (751).

He is an open enemy, and one no worshipper can face on his own strength, which is why refuge is sought in Allah before the recitation begins.

ثُمَّ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

'Then I will come to them from before them, from behind them, from their right, and from their left – and You will not find most of them grateful.' – Iblīs to Allah · Sūra al-A'rāf 7:17

Qur'an 7:17.

There is quiet encouragement in the wording of the threat. Iblīs names four directions from which he will approach: before, behind, the right and the left. He does not mention above, from where mercy descends, nor below, which is the place of prostration. The two directions of nearness to Allah are precisely the two he cannot reach. The enemy is real, but he is not without limit, and the doors of Allah's help are left wide open. With this in mind the worshipper recites the words of refuge.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

'I seek refuge in Allah from Shayṭān, the accursed.'

Qur'an 16:98.

'A'udhu' – I take shelter, I run to. *'Bi-llāh'* – in Allah. *'Min al-shayṭān'* – from the one who is far, expelled, cast out. *'Al-rajīm'* – the stoned, the cursed.

The recitation begins in the name of Allah, placing dependence upon Him before the first verse is read.

Spiritual Meaning

To open every task, great or small, with the Name of Allah is to acknowledge that nothing begins, continues or is completed without Him. Ibn al-Qayyim gathered the fruits of the Name in a single sentence:

The Name of Allah is not mentioned over something small except that it increases it, nor over something good except that it nurtures and blesses it, nor over an affliction except that it removes it, nor against a devil except that it repels him, humiliated and defeated.

— Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him).

The Name itself carries a wealth of meaning. It is said to signify the One who alone is worthy of worship; the eternal refuge and shelter of all creation; the One who astonishes every mind that reflects upon Him; and the One whom hearts adore by their very nature. It is the culmination of all His attributes, the Name under which every Beautiful Name is gathered.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

‘In the Name of Allah – the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.’

Qur’an 1:1.

Three Names sit at the doorway of every recitation: Allah – the One who gathers all majesty; al-Raḥmān – the One whose mercy embraces the whole creation, believer and disbeliever, in this world; and al-

Raḥīm – the One whose mercy is reserved especially for the believers, in this world and the next.

Recitation

Al-Fātiḥa and an Additional Passage

The imam and the person praying alone recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*. In the first two *rak'as* of an obligatory prayer, it is followed by at least three short verses or one long verse. In the final two *rak'as* of a four-*rak'a* obligatory prayer, *al-Fātiḥa* is sufficient. The aim is not speed, but a measured recitation in which the words can be heard by the reciter and their meanings can be followed.

لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ.

There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book.

Bukhārī (756); Muslim (394).

فَاَقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ.

Recite, then, whatever is easy for you from the Qur'an.

Qur'an 73:20.

These two texts shape the Hanafī ruling. The command to recite whatever is easy from the Qur'an is general, and so the school treats the recitation of some portion of the Qur'an as an integral pillar of the prayer, fulfilled by a short verse or, more cautiously, by three short verses or one long verse. The report that there is no prayer without the Opening of the Book is then read as establishing *al-Fātiḥa* specifically

as *wājib*, a binding duty whose deliberate omission spoils the prayer and requires it to be repeated, and whose accidental omission is repaired by the prostration of forgetfulness. On this reading the negation in the hadith denies the completeness of the prayer rather than its bare validity, which is why an unintended lapse does not render the prayer void. Joining a further passage to *al-Fātiḥa* in the first two *rakʿas* of an obligatory prayer, and in every *rakʿa* of *witr* and the voluntary prayers, is likewise *wājib*. In the final *rakʿas* of a four-*rakʿa* prayer the recitation of *al-Fātiḥa* alone is the *Sunna*. In *Zuḥr* and *ʿAṣr* the recitation is silent for imam and individual alike, while in *Fajr*, and in the first two *rakʿas* of *Maghrib* and *ʿIshāʾ*, the imam recites aloud. The other schools hold *al-Fātiḥa* itself to be an integral pillar; the practical difference is narrow, since the Hanafi worshipper recites it in any case.

Recitation in prayer belongs to a wider relationship with the Qurʿan. The Book has rights upon the believer: to be heard, recited, memorised, understood and lived.

Attentive Listening

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

‘So when the Qurʿan is recited, then listen to it and pay attention, so that you may receive mercy.’

– Qurʿan 7:204.

Istimāʿ is to listen. *Inṣāt* is to listen without speaking – total stillness of tongue and heart.

Recitation

وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَنْ أَتْلُو الْقُرْآنَ

‘And I have been commanded to be of the Muslims, and to recite the Qur’an.’

– Qur’an 27:91-92.

Recite as the Prophet ﷺ did – beautifully, with *tartil*, avoiding errors that change the meaning. Ten rewards for every letter. Not every word – every letter. Alif. Lām. Mīm. That’s three letters, thirty rewards.

Memorisation

‘Indeed, one who does not hold anything of the Qur’an within himself is like a ruined house.’

Tirmidhī (2913).

In Janna, those who have memorised a larger portion will be allowed to climb higher – the position will be determined by the last verse they recite.

Understanding and Reflection

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

‘Do they not reflect upon the Qur’an, or are there locks upon their hearts?’

– Qur’an 47:24.

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

‘This is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, so that they may reflect upon its verses, and that those of understanding may be reminded.’

– Qur’an 38:29.

We have the speech of Allah with us – the words of our Creator. It speaks of the past with accuracy, informs us of the future, and remains relevant and a solution to every era.

Those who came before you viewed the Qur’an as letters from their Lord.

— Hasan al-Baṣrī.

Reflection Deepens Love

We interact with the verses and begin to feel the meanings behind their words. We learn how Allah describes Himself, and knowledge of Him deepens love and nearness. We turn to the Qur’an for healing and cure, both physical and spiritual. We use it to understand the world around us: its origin, its purpose, its direction and its end.

Application

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ

‘And this is a Book We have revealed which is blessed – so follow it.’

– Qur’an 6:155.

The Companions would learn ten verses from the Prophet ﷺ and would not move to the next ten until they had understood and acted

upon them. Recitation without application is like leaving a manual unopened. This method is related by Imam Aḥmad.

Introspect: How much of this manual am I actually following?

Saying Āmīn

All four schools affirm that *Āmīn* is said after *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*. The disagreement concerns whether it is normally voiced aloud in an audible congregational prayer. In the Ḥanafī school, the imam, follower and person praying alone pronounce it quietly. Quiet means actual pronunciation with the tongue, at a level the worshipper could hear in an otherwise quiet place; it does not mean merely thinking the word.

إِذَا قَالَ الْإِمَامُ: وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ، فَقُولُوا: آمِينَ؛ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ وَافَقَ قَوْلَهُ قَوْلَ
الْمَلَائِكَةِ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

When the imam says, 'Nor those who have gone astray,' say, 'Āmīn.'
Whoever's saying coincides with the saying of the angels will have his
previous sins forgiven.

Bukhārī (780); Muslim (410).

This hadith establishes the word, its timing and its immense virtue. It does not itself state that the congregation must raise its voice. Hanafī jurists also observe that *Āmīn* is a supplication, not part of the Qur'an, and that supplication within prayer is ordinarily kept low. Their reading is also supported by a route from Sayyiduna Wā'il ibn Ḥujr

and by the practice of Sayyiduna ‘Alī, Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd and the early Kūfan school.

صَلَّيْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ، فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ: ﴿غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
الضَّالِّينَ﴾ قَالَ: «آمِينَ»، وَأَخْفَى بِهَا صَوْتَهُ.

I prayed with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When he reached, “Not the path of those who earned anger, nor of those who went astray,” he said, “Āmīn,” and lowered his voice with it.

Aḥmad (18874); Ḥākim, Mustadrak, 2:232, who authenticated it according to the conditions of Bukhārī and Muslim, with Dhahabī agreeing.

Abū Wā’il also reported that Sayyiduna ‘Alī and Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd did not raise their voices with the basmala, the words of seeking refuge or Āmīn (Ṭabarānī, Mu‘jam al-kabīr (9304)). The narration of audibility remains part of the evidence and is acted upon by other schools; the Hanafi case is that quiet pronunciation also has direct and inherited support.

A second group of reports describes the Prophet ﷺ making Āmīn audible.

سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَرَأَ: ﴿غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾، فَقَالَ:
«آمِينَ»، وَمَدَّ بِهَا صَوْتَهُ.

I heard the Prophet ﷺ recite, 'Not the path of those who earned anger, nor of those who went astray.' He then said, 'Āmīn,' and prolonged his voice with it.

Tirmidhī (248); Abū Dāwūd (932).

Ḥanafī scholars did not ignore these reports. They understood the nearby Companions' ability to hear the Prophet ﷺ, or an occasional audible pronunciation used for teaching, as compatible with a regular practice of quiet recitation. Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī jurists give the reports of audibility greater weight and recommend a voiced *Āmīn* in audible prayers. This is an old disagreement over the manner of a *Sunna*, not over the word itself. A Ḥanafī worshipper says it quietly; a worshipper who follows another recognised school may say it aloud; neither practice invalidates the prayer.

Ibn Abī Shayba, **Muṣannaf**, Book of Prayer, chapter on reciting *Āmīn* quietly; Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ ma'ānī al-āthār*, Book of Prayer; Marghīnānī, *Hidāya*, 1:291–292; Ibn Humām, *Fath al-qadīr*, 1:291–292; MuftiOnline, 'Reciting Ameen Softly.'

Recitation Behind the Imam

In the relied-upon Ḥanafī position, the follower does not recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* or another *sūra* behind the imam, whether the imam's recitation is audible or quiet. This does not make the follower inactive.

He recites the opening praise, says *Āmīn*, follows the transitional *takbīrs*, glorifies Allah in bowing and prostration, praises Him after bowing, and recites the *tashahhud*, blessings and supplications. It is specifically Qur’anic recitation that is carried by the imam.

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

When the Qur’an is recited, listen to it attentively and remain silent, so that you may receive mercy.

