

FIQH ESSENTIALS

For Basic Obligations

ملخص فقه العبادات

كتاب الفقه

Produced by
Saheeh International

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	i
Purification/aṭ-Ṭahārah.....	1
Impurities/an-Najāsāt	1
Performing a Need/Qadhā' al-Hājah.....	2
The Natural Traditions/Sunan al-Fiṭrah	2
Ablution/Wudhū'	2
Requirements to Make Wudhū' Valid	3
The Sunnah of Wudhū'	3
What Invalidates Wudhū'	3
What Does Not Invalidate Wudhū'	4
Additional Notes About Wudhū'	4
The Bath or Complete Ablution/al-Ghusl	4
Requirements to Make Ghusl Valid.....	5
The Sunnah of Ghusl.....	5
Additional Notes About Ghusl.....	5
Substitute Ablution/at-Tayammum.....	6
How to Do Tayammum.....	6
What Invalidates Tayammum	6
Additional Notes About Tayammum.....	6
Special Issues Concerning Women.....	7
Prayer/Ṣalāh.....	9
Times of Required Prayers.....	9
Adhān and Iqāmah	9
Conditions Necessary for Prayer.....	10
Requirements of the Prayer.....	10
Voluntary and Sunnah Prayers/at-Taṭawwu'	11
Usual Sunnah Prayers	12
The Prostration for Forgetfulness/Sujūd as-Sahu	13
Friday Prayer/Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah.....	13
'Eid Prayer/Ṣalāt al-'Eid	13
What Invalidates Prayer	13
What is Disliked During Prayer but Does Not Invalidate It	14
What is Allowed During Prayer.....	14
Making Up Prayers	14
The Prayer of One Who is Ill or Disabled	14
Prayer While Traveling.....	15
Prayer in Arabic	15

az-Zakāh	16
The Recipients of Zakāh	17
Those Not Eligible to Receive Zakāh	17
Additional Notes About Zakāh	18
Zakāh al-Fiṭr	18
Voluntary Charity/Ṣadaqah.....	18
Conditions in Which Ṣadaqah is Not Valid in the Sight of Allāh	19
Additional Notes About Ṣadaqah.....	19
Fasting/aṣ-Ṣiyām	20
The Fast of Ramadhān.....	20
Requirements for Obligatory Fasting.....	20
Sunnahs for Ramadhān	21
What Does Not Invalidate Fasting	21
Additional Notes About Fasting	22
What Invalidates Fasting and Requires Making It Up.....	22
Making Up the Fast of Ramadhān	22
Fasting Because of a Vow/Nadhr.....	22
Additional Notes About Ramadhān	23
Voluntary Fasting	23
Sunnah Fasting	24
Pilgrimage/Hajj	25
Summary of Hajj Rites.....	26
The Lesser Pilgrimage/‘Umrah.....	29
Supplement	30
Ḥalāl and Ḥarām.....	31
Definitions.....	31
General Rules Concerning What is Allowed or Forbidden.....	31
That Which is Ḥarām in the Muslim's Personal Life and Dealings.....	33
Private and Family Life	33
Social Life, Customs and Entertainment	34
Clothes, Ornaments and Decorations.....	35
Food and Drink	35
A Muslim's Character.....	36
About Ṣaḥeeḥ International	38

FOREWORD

This summary is not inclusive of everything generally mentioned in *fiqh* books. It is simply meant as a guide for the new Muslim who needs to gain basic knowledge in a short period of time in order to manage the ordinary affairs of daily life and to perform acts of worship in a correct manner.

To save time, proofs from the Qur'ān and *sunnah* are not included, nor are conflicting views from various schools of thought. These may be referred to in standard books on the subject. However, the usual order of headings listed in *fiqh* books has been observed with certain omissions for the sake of simplicity. The main reference for this summary is *Fiqh as-Sunnah* by as-Sayyid Sābiq.

We hope that instead of being overwhelmed by his new and blessed way of life, the Muslim beginner will find this an easy guide that can best be supplemented by a teacher's explanations.

Şaḥeeḥ International acknowledges the assistance of our sister in Islām, Umm Muḥammad, who originally collected the information used as the basis for this book for the Islamic Education Center, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

We ask Allāh to ease for us the path to His acceptance.

The Editors of Şaḥeeḥ International

PURIFICATION / AṬ-ṬAHĀRAH

All water is considered pure and suitable for purification except when it is mixed with unclean elements to the degree that its taste, color or smell is changed, or when it is in a container that a dog or a pig has drunk from previously.

