

A GUIDE TO ŞALĀḤ

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	8
TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM.....	10
SALUTATIONS.....	10
CHAPTER 1: PURIFICATION	11
THE IMPORTANCE OF PURIFICATION	11
BEFORE DOING WUḌŪ	11
SIWĀK (TOOTH-STICK).....	11
MAKING INTENTION FOR WUḌŪ (NIYAH)	12
ACTIONS FOR PERFORMING WUḌŪ	12
DU'Ā AT THE END OF WUḌŪ	14
TAYAMMUM (DRY ABLUTION).....	14
PROCEDURE FOR TAYAMMUM	15
CHAPTER 2: BEFORE ṢALĀḤ	16
TIME OF ṢALĀḤ.....	16
Fajr Prayer.....	16
Zuhr Prayer.....	16
'Asr Prayer.....	17
Maghrib Prayer	17
'Isha Prayer.....	17
Forbidden Times of Prayer	18
Forbidden Times for Nafl (Extra) Prayer	18
PLACE FOR ṢALĀḤ.....	20
DRESS FOR ṢALĀḤ.....	21

Men	21
Women	21
TYPES OF ṢALĀḤ	21
Number of Rak'ahs for the Five Obligatory Prayers	22
CHAPTER 3: THE ADHAN AND IQAMAH	25
ADHĀN AND IQĀMAH	25
The Story of Adhān	25
The Muadhdhin	26
Text of the Adhān	27
Adhān for Fajr	28
Listening to the Adhān	28
Durūd After the Adhān	29
DU'Ā OF ADHĀN	30
IQĀMAH	31
Text of Iqāmah	31
CHAPTER 4: CONDUCT OF ṢALĀḤ	33
SUTRAH	33
QIBLAH	33
INTENTION (NIYAH)	33
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO ṢALĀḤ	34
Takbeer Taḥrimah	34
Where Should the Hands be Folded and Placed After Saying Takbeer Taḥrimah?	34
Recitation Before Fātiḥah	35
Ta'ahwudh	37
Tasmiah	37
Sūrah Fātiḥah	37

Recitation of Sūrah Fātiḥah Behind an Imam.....	39
Āmeen	40
Recitation After Sūrah Fātiḥah.....	40
1. Sūrah Ikhḷās	41
2. Sūrah Falaq	41
3. Sūrah Nās	42
Rukū' (Bowing)	43
Perfection of Rukū' and Sajdah	44
Qawmah (Standing After Rukū')	45
Du'ās in Qawmah.....	46
First Sajdah (Prostration)	47
Other Du'ās in Sajdah	48
Jalsah (Sitting Between Two Sajdah)	49
Second Sajdah.....	50
Jalsah Istarāḥat (Sitting for Rest).....	50
Second Rak'ah.....	50
Tashahhud.....	51
Standing Up for the Third Rak'ah.....	52
Last Rak'ah	52
Du'ās After Ṣalāt 'Alan-Nabi (Durūd)	53
Ending the Prayer	57
Du'ās After Salutations	57
1. Immediately after Ṣalāḥ	57
2. Du'a of Gratitude to Allah	58
3. Du'a of Great Praise of Allah.....	58
4. It is Sunnah to Say:.....	59
Praying in Congregation	60

CHAPTER 5: SAJDAH AS-SAHW (SAJDAH FOR FORGETFULNESS)	61
WHEN SHOULD A PERSON DO SAJDAH AS-SAHW	62
CHAPTER 6: OCCASIONAL PRAYERS	63
WITR PRAYER	63
Number of Rak'ahs of Witr Prayer	64
Time of Witr Prayer	64
How to Pray Witr	65
Du'ā Qunūt in Witr Prayer	66
Text of Du'a Qunūt	67
JUMU'AH (FRIDAY PRAYER)	69
Importance of Attending Friday Prayer	69
Importance of Cleanliness for Friday Prayer	70
Importance of Going Early to Friday Prayer	70
Prayer Before Jumu'ah	71
Listening to the Khutbah (Sermon)	71
Actual Jumu'ah Prayer	72
Prayer After Jumu'ah	72
'EID PRAYER	73
Place for 'Eid Prayer	73
Time of 'Eid Prayer	73
Number of Rak'ahs of 'Eid Prayer	73
Conduct of 'Eid Prayer	74
'Eid Prayer is Offered Before Khutbah	74
RAIN PRAYER	74
JANĀZAH PRAYER (FUNERAL PRAYER)	75
While Praying Janāzah Prayer	75
Where Janāzah Prayer Differs	75