Qur’an 7:204.

وَإِذَا قَرَأَ فَأَنْصِتُوا

When he recites, remain silent.

Muslim (404).

The hadith, ‘*There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book,*’ is fully accepted (Bukhārī (756); Muslim (394)). Ḥanafī jurists understand its direct addressees here to be the imam and the person praying alone. The general command to recite is read together with the particular rules of congregation: the imam is appointed to be followed, and his Qur’anic recitation represents the congregation. Reading a general text in the light of a more specific one is a standard method of legal interpretation, not a rejection of either hadith.

Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) expressed the practical result clearly.

حَدَّثَنِي يَحْيَى، عَنْ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ كَانَ إِذَا
سُئِلَ: هَلْ يَقْرَأُ أَحَدٌ خَلْفَ الْإِمَامِ؟ قَالَ: إِذَا صَلَّى أَحَدُكُمْ خَلْفَ
الْإِمَامِ فَخَسْبُهُ قِرَاءَةُ الْإِمَامِ، وَإِذَا صَلَّى وَحْدَهُ فَلْيَقْرَأْ. قَالَ: وَكَانَ عَبْدُ
اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ لَا يَقْرَأُ خَلْفَ الْإِمَامِ.

Nāfi' related that when Sayyiduna 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) was asked whether anyone should recite behind the imam, he replied, 'When one of you prays behind the imam, the imam's recitation is sufficient for him; when he prays alone, he should recite.' Nāfi' added that Sayyiduna Ibn 'Umar did not recite behind the imam.

Muwaṭṭa' Mālik, Book 3, hadith 45.

The same position is transmitted from Sayyiduna 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and a substantial group of Companions and Successors. Some individual reports commonly quoted in this discussion have chains that were debated, so the Ḥanafī case should not be made to depend upon one disputed narration. Its force lies in the combined reading of Qur'an 7:204, the instruction to remain silent, the legal function of the imam and the well-attested practice of leading Companions.

The Prophet ﷺ also noticed recitation occurring behind him in an audible prayer and said that it had caused confusion in his recitation (Muslim (398); Abū Dāwūd (828)). Hanafi jurists read this alongside the command to listen and the practice of the Companions. Other

schools interpret the full body of reports differently, particularly with regard to al-Fātiḥa; the issue remains one of recognised legal interpretation.

The Mālikī school generally distinguishes between audible and quiet prayers, the Shāfiʿī school requires *al-Fātiḥa* from the follower, and the Ḥanbalī school contains further detail. Those who recite behind the imam according to another recognised school remain within the juristic tradition. The purpose here is to show that Ḥanafī silence is a reasoned act of following and listening, not an absence of evidence.

Kāsānī, Badāʿiʿ aṣ-ṣanāʿiʿ, Book of Prayer; Tumurtāshī, Tanwīr al-abṣār, chapter on congregational prayer; SeekersGuidance, 'Reciting the Fātiḥa Behind the Imam'; Darul Ifta Birmingham, 'Is It Permissible to Recite Sūrat al-Fātiḥa Behind the Imam?'

Bowing and Rising

Moving into Rukūʿ

The Ḥanafī method raises the hands at the opening of the prayer and does not repeat the raising before and after bowing. The hands move to the knees as the *takbīr* is said. This practice is transmitted from Sayyiduna ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd (may Allah be pleased with him), from a number of Kūfan Companions and through the juristic practice inherited by the school.

أَلَا أُصَلِّيْ بِكُمْ صَلَاةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ؟ فَصَلَّى فَلَمْ يَرْفَعْ يَدَيْهِ إِلَّا فِي أَوَّلِ
مَرَّةٍ.

*Shall I not pray for you as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed? He then
prayed and did not raise his hands except at the first time.*

Tirmidhī (257); Abū Dāwūd (748).

صَلَّيْتُ مَعَ عُمَرَ، فَلَمْ يَرْفَعْ يَدَيْهِ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ إِلَّا حِينَ افْتَتَحَ
الصَّلَاةَ.

*I prayed with Sayyiduna ‘Umar, and he did not raise his hands at any
point in his prayer except when he began it.*

*Ibn Abī Shayba, Muṣannaf (2469). Zafar Aḥmad ‘Uthmānī regarded its chain as
meeting the conditions of Muslim; I’lā’ as-sunan, 3:49.*

The reports of repeated hand-raising are also authentic and are the basis of the Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanbalī positions. Sayyiduna Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) described the Prophet ﷺ raising his hands at the opening, before bowing and after rising:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَرْفَعُ يَدَيْهِ حَذْوَ مَنْكِبَيْهِ إِذَا افْتَتَحَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَإِذَا
كَبَّرَ لِلرُّكُوعِ، وَإِذَا رَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ مِنَ الرُّكُوعِ.

*The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would raise his hands level with his shoulders
when he opened the prayer, when he pronounced the takbīr for bowing,
and when he raised his head from bowing.*

Bukhārī (735); Muslim (390).

The disagreement therefore does not arise because one side knows a hadith and the other does not. Ḥanafī scholars give preference to Sayyiduna Ibn Mas‘ūd’s description and the continuous practice of his school, and some understand non-raising as the later settled practice. Other hadith scholars prefer the reports of Sayyiduna Ibn ‘Umar and similar narrations. Both methods have deep roots in the transmitted prayer, and neither should become a test of another Muslim’s devotion to the *Sunna*.

The Posture of Rukū‘

The fingers are spread over the knees, the elbows are kept away from the sides, and the back is level without lifting or dropping the head. The posture is held until the body becomes still. The *tasbīḥ* Subḥāna Rabbiyal-‘Azīm is recited at least three times in an unhurried prayer.

أَمَّا الرُّكُوعُ فَعَظِّمُوا فِيهِ الرَّبَّ.

As for bowing, magnify the Lord in it.

Muslim (479).

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ.

Glory be to my Lord, the Magnificent.

Abū Dāwūd (869).

Rukū' gives bodily form to the acknowledgement of Allah's greatness. The back bends, the head is lowered and the tongue magnifies the Lord.

Spiritual Meaning

A Posture of Humility

The Prophet ﷺ bowed with his back straight, his head level with his back, his knees firmly clasped, his fingers spread, and his arms separated from his torso.

It was narrated from Sayyiduna Wābiṣa ibn Ma'bad (may Allah be pleased with him): 'I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performing prayer, and when he bowed he made his back so straight that if water were poured upon it, it would remain there.'

Ibn Mājah (872).

A posture that belongs to Allah alone

Bowing to anything other than Allah is forbidden. If done as glorification, it is shirk. If done as mere respect, it is still a sin. This posture belongs to Allah alone.

Words to Recite

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ

‘How perfect is my Lord, the Magnificent.’

Muslim (772).

Rabbiyy – ‘my Lord.’ The personal pronoun creates a quiet warmth. This magnificent, transcendent God is also my individual Lord – the One who provides for me, heals me, guides me, forgives me.

Al-‘Azīm – ‘The One of Unshakable Glory.’ In this position – physically unstable, bent forward, off-balance – we remember Allah’s unshakable power and might. The body is bowed; the heart is steadied.

Rising from Rukū‘

The imam and the person praying alone say Sami‘a Allāhu liman ḥamidah while rising. The follower says the praise after the imam. The body returns to a complete upright standing before the descent into prostration.

إِذَا قَالَ الْإِمَامُ: سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ، فَقُولُوا: اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ، فَإِنَّهُ
مَنْ وَافَقَ قَوْلَهُ قَوْلَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

When the imam says, ‘Allah hears the one who praises Him,’ say, ‘O Allah, our Lord, to You belongs all praise.’ Whoever’s words coincide with those of the angels will have his previous sins forgiven.

Bukhārī (796); Muslim (409).

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ، حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ.

Our Lord, to You belongs all praise: abundant, pure and blessed praise.

Bukhārī (799).

The return to standing is a complete posture of praise, not a hurried bridge between bowing and prostration.

Where the Hands Rest in Qawma

In the relied-upon Hanafi method, the arms return to the sides after rising from *rukūʿ*. The hands are not folded a second time. The transmitted reports concerning *qawma* establish a complete upright posture and its words of praise, but they do not prescribe a fresh act of clasping after the bow. Hanafi jurists therefore attach the folded-hand posture to the standing of recitation and allow the arms to rest naturally in this standing of praise.

This point should be expressed with historical precision. There is no separate sound hadith whose wording simply says, “Leave the hands at the sides after bowing.” It is the school’s juristic specification drawn from the absence of a transmitted refolding, the distinction between the two standings and its inherited method of prayer. Some scholars extend the general reports of placing the right hand over the left to this standing and therefore refold. A person following that recognised view has not invalidated the prayer.

Shurunbulālī, Marāqī al-falāḥ, chapter on the manner of prayer; Ibn ʿĀbidīn, Radd al-muḥtār, Book of Prayer; Sajaad, A Brief Salah Manual, step 5; Aʿẓamī, Ṣalāt: Is Yours Correct?, section on qawma.

Spiritual Meaning

When the Imam Declares, We Respond

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'When the imām says 'Sami' Allāhu li-man ḥamidah,' say 'Allāhumma Rabbanā lakal-ḥamd' – for indeed, whoever coincides in saying this with the angels, his past sins will be forgiven.'

Bukhārī (796); Muslim (409).

The Praise the Angels Race to Record

Sayyiduna Rifā'a ibn Rāfi' (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: 'One day we were praying behind the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When he raised his head from rukū', he ﷺ said Sami' Allāhu li-man ḥamidah. A man behind him said: 'Rabbanā wa-laka al-ḥamd, ḥamdan kathīran ṭayyiban mubārakan fih.' When he ﷺ finished, he asked: 'Who uttered those words?' The man replied: 'Me.' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'I saw some thirty-something angels racing to write it first.''

Bukhārī (799).

Words to Recite

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ

(The imām says): ‘May Allah respond to the one who praises Him.’

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ

(Those behind reply): ‘O Allah, our Lord, to You alone belongs all praise.’

Bukhārī (795); Muslim (392).

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ ، حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ

‘Our Lord, to You alone belongs all praise – abundant, pure, and blessed praise.’

Bukhārī (799).

Stillness in Each Posture

Between the movements of the prayer lie moments of rest, and the school gives these a definite legal weight. Bringing each posture to a settled stillness, so that the bones come to rest before the next movement begins, is what the jurists call *ta’dīl al-arkān*. Its authority is the instruction the Prophet ﷺ gave to the man who prayed badly, telling him to bow until he was calm in his bowing, to rise until he stood upright, and to prostrate until he was calm in his prostration.

ثُمَّ ارْكَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ رَاكِعًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَعْتَدِلَ قَائِمًا، ثُمَّ اسْجُدْ حَتَّى
تَطْمَئِنَّ سَاجِدًا.

Then bow until you are calm in bowing, then rise until you are standing upright, then prostrate until you are calm in prostration.

Bukhārī (757); Muslim (397).

Within the school there is a fine and well-known distinction. Imam Abu Hanifa held that this settling of the limbs, together with the upright standing after bowing and the sitting between the two prostrations, is *wājib*: a binding duty whose omission leaves the prayer deficient and calls for the prostration of forgetfulness or for repetition, though it does not by itself void the prayer. His two companions, Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad, held it to be an integral pillar, which is also the position of the other three schools. The practical upshot is the same in either case, and it is not a small matter. A prayer poured out in haste, in which the worshipper does not pause in his bowing or allow his back to settle when he lifts his head, is the prayer the Prophet ﷺ described as the worst kind of theft, in which a man steals from his own prayer.

Prostration and Sitting

Going into Sajda

The Ḥanafī method places the knees on the ground before the hands, followed by the nose and forehead. On rising, the order is reversed.

The movement should be controlled, without dropping heavily or disturbing those nearby.

رَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا سَجَدَ وَضَعَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ قَبْلَ يَدَيْهِ، وَإِذَا نَهَضَ رَفَعَ
يَدَيْهِ قَبْلَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ.

I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he prostrated, place his knees before his hands; and when he rose, he lifted his hands before his knees.

Abū Dāwūd (838); Tirmidhī (268).

Other jurists rely on a report from Sayyiduna Abū Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him), which they read as directing the hands to the ground before the knees.

إِذَا سَجَدَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلَا يَبْرُكْ كَمَا يَبْرُكُ الْبَعِيرُ، وَلِيَضَعَ يَدَيْهِ قَبْلَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ.

When one of you prostrates, he should not kneel as a camel kneels; let him place his hands before his knees.

Abū Dāwūd (840).

The chains and wording of both reports were discussed by hadith specialists, including whether an inversion occurred and what part of a camel's descent is being compared. Ḥanafī jurists prefer the report of Sayyiduna Wā'il ibn Ḥujr and the controlled descent it describes. Shāfi'ī jurists generally prefer the hands first. Neither order is a pillar of prostration: the worshipper who follows another recognised view, or uses his hands first because of age or pain, performs a valid *sajda*.

The Seven Points of Prostration

The forehead and nose, both hands, both knees and the toes of both feet form the complete prostration. The body must settle before rising. The details below describe the relied-upon Hanafi form for a man; the more compact posture of a woman is gathered separately later in this part.

أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَسْجُدَ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَعْظُمٍ: عَلَى الْجَبْهَةِ - وَأَشَارَ بِيَدِهِ عَلَى أَنْفِهِ -
وَالْيَدَيْنِ، وَالرُّكْبَتَيْنِ، وَأَطْرَافِ الْقَدَمَيْنِ.

I was commanded to prostrate on seven bones: the forehead - and he pointed to his nose - the two hands, the two knees and the ends of the two feet.

Bukhārī (812); Muslim (490).

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى.

Glory be to my Lord, the Most High.

Abū Dāwūd (869).

The Form of Sajda for Men

The palms are placed firmly on the ground, broadly level with the shoulders or ears, with the fingers kept together and directed towards the *qibla*. The forearms are lifted clear of the ground, the elbows remain away from the sides, and the abdomen is kept away from the thighs. The knees are kept reasonably close rather than spread without need. The toes are bent towards the *qibla* and remain in contact with

the ground. These details create a prostration that is composed and open without becoming exaggerated or uncomfortable.

اعْتَدِلُوا فِي السُّجُودِ، وَلَا يَبْسُطُ أَحَدُكُمْ ذِرَاعَيْهِ انْبِسَاطَ الْكَلْبِ.

Be balanced in prostration, and none of you should spread his forearms as a dog spreads them.

Bukhārī (822); Muslim (493).

Sayyiduna Abū Ḥumayd's detailed description also states that the toes were directed towards the qibla (Bukhārī (828)). Reports describing the whiteness of the Prophet's ﷺ armpits as visible in prostration establish that his arms were kept away from his sides (Bukhārī (390); Muslim, Book of Prayer). The Hanafi manuals combine these reports with the instruction to keep the fingers together and the knees close.

The Feet and Heels in Sajda

Both feet should remain grounded throughout the prostration, with the toes turned towards the qibla. Deliberately lifting both feet for the whole prostration invalidates it according to Hanafi jurists. The complete posture therefore gives attention not only to the forehead and hands, but also to the feet, which are explicitly included among the seven points of prostration.

فَقَدْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، فَوَجَدْتُهُ سَاجِدًا رَاصًّا عَقْبِيهِ، مُسْتَقْبِلًا
بِأَطْرَافِ أَصَابِعِهِ الْقِبْلَةَ.

*I could not find the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, then I found him prostrating
with his heels brought together and the tips of his toes facing the qibla.*

*Ṭaḥāwī, Bayān mushkil al-āthār, 1:104; Ibn al-Mundhir, Awsat (1401); Ibn
Khuzayma, Ṣaḥīḥ, 1:328; Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṣaḥīḥ, 5:260; Ḥākim, Mustadrak, 1:352;
Bayhaqī, Sunan al-kubrā, 2:167.*

Other descriptions of the Prophetic prostration indicate some space between the legs. Hanafi scholars have reconciled the material by recommending that the feet be kept close and the heels joined, or nearly joined, without straining the ankles or treating physical contact as a condition. The report establishes a recognised form; it does not make the touching of the heels a pillar of prostration.

A‘zamī, Ṣalāt: Is Yours Correct?, ‘Correction of Sajdah’; Ṭaḥāwī, Bayān mushkil al-āthār, 1:104; Ibn Khuzayma, Ṣaḥīḥ, 1:328; Ibn Ḥibbān, Ṣaḥīḥ, 5:260; Bayhaqī, Sunan al-kubrā, 2:167.

Spiritual Meaning

The Closest a Servant Comes to His Lord

*‘The closest a servant is to his Lord is when he is in prostration
– so increase your supplication in it.’*

Muslim (482).

Every Prostration Raises a Degree

‘Make many prostrations to Allah – for you will not prostrate to Allah once except that He raises you one degree because of it, and removes one sin from you because of it.’

Muslim (488).

سَيِّمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ

‘Their distinguishing feature – as a result of prostration – is on their faces.’

– Qur’an 48:29.

What Prostrated to Allah the Fire Cannot Consume

Allah has made the Hellfire *ḥarām* for the face which prostrates itself to Him.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Hellfire will consume all of the son of Ādam except the mark of prostration. Allah has forbidden the Fire to consume the mark of prostration.’

Bukhārī (7437); Muslim (182).

Sins Fall Away with Every Sajda

‘When the slave stands to pray, all of his sins are brought and placed on his head and shoulders. Whenever he bows or prostrates, they fall off him.’

Ibn Ḥibbān (1734); Ṭabarānī, Muʿjam al-kabīr, 13:316 (14108).

The Path to the Prophet's ﷺ Company

Sayyiduna Rabī'a ibn Ka'b (may Allah be pleased with him) used to spend the night in the service of the Prophet ﷺ bringing him water for his purification. Once the Prophet ﷺ said to him: 'Ask!' Rabī'a said: 'I ask you for your company in Paradise.' The Prophet ﷺ asked if he would like anything else. He replied: 'Only that.' The Prophet ﷺ then told him: 'Then help me to achieve this for you through abundant sujūd.'

Muslim (489).

An Example to Learn From

Sayyiduna Abū Dardā' (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'Indeed I make **du'ā'** for thirty of my brothers whilst I am in **sujūd** – with their names and their fathers' names.' (*Bayhaqī, Sunan al-kubrā, 4:256 (3370); Ibn Abī Shayba, Muṣannaf, 2:199*).

Why This Posture Is the Most Powerful

We are doing what the rest of creation does. The mountains, the trees, the stars – all prostrate. In *sajda* we rejoin them. It makes *Shayṭān* angry and jealous. He refused to do it once; we do it dozens of times a day. It connects us to our origin. We were created from dust – and in *sajda*, dust touches dust again. Every single limb is humbled. Every atom of us is lowering itself. The position itself limits distractions. The world is literally shut out – and there is only Allah.

Sajda: The Station of Supplication

Open, honest, intimate communication with Allah. Speak to Him as your Creator and your Lord – as the One you love and the One you need. Tell Him your fears, your aspirations, your struggles. Tell Him what keeps you awake at night. Tell Him what you have missed and what you hope for.

Sajda is the release of burdens, the removal of anxiety, the place where *du‘ā’* is answered and where *sukūn* – tranquility of heart, body, and soul – is found. It is, in every sense, the healing of the injured heart.

Words to Recite

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى

‘Glory be to my Lord, the Most High.’

Muslim (772).

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا وَبِحَمْدِكَ ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي

‘How Perfect are You, O Allah our Lord, and for You is all praise. O

Allah, forgive me.’

Bukhārī (794); Muslim (484).

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ سَجَدْتُ ، وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ ، وَلَكَ أَسَلْتُ ، سَجَدَ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِي
خَلَقَهُ وَصَوَّرَهُ وَشَقَّ سَمْعَهُ وَبَصَرَهُ ، تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

‘O Allah, for You alone I have prostrated, in You alone I have believed, and to You alone I have submitted. My face has prostrated to the One who created and fashioned it, and who formed its hearing and sight. Blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators.’