Conduct of the Janāzah Prayer	76
First Takbeer or Takbeer Tahrimah	76
Du'ā of Starting.....	76
Recitation of a Sūrah.....	78
Second Takbeer.....	78
Third Takbeer	80
Ending the Janāzah Prayer (Fourth Takbeer)	83
PRAYER DURING A JOURNEY	84
Qasr Prayer (Short Prayer).....	84
It is More Rewarding to Pray a Qasr Prayer (Short Prayer)	84
Combining Prayers	84
When to Shorten and Combine Prayers.....	85
Duration of Journey.....	86
Nafl Prayer on a Journey.....	86
NOTES.....	88

The words of the niyah should not be uttered aloud, as this is not authentic or approved by the Prophet ﷺ.

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO ṢALĀḤ

Takbeer Taḥrimah

After making niyah, the person should start the prayer by saying:

Arabic	الله أكبر
Transliteration	Allāhu Akbar
Translation	Allah is the Greatest

raising both of the hands to the shoulders, with fingers stretching to the earlobes. They should then fold the hands over the chest, right hand over left hand. This first Allāhu Akbar is called takbeer taḥrimah because after saying takbeer taḥrimah, every common and worldly action, talk or movement is forbidden. Throughout the prayer, the eyes of the worshipper should point to the spot where the forehead rests in sajdah.

Where Should the Hands be Folded and Placed After Saying Takbeer Taḥrimah?

Some people place their hands under the navel, others place them under the chest but there are hadiths which state that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to place his hands over his chest.

Evidence
Halb Ata'i ؓ reported: "I saw the Prophet ﷺ placing his right hand over his left hand over his chest." (Ahmad and Tirmidhi)
Wa'il bin Hajr ؓ said: "I prayed with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and he put his right hand over his left hand over his chest." (Ibn Khuzaimah, Abu Dawud and Muslim)

There are some other narrations which state that some fuqahā used to place their hands under the chest but above the navel. Placing the hands in either of these positions is correct, but it is better to place them over the chest according to the practice of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as mentioned in the above authentic hadiths.

Recitation Before Fātiḥah

There are several du'ās which Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to recite before Sūrah Fātiḥah. We will mention one of them:

Arabic	اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ اللَّهُمَّ تَقَيَّ مِنْ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا يُتَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْ خَطَايَايَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ
Transliteration	Allah humma bā'id baynee wa bayna khaṭāyāya kamā bā'adta baynal mashriqi wal maghribi, Allah humma naqqinee minal khaṭāyāya kamā yunaqqath thawbul abyaḍu minad danasi, Allah hum maghsil khaṭāyāya bil ma'i wath thalji wal baradi
Translation	O Allah! Set me apart from my sins as East and West are apart from each other. O Allah! Cleanse me of my sins as a white garment is cleansed from dirt after thorough washing. O Allah! Wash my sins away with water, snow and hail. (Bukhari and Muslim)

If a person does not know the du‘ā just mentioned, then they should recite the following one. Umar رضي الله عنه is reported to have used this du‘ā after saying takbeer taḥrimah:

Arabic	سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ
Transliteration	Subhāna kallah humma wabi ḥamdika wa tabāra kasmuka wa ta‘āla jadduka wa lā ilāha ghayruka
Translation	Glory be to You, O Allah, and all praises are due unto You and blessed is Your name and high is Your majesty and none is worthy of worship but You

A person can read both du‘ās together or just one of them or any of the other du‘ās which are approved by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and there about seven of these. These du‘ās can be found in different places in several books of hadith (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad of Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Darqutni, Nisai, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban and Muwatta Imam Malik). All of the seven du‘ās can be read together before reading Sūrah Fātiḥah.

This recitation is called Du‘ā al-Istiftaḥ which means ‘du‘ā of starting’. Du‘ā al-Istiftaḥ should only be read in the first rak‘ah.