Muslim (771).

Sitting Between the Two Prostrations

The right foot is kept upright with the toes facing the *qibla*, while the body rests on the left foot. The hands rest on the thighs near the knees. The sitting must be long enough for the body to settle and for a brief supplication to be made.

وَكَانَ يَفْرِشُ رِجْلَهُ الْيُسْرَى، وَيَنْصِبُ رِجْلَهُ الْيُمْنَى.

He would spread his left foot and keep his right foot upright.

Muslim (498).

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي، رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي.

My Lord, forgive me; my Lord, forgive me.

Abū Dāwūd (874).

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي، وَارْحَمْنِي، وَعَافِنِي، وَاهْدِنِي، وَارْزُقْنِي.

*O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, grant me wellbeing, guide me
and provide for me.*

Abū Dāwūd (850).

The brief sitting between the two prostrations is a deliberate pause in which the servant asks for forgiveness, mercy, guidance and provision.

Spiritual Meaning

The Ambition of the Believer

Such is the ambition of the believer that even after *sajda* – the most intimate moment of nearness – he continues to ask Allah.

The Weight of One Word: Maghfira

Maghfira carries two meanings: to cover up, and to protect. So when we say ‘*Rabbi-ghfir li*’ – we are asking: O my Lord, cover up my faults in this world and the next; and protect me from the bad consequences of my sins.

Sin does not just stain the record. It affects mental well-being, finances, relationships, the grave, and our dying moments. To ask for maghfira is to ask for shielding from all of it.

Why Two Prostrations?

Sujūd is repeated because it is the most honourable and virtuous element of prayer. So we are given two of them in every *rak‘a*.

And notice: one *rak'a* begins with recitation (the Qur'an) and ends with *sajda* (prostration). This mirrors the very first revelation – *Sūra al-'Alaq* – which opened with '*Iqra*' ('*Read!*') and closed with '*wasjud wa-qtarib*' ('*Prostrate and draw near*'). The structure of every *rak'a* is the structure of revelation itself.

Words to Recite

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ، رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي

'My Lord, forgive me. My Lord, forgive me.'

Abū Dāwūd (874).

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ، وَارْحَمْنِي ، وَعَافِنِي ، وَاهْدِنِي ، وَارْزُقْنِي

'O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, grant me well-being, guide me, and grant me sustenance.'

Tirmidhī (284).

Standing for the Next Rak'a

After the second prostration of the first and third *rak'as*, the worshipper rises without making a separate sitting of rest, unless age, illness or another need makes it helpful. The knees support the rise rather than the hands being planted on the floor as a normal habit.

ثُمَّ كَبَّرَ فَقَامَ وَلَمْ يَتَوَرَّكْ

He then said the takbīr and stood, without sitting back on his haunches.

Abū Dāwūd (733).

Sayyiduna Mālik ibn al-Ḥuwayrith (may Allah be pleased with him) also reported seeing the Prophet ﷺ sit briefly before rising (Bukhārī (823)). This is the basis for the recommended rest-sitting in the Shāfiʿī school and in a view within the Ḥanbalī school. Ḥanafī jurists understand it as an action connected to need, age or an occasional circumstance because other detailed descriptions move directly from prostration to standing. It is not condemned when performed and is especially appropriate for anyone who requires it physically.

The Final Sitting and Salām

The Tashabbud

In the final sitting, a Ḥanafī man sits upon the left foot with the right foot upright and its toes directed towards the *qibla*, as in the earlier sitting. A woman sits with both legs taken to her right side in the school's more compact posture. Other schools distinguish between the first and final sittings and may use *tawarruk* in the last sitting, relying on the detailed report of Sayyiduna Abū Ḥumayd (Abū Dāwūd (730)). These are recognised differences in preferred posture. The hands rest on the thighs while the *tashabbud* moves from honouring Allah, to greeting the Prophet ﷺ, to including every righteous servant, and finally to the testimony of faith.

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

*All greetings, prayers and pure words belong to Allah. Peace be upon you,
O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be upon us
and upon the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that there is no
god except Allah, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and
Messenger.*

Bukhārī (831); Muslim (402).

The Index Finger

Pointing with the index finger during the testimony of faith is firmly established. In the relied-upon Hanafi method, the right hand rests upon the right thigh. The little and ring fingers are folded, the thumb and middle finger form a circle, and the index finger points towards the *qibla*, not upwards towards the sky. It is raised as the worshipper reaches *lā ilāha* and lowered at *illā Allah*. It is not repeatedly wagged, and it is not kept raised for the remainder of the *tashahhud*.

ثُمَّ قَبَضَ أَصَابِعَهُ كُلَّهَا، وَأَشَارَ بِإِصْبَعِهِ الَّتِي تَلِي الْإِبْهَامَ.

He then closed his fingers and pointed with the finger next to the thumb.

Muslim (580).

كَانَ يُشِيرُ بِإِصْبَعِهِ إِذَا دَعَا، وَلَا يُحَرِّكُهَا.

He would point with his finger when supplicating and would not move it repeatedly.

Abū Dāwūd (989); Nasā'ī (1270). The additional wording concerning movement has been discussed by hadith specialists.

The Prophetic reports establish pointing, the form of the hand and the connection between the gesture and supplication. They do not spell out the timing syllable by syllable. The raising at the words of negation and lowering at the affirmation of Allah is the Hanafi jurists' disciplined arrangement of those reports. It gives bodily expression to rejecting every false object of worship and affirming Allah alone.

This timing is recorded in the relied-upon Hanafi manuals and was treated at length by Imam Ibn 'Ābidīn in a separate work on the fingers during the tashahhud. The other fingers remain in their formed position until the sitting ends. Other recognised schools may keep the finger raised or move it in a measured manner; those practices do not invalidate the prayer.

Ibn 'Ābidīn, *Raf' at-taraddud fī 'aqd al-aṣābī* 'inda at-tashahhud; *Radd al-muḥtār*, chapter on prayer; A'zamī, *Ṣalāt: Is Yours Correct?*, pp. 17-18; Sajaad, *A Brief Salah Manual*, step 10.

Blessings and Supplication

After the *tashahhud*, blessings are sent upon the Prophet ﷺ. The worshipper then chooses a supplication transmitted from the Qur'an

and *Sunna*. Supplications should remain appropriate to prayer and should not take the form of ordinary conversation.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ. اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا
بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ.

O Allah, send Your grace upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, as You sent Your grace upon Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm. You are Praiseworthy, Glorious. O Allah, bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, as You blessed Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm. You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.

Bukhārī (3370); Muslim (406).

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ظُلْمًا كَثِيرًا، وَلَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، فَاعْفِرْ
لِي مَغْفِرَةً مِنْ عِنْدِكَ، وَارْحَمْنِي، إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

O Allah, I have greatly wronged myself, and none forgives sins except You. Grant me forgiveness from Yourself and have mercy on me. You are the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Bukhārī (834); Muslim (2705).

The final sitting gathers the meanings of the entire prayer: praise of Allah, peace upon the Prophet ﷺ, fellowship with the righteous, testimony of faith and personal supplication.

The Words and Weight of the *tashabbud*

Taught Like a Sūra

*Sayyiduna Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) said:
‘The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would teach us the tashabbud just
as he would teach us a sūra from the Qur’an.’*

Muslim (403).

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

*‘All royal greetings belong to Allah, as do prayers and good deeds and
words. May peace, the mercy of Allah, and His blessings be upon you, O
Prophet. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah. I bear
witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear
witness that Muḥammad is His slave and Messenger.’*

Bukhārī (831); Muslim (402).

Unpacking the conversation

As-salāmu ‘alayka ayyuḥan-Nabī – Peace be upon you, O Prophet.
The best of creation. The one who did us the most favours. O Allah,
give him peace, safety, and security. Keep him safe from all harm.

Wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh – And may Allah's mercy and blessings
be upon you too.

As-salāmu ‘alaynā wa ‘alā ‘ibādillāh al-ṣāliḥīn – And upon us, and upon the righteous servants of Allah. We should strive to be in that category – to receive the daily *du‘ās* of the entire *Umma*.

The *shahāda* at the end. We ended *wuḍū’* with the kalima. We ended the *adhān* with the kalima. And here too – we ask Allah to make it our final word.

Sending Blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ * كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ * إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ * اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ * كَمَا
بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ * إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ *

‘O Allah, send blessings upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad, just as You have sent blessings upon Ibrāhīm and upon the family of Ibrāhīm – indeed, You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious. O Allah, bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, just as You have blessed Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm – indeed, You are the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.’

Bukhārī (3370); Muslim (406).

Having greeted and paid respect to the Lord of the worlds, we now turn to pay our respect to the best of creation ﷺ.

There is no other act in existence – that we know of – in which humans, angels, and Allah Himself all participate, except sending

ṣalawāt upon the Messenger ﷺ. For each one we send, we receive: ten rewards · ten sins forgiven · ten stages elevated in Paradise.

The preferred method of *du'ā'* is to first praise Allah, then send ṣalawāt upon His beloved ﷺ, and only then ask for one's own needs. That is precisely the structure the prayer teaches us in this sitting.

Supplication Before the *Salām*

End by asking for forgiveness for our shortcomings throughout this journey of prayer. The end of the prayer is a time of accepted prayers. It is as though Allah is asking:

Is there anything left that you need to ask for, My beloved servant?

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي ظُلْمًا كَثِيرًا ، وَلَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ ، فَاعْفُرْ
لِي مَغْفِرَةً مِنْ عِنْدِكَ ، وَارْحَمْنِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

'O Allah, I have wronged myself greatly, and no one forgives sins except You. Grant me forgiveness from You, and have mercy upon me. Indeed, You are the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.'

Bukhārī (834); Muslim (2705).

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ ، وَمِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ ، وَمِنْ فِتْنَةِ
 الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَالِ

*‘O Allah, I seek Your protection from the punishment of the Fire, from the
 punishment of the grave, from the trials of life and death, and from the
 evil of the trial of al-Masīḥ al-Dajjāl.’*

Bukhārī (1377); Muslim (588).

The Salām

The prayer ends with *salām* to the right and then to the left, turning
 far enough for the whiteness of the cheek to be visible from behind.
 The second *salām* begins after the head has returned through the
 centre. The words greet the angels and the believing worshippers on
 either side.

كُنْتُ أَرَى رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُسَلِّمُ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَعَنْ يَسَارِهِ حَتَّى أَرَى بَيَاضَ
 خَدِّهِ.

*I used to see the Messenger of Allah ﷺ give salām to his right and to his
 left until I could see the whiteness of his cheek.*

Muslim (582).

The *salām* releases the worshipper from the protected state of prayer,
 but it also returns him to the world carrying peace for those around
 him.

Spiritual Meaning

Leaving with Peace

The greeting of Janna, the greeting of Allah and the angels, is *Salām*. We end the prayer with it.

Who Is the Salām For?

Our intention should be to convey greetings to the angels on our right and left, and to our fellow congregants when praying in *jamā'a*.

A Bridge Back to the World

During prayer, you ascended to great heights – communicating directly with Allah. The *salām* is the transition that returns you to the world, gently.

No Contradiction

It would be a contradiction to spread *salām* from your prayer – and then still harbour grudges against those around you. Let the *salām* be real.

Words to Recite

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

(Turning to the right, then to the left:) ‘May the peace and mercy of Allah be upon you.’

Muslim (582).

The Prayer of Women

The essential pillars, recitations and conditions of prayer are shared by men and women. A woman stands, recites, bows, prostrates and sits before the same Lord, and her prayer is not a lesser act of worship. The Hanafi school nevertheless preserves differences in the preferred bodily form. These are directed towards greater concealment and compactness, and are based on early reports, the practice of the Companions and Successors, and the continuous legal transmission of the school.

مَرَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَلَى امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَصَلِّيَانِ، فَقَالَ: «إِذَا سَجَدْتُمَا فَضْمَا بَعْضَ
الْحَمِّ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ، فَإِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ لَيْسَتْ فِي ذَلِكَ كَالرَّجُلِ».

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed by two women who were praying and said, "When you prostrate, draw part of the body close to the ground, for a woman is not like a man in this respect."

Abū Dāwūd, Marāsil (87); Bayhaqī, Sunan al-kubrā (3243). It is a mursal report with reliable transmitters and is supported by early Companion and Successor practice.

سُئِلَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ عَنْ صَلَاةِ الْمَرْأَةِ، فَقَالَ: تَجْتَمِعُ وَتَحْتَفِزُ.

Sayyiduna Ibn ‘Abbās was asked about a woman’s prayer. He replied, "She draws herself together and keeps herself compact."

Ibn Abī Shayba, Muṣannaf (2794).

Dress and Standing

A woman's clothing must be opaque, loose and secure throughout the prayer. Her hair, ears, neck and forearms must be covered. In the relied-upon Hanafi position, the face, hands and feet are not part of the 'awra in prayer, though covering the feet is a sound precaution and may be required under other recognised opinions.

At the opening takbīr, a woman raises her hands approximately to the shoulders rather than the earlobes, then places the right hand over the left upon the chest. She stands with the feet together or very close, maintaining a composed and compact stance. These details are chiefly preserved through early practice and Hanafi juristic transmission; they should not all be presented as though one single Prophetic hadith enumerates the entire female posture.

Rukū' and Qawma

In *rukū'*, she bends sufficiently to place the hands upon the knees without extending the back as fully as a man. The fingers are kept together, the elbows remain close to the sides and the feet stay close. She then rises fully into *qawma* and recites the same transmitted praises. Compactness never means rushing or failing to stand upright.

'Aṭā', as transmitted in 'Abd ar-Razzāq, Muṣannaf (5069), 3:137; Ṭaḥṭāwī, commentary on Marāqī al-falāḥ; A'zamī, Ṣalāt: Is Yours Correct?, 'The Ṣalāt of Women.'

Sajda and Sitting

In prostration, she draws the limbs together, keeps the arms close to the sides, brings the abdomen towards the thighs and places the forearms upon the ground. The hands remain near the head with the fingers together towards the qibla. The feet are taken to the right rather than held upright as in a man's posture. In the sitting positions, she sits upon the left side with both legs emerging to the right and keeps the hands composed upon the thighs.

This form is supported by the mursal report above and by statements from Ibrahim Nakha'ī and other early authorities that a woman should draw her thighs inwards, place her abdomen upon them and avoid the more open posture of a man. The aim is concealment, not discomfort. Illness, pregnancy, disability or pain permits any necessary adjustment, just as it does for men.

Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf*, 1:270; 'Abd ar-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 3:138; Darul Hadith Research Centre, *From Our Perspective*, pp. 68-69; Riyāḍ al-Ḥaqq, *The Salah of a Believer*, chapter 13; 'Abd ar-Ra'ūf Sukharwī, *Ḥanafī 'Auratun kī Mudallal Namāz*.

These are differences of preferred form within the Hanafi school. They do not create a different set of pillars, and they should not be used to question the validity of a woman who has been taught another recognised Sunni method.

After the Prayer

Seeking Forgiveness and Remembering Allah

The completion of the *salām* does not mean that the meeting is discarded at once. The Prophet ﷺ sought forgiveness three times, acknowledging that even worship contains shortcomings, and then praised Allah as the source of peace. The established remembrances after prayer should be recited calmly rather than rushed while standing to leave.

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ. اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ، وَمِنْكَ
السَّلَامُ، تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ.

*I seek Allah's forgiveness. I seek Allah's forgiveness. I seek Allah's
forgiveness. O Allah, You are Peace, and from You comes peace. Blessed
are You, Possessor of Majesty and Honour.*

Muslim (591).

The *tasbīḥ* taught to Sayyidatuna Fāṭima (may Allah be pleased with her) consists of thirty-three declarations of Allah's perfection, thirty-three praises and thirty-four *takbīrs* (Bukhārī (6318); Muslim (2727)). Another transmitted form completes thirty-three of each with the declaration of divine oneness. These are simple words, but their regular preservation gives the obligatory prayer a settled conclusion.

The first words after prayer acknowledge imperfection and return every hope of peace to Allah.

Immediately after the *salām*, seek Allah's forgiveness for any shortcomings throughout the prayer:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ

'I seek forgiveness from Allah.' (× 3)

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ ، وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ ، تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

'O Allah, You are al-Salām (the source of Peace), and from You comes peace. Blessed are You, O Possessor of Majesty and Honour.'

Muslim (591).

The Tasbīḥ of Sayyidatuna Fāṭima (may Allah be pleased with her)

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

'How Perfect is Allah.' (× 33)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

'All praise is for Allah.' (× 33)

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

'Allah is the Greatest.' (× 34)

Muslim (597).

The Prophet ﷺ taught this remembrance to Sayyidatuna Fāṭima (may Allah be pleased with her) when she asked him

for a servant, telling her that it was better than what she had requested.

Bukhārī (5361); Muslim (2727).

Āyat al-Kursī After Prayer

The recitation of *Āyat al-Kursī* after the obligatory prayers joins worship to a renewed declaration of Allah's life, authority and perfect knowledge.

'Whoever recites Āyat al-Kursī after every obligatory prayer – there is nothing that will prevent him from entering Paradise except death.'

Nasā'ī, 'Amal al-yawm wa-l-layla (100).

Supplication for Constancy in Worship

The ability to remember, thank and worship Allah well is itself a gift, and the Prophet ﷺ taught us to ask for it.

A Supplication the Prophet ﷺ Urged Sayyiduna Mu'adh Never to Leave

اللَّهُمَّ اَعِنِّي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

'O Allah, help me in remembering You, in being grateful to You, and in worshipping You in an excellent manner.'

Abū Dāwūd (1522); Nasā'ī (1303).

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجُبْنِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ
 أَنْ أُرَدَّ إِلَى أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الدُّنْيَا ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ
 عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ

*‘O Allah, I seek Your protection from miserliness, from cowardice, from
 being returned to a miserable old age, from the trials of the world, and
 from the punishment of the grave.’*

Bukhārī (6365).

Protection After Maghrib and Fajr

The beginning and end of the day are guarded with a brief plea for protection from the Fire.

اللَّهُمَّ أَجِرْنِي مِنَ النَّارِ

‘O Allah, protect me from the Hellfire.’ (× 7)

Abū Dāwūd (5079).

The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘When you finish Maghrib, say this seven times. If you say it and then die during that night, it will be a protection for you. And after praying Fajr, say the same. If you die on that day, it will be a protection for you.’

— Abū Dāwūd (5079).

Personal Supplication After the Obligatory Prayer

The strongest and most regular practice immediately after the salām is the transmitted remembrance already described. Personal supplication after those remembrances is also permissible and praiseworthy. The expression “at the end of the prescribed prayers” can refer, according to context, to the final part before the salām or to the time immediately after it. It should therefore not be used to erase either the established supplications before the salām or permissible supplication after prayer.

قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَيُّ الدُّعَاءِ أَسْمَعُ؟ قَالَ: «جَوْفُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ، وَدُبُرُ
«الصَّلَوَاتِ الْمَكْتُوبَاتِ».

It was asked, “O Messenger of Allah, which supplication is most readily heard?” He replied, “In the last part of the night and at the end of the prescribed prayers.”

Tirmidhī (3499).

Raising the Hands After Prayer

Raising the hands is a widely established etiquette of supplication. A specific report from Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr distinguishes the supplication made within prayer from the raising of the hands after completing it.

رَأَى عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ رَجُلًا رَافِعًا يَدَيْهِ يَدْعُو قَبْلَ أَنْ يَفْرُغَ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ،
فَلَمَّا فَرَغَ مِنْهَا قَالَ: «إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَرْفَعُ يَدَيْهِ حَتَّى يَفْرُغَ مِنْ
صَلَاتِهِ».

Sayyiduna ‘Abdullāh ibn az-Zubayr saw a man raising his hands in supplication before completing his prayer. When the man finished, he said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would not raise his hands until he had completed his prayer.”

Ṭabarānī, Mu‘jam al-kabīr (14912); Haythamī, Majma‘ az-zawā‘id, 10:169, who said its narrators are trustworthy.

A further report describes the Prophet ﷺ facing the qibla and raising his hand after the salām while supplicating for Sayyiduna Walīd ibn al-Walīd, Sayyiduna ‘Ayyāsh ibn Abī Rabī‘a, Sayyiduna Salama ibn Hishām and the oppressed Muslims. This establishes the permissibility of raising the hands after prayer for a need; it does not by itself require the same form after every obligatory prayer.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Tafsīr, commentary on Qur’an 4:98; Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr, at the same verse.

Collective Supplication

Collective supplication is permissible in principle. The Prophet ﷺ led public supplications on occasions such as qunūt and the prayer for rain, and the early Muslims also supplicated together after prayer when a shared danger or need arose. Sayyiduna ‘Alā’ Ḥaḍramī, for example,

led his companions in supplication after Fajr during a grave expedition, and they continued until signs of relief appeared.

Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya wa-n-nihāya*, 6:321; Darul Hadith Research Centre, *From Our Perspective*, pp. 59-61.

Hanafi scholars have therefore allowed the imam to supplicate while the congregation says *Āmīn*, whether for teaching, a communal need or as an established local practice. The necessary safeguard is that it must not be treated as a condition of the obligatory prayer, nor should an imam or worshipper be condemned for omitting it. A permissible or recommended practice is harmed when social pressure turns it into something that appears compulsory.

Wiping the Face After Supplication

The individual chains concerning wiping the face after supplication contain discussion. They are not of the same strength as the clearest reports in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*. A number of hadith scholars nevertheless considered the supporting routes together sufficient for recommendation. Ibn Ḥajar explicitly stated that their combined force raises the report to the level of *ḥasan*. Hanafi jurists consequently permit or recommend wiping the face, without treating it as an integral part of every supplication.

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا رَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ فِي الدُّعَاءِ لَمْ يُحِطَّهُمَا حَتَّى يَمْسَحَ بِهِمَا
وَجْهَهُ.

*When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ raised his hands in supplication, he
would not lower them until he had wiped them over his face.*

*Tirmidhī (3386); Abū Dāwūd (1485). See Ibn Ḥajar, Bulūgh al-marām, hadiths
1554-1555, on the combined supporting routes.*

Those who wipe the face have recognised evidence and juristic precedent; those who leave it follow the judgement of other hadith specialists. It should never become a source of hostility, nor should either practice be presented as part of the validity of prayer.

The Voluntary Prayers

Once the obligatory prayers are secure, the voluntary prayers repair deficiencies, deepen love and build a private reserve of worship.

Once the obligatory is in place, the voluntary builds. Each *nāfila* is a private investment with Allah – and the returns mentioned in the *Sunna* are extraordinary.

The Twelve Regular Sunna Prayers

مَنْ ثَابَرَ عَلَى ثِنْتَيْ عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً مِنَ السُّنَّةِ بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ ، أَرْبَعِ
رَكَعَاتٍ قَبْلَ الظُّهْرِ ، وَرَكْعَتَيْنِ بَعْدَهَا ، وَرَكْعَتَيْنِ بَعْدَ الْمَغْرِبِ ،
وَرَكْعَتَيْنِ بَعْدَ الْعِشَاءِ ، وَرَكْعَتَيْنِ قَبْلَ الْفَجْرِ

Sayyidatuna 'Ā'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'Whoever perseveres in performing twelve rak'as of Sunna, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise: four rak'as before Zuhur and two after; two after Maghrib; two after 'Ishā'; and two before Fajr.'

– Tirmidhī (414); also in Muslim (728); Nasā'ī (1796).

مَنْ حَافَظَ عَلَى أَرْبَعِ رَكَعَاتٍ قَبْلَ الظُّهْرِ وَأَرْبَعِ بَعْدَهَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
النَّارِ

Sayyidatuna Umm Ḥabība (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'Whoever observes four rak'as before Zuhur and four after it – Allah will forbid him to the Fire.'

– Tirmidhī (428); Abū Dāwūd (1269); Nasā'ī (1817); Ibn Mājah (1160).

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ امْرَأً صَلَّى قَبْلَ الْعَصْرِ أَرْبَعًا

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'May Allah have mercy on the one who prays four rak'as before 'Aṣr.'

Tirmidhī (395).

مَنْ صَلَّى بَعْدَ الْمَغْرِبِ سِتَّ رَكَعَاتٍ لَمْ يَتَكَلَّمْ بَيْنَهُنَّ بِسُوءٍ عُدِلْنَ لَهُ
بِعِبَادَةِ ثِنْتَيْ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً

Sayyiduna Abū Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'Whoever prays six rak'as after Maghrib, and does not speak any evil between them, they will be counted for him as the worship of twelve years.'

– Tirmidhī (435); Ibn Mājah (1374).

أَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الْفَرِيضَةِ صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ

Sayyiduna Abū Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'The best prayer after the obligatory prayer is the prayer of the night.'

– Muslim (1163).

Part Three: Understanding What We Recite

Sūrat al-Fātiḥa and the short sūras

Prayer becomes more present when the passages recited every day are understood. This part gathers *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* and the final short *sūras*, presenting their Arabic text, transliteration, translation, principal themes and practical lessons.

Sūrat al-Fātiḥa

Al-Fātiḥa is recited in every *rak'a*, yet its familiarity can conceal its depth. It is praise, covenant, dependence and guidance gathered into seven verses.

Virtues

Al-Fātiḥa as a Cure

During a journey, Sayyiduna Abū Sa'īd Khudrī (may Allah be pleased with him) cured a tribal leader who had been stung – by reciting *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* over him as *ruqya*. The tribe gave the Companions a flock of sheep in payment. When the Companions returned to the Prophet ﷺ, he approved what had happened and allowed them to share the reward.

Bukhārī (5736); Muslim (2201).

The Greatest Sūra

While praying, Sayyiduna Ubayy ibn Ka'b (may Allah be pleased with him) did not respond when the Prophet ﷺ called him. After finishing

his prayer, he apologised. The Prophet ﷺ reminded him that the call of Allah and His Messenger should be answered first. Then he ﷺ told him: ‘Shall I not teach you the greatest **sūra** of the Qur’an *before you leave this masjid?*’ He took his hand – and as they reached the door, he said: ‘It is Umm al-Qur’an – Sūrat al-Fātiḥa – the seven oft-repeated verses, and the magnificent Qur’an that has been given to me.’

Unmatched in the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms – and even within the rest of the Qur’an itself.

Tirmidhī (2875).

A Gate of Heaven Opened for It Alone

While the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sitting with Jibrīl (peace be upon him), a sound was heard from above. Jibrīl said: ‘*This is a gate that has been opened in the heavens today – never opened before.*’ An angel descended and gave the Prophet ﷺ glad tidings of two unique gifts never given to any prophet before him: *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, and the last two verses of *Sūra al-Baqara*. Any recitation of these brings blessings and reward.

Muslim (806); Nasā’ī (912).

Arabic Text, Transliteration and Translation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Al-ḥamdu li-llāhi Rabbi l-‘ālamīn.

All praise is for Allah, Lord of all the worlds.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Ar-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

Māliki yawmi d-dīn.

Master of the Day of Judgement.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

Iyyāka na‘budu wa iyyāka nasta‘in.

You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm.

Guide us to the straight path,

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Ṣirāṭa lladhīna an‘amta ‘alayhim, ghayri l-maghdūbi ‘alayhim wa la ḍ-ḍāllīn.

the path of those You have favoured, not those who earned wrath, nor those who went astray.

Qur’an 1:1-7.

The Movement of the Heart

A Journey Through Five States of the Heart

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

‘All praise is for Allah – Lord of all the worlds.’

Qur’an 1:2.

Love & Gratitude

All praise begins here. The heart turns warm with thanks to the Lord of every world.

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

‘The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.’

Qur’an 1:3.

Hope in His Mercy

Whatever I have done, whatever I have missed – His mercy is wider than my failure.

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

‘Master of the Day of Judgement.’

Qur’an 1:4.

Fear of Displeasing Him

There is a Day. There is a King. The hope of verse 2 is balanced by the awe of verse 3.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

‘You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.’

Qur’an 1:5.

Sincerity & Surrender

‘You alone we worship’ – only Allah's attention matters. Not praise, admiration, or thanks from people. This defeats *riyā’* – showing off. *‘You alone we ask for help’* – any good that came through me was from

Him, not from my intelligence, skill, or effort. This defeats kibr – pride.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

‘Guide us to the straight path –’

Qur’an 1:6.

Asking for Guidance

Guidance to: Islam · knowledge · ability to act · divine help · sincerity · alignment with the *Sunna*. And then – the importance of role models: *‘the path of those You have favoured.’* Not a path I invent, but one already walked by Anbiyā’, Ṣiddīqīn, Shuhadā’, and Ṣāliḥīn.

A Conversation with Allah

How Allah Responds to al-Fātiḥa

The servant recites: All praise is for Allah – Lord of all the worlds.

Allah Most High responds: *‘My servant has praised Me.’*

The servant recites: The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Allah Most High responds: *‘My servant has exalted Me.’*

The servant recites: Master of the Day of Judgement.

Allah Most High responds: *‘My servant has glorified Me – and submitted to Me.’*

The servant recites: You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.

Allah Most High responds: *‘This is between Me and My servant – and My servant will have what he has asked for.’*

The servant recites: Guide us to the straight path – the path of those You favoured, not those who earned wrath, nor those who went astray.

Allah Most High responds: *‘This is for My servant – and My servant will have what he has asked for.’*

‘I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves – and My servant shall have what he has asked for.’

Muslim (395).

The Short Sūras

The short *sūras* most often recited in prayer deserve more than familiarity of sound. Each is presented here with its Arabic text, transliteration and translation, followed by the reflections gathered for this volume.

Sūrat al-‘Aṣr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

وَالْعَصْرِ

Wa'l-‘aṣr.

By the passage of time,

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ

Inna l-insāna la-fi khusr.

humanity is surely in loss,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالحَقِّ وَتَوَّصُوا بِالصَّبْرِ

*Illā lladhīna āmanū wa ‘amilu ṣ-ṣāliḥāti wa tawāṣaw bi-l-ḥaqqi wa
tawāṣaw bi-ṣ-sabr.*

*except those who believe, do righteous deeds, urge one another to
truth, and urge one another to patience.*

Qur'an 103:1-3.

Overview

This short Makkan *sūra* gathers an entire programme of salvation into three verses. Time is constantly carrying human life away. Mere belief without righteous action is incomplete, while private goodness without concern for truth and patient perseverance is also insufficient.

Key lessons

Value time before it is lost. Join faith to consistent righteous action. Help others remain upon truth with wisdom and patience.

Sūrat al-Humaza

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

Waylun li-kulli humazatin lumaza.

Woe to every slanderer and mocker,

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ

Alladhī jama‘a mālan wa ‘addadah.

who gathers wealth and counts it repeatedly,

يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ

Yaḥsabu anna mālahu akhladah.

thinking that his wealth will make him live for ever.

كَأَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ

Kallā la-yunbadhanna fī l-ḥuṭama.

No indeed. He will certainly be thrown into the Crusher.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحَطَمَةُ

Wa mā adrāka mā l-ḥuṭama.

And what will make you understand what the Crusher is?

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَةُ

Nāru Allāhi l-mūqada.

It is Allah's kindled Fire,

الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ

Allatī taṭṭali‘u ‘alā l-afīda.

which rises over the hearts.

إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ

Innabā ‘alayhim muṣṣada.

It will be closed in upon them,

فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ

Fī ‘amadin mumaddada.

within towering columns.

Qur'an 104:1-9.

Overview

The *sūra* joins two diseases that often feed one another: contempt for people and false security in wealth. A tongue that humiliates others and a heart that imagines possessions can guarantee permanence are both corrected by the certainty of return to Allah.

Key lessons

Guard the tongue from mockery, backbiting and insinuation. Wealth is a trust and cannot protect anyone from death or judgement. Harmful speech reaches hearts, and the punishment described is itself said to reach the hearts.

Sūrat al-Fīl

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ

A-lam tara kayfa fa'ala Rabbuka bi-aṣḥābi l-fīl.

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the army of the elephant?

أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ

A-lam yaj'al kaydahum fī taḍlīl.

Did He not make their plan go astray?

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ

Wa arsala 'alayhim ṭayran abābīl.

And He sent against them flocks of birds,

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ

Tarmīhim bi-ḥijāratin min sijjīl.

striking them with stones of baked clay,

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَأْكُولٍ

Fa-ja'alahum ka-ʿaṣfin ma'kūl.

and made them like chewed-up straw.

Qur'an 105:1-5.

Overview

A short Makkan *sūra* of five verses recounting a huge event in the Arabian Peninsula – the very year the Prophet ﷺ was born. The *sūra* refers to the failed invasion of Makka by Abraha, the Christian governor of Yemen, who marched on the Ka'ba with a formidable

army that included massive war elephants. His goal was to destroy the Ka'ba and divert pilgrims to the grand cathedral he had built in Ṣan'ā'.

Key themes

Allah's protection. Allah is the ultimate protector of His sacred places. No matter how powerful an enemy may be, they cannot destroy what He chooses to protect. True power vs. physical power. Abraha's giant war elephants – destroyed by tiny birds carrying tiny stones. Material might is an illusion before Allah. A reminder of blessings. The *sūra* reminded the Quraysh of how Allah saved them – so that they would be grateful and worship Him alone.

Sūrat Quraysh

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ

Li-ilāfi Quraysh.

For the safety of Quraysh,

إِيْلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

Īlāfihim riḥlata sh-shitā'i wa ṣ-ṣayf.

their safety in the trading caravan of winter and summer.

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ

Fa-l-ya‘budū Rabba hādhā l-bayt.

So let them worship the Lord of this House,

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

Alladhī aṭ‘amahum min jū‘in wa āmanahum min khawf.

the One who fed them, saving them from hunger, and made them safe from fear.

Qur’an 106:1-4.

Overview

The *sūra* speaks directly to the Quraysh, the ruling tribe of Makka, reminding them of the unique blessings of food and security they had been given – and pointing them to the One who gave them these gifts.

Key lessons

Be grateful – through worship. Real gratitude is servitude to the One who is the source of all blessings. Do not overlook the simple, basic blessings. Food and safety – things we breathe past every day – are the foundation of every other blessing. Remember the good others have done for you. Even when people do not show full appreciation in return, remember their good – because humans are flawed, and we want Allah to remember the good in us too.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ

A-raʿayta lladhī yukadhdhibu bi-d-dīn.

Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense?

فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدُعُّ الْيَتِيمَ

Fa-dhālika lladhī yaduʿu l-yatīm.

That is the one who repulses the orphan,

وَلَا يُحِضُّ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

Wa lā yaḥuḍḍu ʿalā ṭaʿāmi l-miskīn.

and does not encourage the feeding of the poor.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ

Fa-waylun li-l-muṣallīn.

So woe to those who pray,

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ

Alladhīna hum ‘an ṣalātihim sāhūn.

those who are heedless of their prayer,

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ

Alladhīna hum yurā’ūn.

those who make a show of their deeds,

وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ

Wa yamna’ūna l-mā’ūn.

and withhold even the smallest kindnesses.

Qur’an 107:1-7.

Overview

This *sūra* names two diseases that come from one root – denial of the Day of Recompense. First, it describes the people of Makka who denied the next life – and so became cruel and stingy, pushing away the orphan and ignoring the poor. Then, it pivots to the hypocrites of Madīna – who would pretend to pray, but were neglectful of their prayer, performing it only to be seen as ‘*Muslims*’ by others.

Lessons

Believe in requital. Behave knowing that everything is being recorded – every kindness, every cruelty. Honour the orphans and the poor. Do not just give – encourage others to give too. Guard your prayer. Pray

on time, pray with presence, and strive for sincerity over appearance. Protect yourself from stinginess. Do small acts of kindness – lend the small things, share what costs you little. The *sūra* names *al-Māʿūn* – the simplest of favours – as a test.

Sūrat al-Kawthar

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ

Innā aʿṭaynāka l-Kawthar.

Indeed, We have given you Kawthar, abundance.

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ

Fa-ṣalli li-Rabbika wa-nḥar.

So pray to your Lord and sacrifice.

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

Inna shāniʿaka huwa l-abtar.

Indeed, the one who hates you is the one cut off.

Qurʿan 108:1-3.

Overview

Allah gives glad tidings to the Messenger ﷺ of the great good He has blessed him with – to highlight his exalted status, in contrast to the despicable enemies described in the previous *sūra* – and then tells him how to respond to these blessings.

Some of the blessings

The best of nations – the *Umma* of Muḥammad ﷺ, the first to enter Paradise. Prophethood itself – and the seal of prophethood at that. Beautiful character. The Prophet ﷺ was described in the Qur'an as being upon '*a tremendous standard of character.*' '*We made your status exalted*' – his mention raised, his name remembered five times a day in every *adhān* across the earth. Al-Kawthar itself – a river / pond in Paradise, with water whiter than milk and sweeter than honey.

Lessons

Appreciate the noble status of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ – and let that appreciation live in our daily *ṣalawāt* upon him. Show gratitude for blessings – through prayer and sacrifice. Worship Him, and share with His creation. Do not worry about people pulling you down on your mission to seek Allah's pleasure. The one who tries to cut you off – it is he who is cut off.

Sūrat al-Kāfirūn

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ

Qul yā ayyuhā l-kāfirūn.

Say, 'O disbelievers,

لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ

Lā a'budu mā ta'budūn.

I do not worship what you worship.

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ

Wa lā antum 'ābidūna mā a'bud.

Nor are you worshippers of what I worship.

وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ

Wa lā anā 'ābidun mā 'abadtum.

Nor will I be a worshipper of what you worship.

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ

Wa lā antum ‘ābidūna mā a‘bud.

Nor will you be worshippers of what I worship.

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

Lakum dīnukum wa liya dīn.’

For you is your religion, and for me is mine.’

Qur’an 109:1-6.

Overview

An uncompromising declaration of faith – revealed in response to the Quraysh’s proposal that the Prophet ﷺ worship their gods for a year, and they would worship his Lord for a year. The answer was final and absolute: no compromise.

Lessons

Do not compromise on foundations. Morals, beliefs, the core of who we are – these are not bargaining chips. All religions are not the same. We have a unique identity, and that uniqueness is not arrogance – it is honesty about what we believe. Be very careful with calling others ‘*Kāfir*.’ Takfīr is a dangerous matter that requires extensive knowledge – it belongs to scholars, not casual conversation.

Sunna recitations of Al-Kāfirūn

It is *Sunna* to recite *Sūra al-Kāfirūn* alongside *Sūra al-Ikhlāṣ* in three settings:

In the two *Sunna rak'as* before Fajr and the two *Sunna rak'as* after Maghrib. In the two *rak'as* after *ṭawāf*. Before sleeping – a means of safety from shirk.

The pairing has a beautiful meaning: Kāfirūn rejects falsehood, Ikhlāṣ affirms truth – together they mirror the structure of the *shahāda* itself.

Sūrat an-Naṣr

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ

Idhā jā'a naṣru llāhi wa l-faṭḥ.

When the help of Allah and the conquest comes,

وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا

Wa ra'ayta n-nāsa yadkhubulūna fī dīni llāhi afwājā.

and you see people entering Allah's religion in crowds,

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

Fa-sabbih bi-hamdi Rabbika wa-staghfirhu, innahu kāna tawwābā.

then glorify your Lord with praise and seek His forgiveness.

He is ever-accepting of repentance.

Qur'an 110:1-3.

Overview

According to a widely held view, this was the final complete *sūra* revealed to the Prophet ﷺ before his passing. When it was revealed, most Muslims celebrated – the promise of victory was clear. But the closest companions, Sayyiduna Abū Bakr and Sayyiduna Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him), wept. They understood the deeper message: now that the mission was complete, and people were entering Islam in crowds, the Messenger’s ﷺ time on earth was drawing to a close.

Lessons

Victory comes entirely from Allah – never from human strategy alone. So be humble in victory. Mark every success with spiritual reflection – with gratitude, with *tasbīḥ*, and with seeking forgiveness. The ending of any chapter calls for *istighfār*, because the heart is never quite as pure as the moment deserved.

Sūrat al-Masad

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ

Tabbat yadā Abī Lahabin wa tabb.

May the hands of Abū Lahab perish, and he is ruined.

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ

Mā aghnā ‘anhu māluhu wa mā kasab.

His wealth and what he has earned will not avail him.

سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ

Sa-yaṣlā nāran dhāta lahab.

He will burn in a fire of blazing flame,

وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ

Wa-mra’atuhu ḥammālata l-ḥaṭab.

and so will his wife, the carrier of firewood.

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ

Fī jīdihā ḥablun min masad.

Around her neck is a rope of twisted palm fibre.

Qur'an 111:1-5.

Overview

A strong rebuke of Abū Lahab – the Prophet's own uncle – and his wife, for their persistent harassment of the Messenger ﷺ and the Muslims, despite their close family ties.

Lessons

Allah protects the honour of His beloved. Those who harm the Messenger ﷺ are named and exposed by name in the Qur'an – for all of time. Family status does not make up for shortcomings. Abū Lahab was the Prophet's ﷺ uncle. Yet wealth, lineage, and proximity were of no benefit when his actions were against Allah. Avoid Namīma – tale-bearing and gossip that causes division. The wife of Abū Lahab is condemned not only for hostility but for being a carrier – of words, of harm, of fuel for the fire.

Sūrat al-Ikblāṣ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

Qul huwa llāhu Aḥad.

Say, 'He is Allah, the One.

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

Allāhu ṣ-Ṣamad.

Allah, the Eternal Refuge.

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

Lam yalid wa lam yūlad.

He neither begets, nor is He begotten.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Wa lam yakun lahu kufuwan aḥad.'

And there is none comparable to Him.'

Qur'an 112:1-4.

Overview

Four verses, revealed during the Makkan period. Some narrations place it as the twenty-second *sūra* revealed. Every false notion of a deity is rejected by affirming that Allah alone is worthy of worship. He has no equal, no parent and no child; He is completely independent while all creation depends upon Him.

Virtues

Equal to one-third of the Qur'an. In reward – or, as scholars explain, in subject matter: the Qur'an covers three themes – (1) Allah Himself, (2) the relationship between Allah and creation, (3) the relationships between creation themselves – and *al-Ikhlāṣ* covers the first.

Your love for it will cause you to enter Paradise.

Tirmidhī (2901).

Whoever recites Qul Huwa Allāhu Aḥad ten times, Allah will build for him a palace in Paradise.

Aḥmad (15610).

Recited with the three Quls before sleeping, three times every morning and evening, and after every prayer. Paired with *Sūra al-Kāfirūn* – two angles of the same *shahāda*: rejection of falsehood, affirmation of truth.

Sūrat al-Falaq and Sūrat an-Nās

Sūrat al-Falaq

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ

Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbi l-falaq.

Say, 'I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak,

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ

Min sharri mā khalaq.

from the evil of what He has created,

وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ

Wa min sharri ghāsiqin idhā waqab.

and from the evil of darkness when it gathers,

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

Wa min sharri n-naffāthāti fī l-'uqad.

and from the evil of those who blow on knots,

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ

Wa min sharri ḥāsīdin idhā ḥasad.

and from the evil of the envier when he envies.'

Qur'an 113:1-5.

Sūrat an-Nās

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allāhi r-Raḥmāni r-Raḥīm.

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ

Qul a'ūdhu bi-Rabbi n-nās.

Say, 'I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind,

مَلِكِ النَّاسِ

Maliki n-nās.

the King of mankind,

إِلَهِ النَّاسِ

Ilāhi n-nās.

the God of mankind,

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ

Min sharri l-waswāsi l-khannās.

from the evil of the retreating whisperer,

الَّذِي يُوسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ

Alladhī yuwaswisu fī ṣudūri n-nās.

who whispers into the hearts of mankind,

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

Mina l-jinnati wa n-nās.'

from among jinn and mankind.'

Qur'an 114:1-6.

The Mu'awwidhatayn

These two *sūras* are called the *Mu'awwidhatayn* – 'the two of seeking refuge,' 'the protectors.' They were revealed to the Prophet ﷺ to ward off the magic that had been placed on him by a magician.

'The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to seek refuge with Allah from the jinn and from the evil eye, until the Mu'awwidhatayn (Sūras al-Falaq and al-Nās) were revealed. When they were revealed, he started to recite them and not anything else.'

Tirmidhī (2058); Nasā'ī (5494).

‘Before sleeping, the Prophet ﷺ would recite the last three sūras of the Qur’an (al-Ikhlāṣ, al-Falaq, al-Nās), blow into his hands, and then wipe his hands over his body.’

Bukhārī (5017).

They are recited with *Sūra al-Ikhlāṣ* after every prayer, and every morning and evening (Abū Dāwūd (1523); Tirmidhī (2903); Nasā’ī (1336)).

Lessons

Ask Allah for protection from all evil – and especially: the evil of the night, witchcraft, and jealous people. Do not broadcast every happy detail of your life. What is hidden is protected. Some blessings are best kept private. Positive *ghibṭa* is permitted – wishing for similar good without hating what others have. The poison is in the resentment, not in the noticing. *Sūra an-Nās* invokes three of Allah's attributes – His Lordship, His Kingship, and His Divinity – before asking for protection from the whisperer of evil, whether from jinn or human. The greater the threat, the greater the call.

Closing Note

The method of prayer should give confidence rather than anxiety. A worshipper follows the recognised scholarship available to him, corrects clear mistakes, and continues to improve without turning every difference into a dispute. The outward *Sunna* is honoured most fully when it carries a heart that is humble, attentive and sincere.

All success is from Allah Most High. Any error that remains is from the author and compiler. Matters of practice should be taken to qualified scholars who understand both the evidence and the juristic tradition in which that evidence has been received.

Bibliography and Further Reading

A‘zamī, Faḍl ar-Raḥmān. *Ṣalāt: Is Yours Correct?*

Fayṣal, Muḥammad Ilyās. Authenticity of Salah.

Ḥusaynī, Ṣuhūr Aḥmad. *The Prayer of Rasullullah ﷺ, Translated by Yāsir al-Ḥanafī.*

Ibn Humām, Kamāl ad-Dīn. *Fath al-qadīr.*

Mashhadānī, ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb. *Kayfiyyat ṣalāt an-Nabī ﷺ ‘alā ḍaw’ ijtiḥād al-madhḥab al-Ḥanafī.*

Riyāḍ al-Ḥaqq. The Salah of a Believer in the Qur’an and Sunna.

Yūsuf, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn. *Fiqh al-Imam.*

Darul Hadith Research Centre. *From Our Perspective, vol. 1.*

Hadith Answers. *Research articles on the evidences of prayer.*

Kadodia, Husain. The Crown of a Believer.

Sajaad, Muhammad. A Brief Salah Manual: The Salah of Men and Women with Evidences.

Sukharwī, ‘Abd ar-Ra’ūf. Ḥanafī ‘Auraton kī Mudallal Namāz.

Ḥaḍramī, Ḥasan ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Baḥr. Ṣalāt al-muqarrabīn.

Bukḥārī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukḥārī.*

Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.*

Abū Dāwūd, Sulaymān ibn al-Ash‘ath. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd.*

Ṭaḥāwī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. Sharḥ ma‘ānī al-**āthār**.

Zayla‘ī, Jamāl ad-Dīn. *Naṣb ar-rāya*.

‘Aynī, Badr ad-Dīn. *‘Umdat al-qārī*.

Kāsānī, ‘Alā’ ad-Dīn. *Badā’i‘ aṣ-ṣanā’i‘*.

Marghīnānī, Burhān ad-Dīn. *Hidāya*.

Khalīl ibn Ishāq. *Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*.

Nawawī, Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf. *Minḥāj at-ṭālibīn*.

Ibn Qudāma, ‘Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad. *Mughnī*.

Darul Ifta Birmingham. *‘Maṣḥ on Cotton Socks.’*

SeekersGuidance. *‘What Are the Conditions for Non-leather Socks to Be Used for Wiping?’*

SeekersGuidance. *‘Reciting the Fātiḥa Behind the Imam: Ruling and Maintaining Concentration.’*

IslamQA.org/Qibla. *‘Why Don’t Hanafis Say Āmīn Out Loud?’*

Ṣaḥnūn ibn Ṣa‘īd. *Mudawwana al-kubrā*.

Shurunbulālī, Ḥasan ibn ‘Ammār. *Marāqī al-falāḥ*.

Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī, ‘Abdullāh. *Risāla*.

Ibn an-Naqīb, Aḥmad ibn Lu’lu’. *‘Umdat as-sālik*.

Jaṣṣāṣ, Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī. *Aḥkām al-Qur’an*.

Tumurtāshī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdillāh. *Tanwīr al-abṣār*.

Egypt's Dar al-Ifta. *'What Is the Ruling of Wiping Over Socks?'* Fatwa 6540.

Darul Ifta Birmingham. 'Is It Permissible to Recite **Sūrat al-Fātiḥa** Behind the Imam?'

124