IMPURITIES / AN-NAJĀSĀT

The Muslim must avoid impure or unclean substances and wash them off if they should contaminate his body, clothing or place of prayer. These impurities include:

1. Dead animals which have not been Islāmically slaughtered for consumption (except fish, locusts and insects without running blood)
2. Blood that has flowed from an animal or a human body (bleeding from a wound that cannot be prevented is overlooked during worship)
3. Pigs or any part of them
4. Human vomit, urine and excrement
5. Urine and stool of animals not permissible for consumption
6. Animals that eat the flesh or feces of other animals
7. The dog, except for its hair
8. The white liquid discharged after urination (by some people)
9. Prostatic fluid resulting from sexual excitement – (Seminal fluid is considered pure.)
10. Scholars differ about the impurity of alcoholic drinks if one comes in contact with them, however, there is no question that they are forbidden for consumption.

If the body or clothing has been contaminated by an impurity, it must be washed out with water. Any stain remaining after washing is excused. The ground is purified by removing from it any solid impurities (or their decay). In the case of impure liquids, water must be poured over them, or they must be allowed to dry completely.

If one comes into contact with water or another substance and doubts its purity, he should assume that it is pure and not question. If one discovers some impurity on his clothes after praying and was unaware of or had forgotten about it, that person's prayer is valid and need not be repeated.

PERFORMING A NEED (i.e., Relieving Oneself) / QADHĀ' AL-ḤĀJAH

One should not take anything with Qur'ānic verses or the name of Allāh written on it into the toilet area. Additionally, one should not speak while relieving himself and should be well hidden from others. One should avoid facing or turning his back to the *qiblah* when relieving himself outside in an open area, and one should avoid splashing himself with urine. If impurities are contacted (i.e., blood, feces, etc.) and adhere to the body or clothing, they must be washed off. Also, one should clean private parts by wiping at least three times or washing with water, using the left hand. It is *sunnah* to enter the toilet with the left foot, seeking refuge with Allāh from Satan, and to exit with the right foot, asking forgiveness.

THE NATURAL TRADITIONS / SUNAN AL-FITRAH

There are certain practices that Allāh chose for His prophets and that Muslims should follow as well. These are:

1. Circumcision for males
2. Removing hair from the armpits and pubic area (plucking, shaving or cutting) at least once every 40 days
3. Trimming the fingernails and mustache
4. Growing a beard
5. Taking care of the hair and keeping it neat – (Shaving the head is allowed for men but forbidden for women.)
6. Gray hairs should not be removed but either left as they are or dyed.
7. Using pleasant scents – (Women are forbidden to wear perfume in the street, in mosques or in the presence of men who are not close family members [*maḥram*].)

ABLUTION / WUDHŪ'

Wudhū' is required for the following:

1. *Ṣalāh* (prayer)
2. *Ṭawāf* (circling the *Ka'bah*)

Wudhū' is preferred when touching the *muṣḥaf* (the Arabic Qur'ān) and when reading from it.

It is *sunnah* to make *wudhū'* before sleeping, after marital relations if one does not plan to take a complete bath (*ghusl*) immediately (although *ghusl* is necessary before one can pray), and at the beginning of *ghusl*. It is also good to renew *wudhū'* for every prayer, but one may pray with a previous *wudhū'* which has not become invalid.

REQUIREMENTS TO MAKE WUDHŪ' VALID

1. The intention (to do it in obedience to Allāh or to please Him) – The intention is in the heart, not spoken out loud.
2. Washing the face with water
3. Washing the forearms, including the elbows
4. Wiping over a portion of the head
5. Washing the feet, including the ankles

THE SUNNAH OF WUDHŪ'

The *sunnah* is what the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) practiced and which Muslims are encouraged to follow. These acts are not required, but whoever does them gains additional reward.

1. Using a toothstick¹ (or toothbrush) before *wudhū'*
2. Saying, "*Bismillāh*" at the beginning
3. Starting by washing the hands three times, then rinsing out the mouth and nose three times
4. Washing the face three times and (for men) rubbing water into the beard
5. Washing the forearms three times, beginning with the right side
6. Wiping over the head, then the ears once
7. Washing the feet, including the ankles and between the toes, three times, beginning with the right
8. Avoiding interruptions in the middle of *wudhū'*
9. Avoiding wasting water
10. Praying two *rak'ahs* after *wudhū'*

WHAT INVALIDATES WUDHŪ'

1. Anything passed from the body through the private parts including urine, feces, gas and other discharges – (The ejaculation of seminal fluid requires a complete bath.)
2. Deep sleep (with the exception of one who has slept in a sitting position upon a solid surface)
3. Fainting, insanity, intoxication from medicine or other causes, or anything affecting the lucidity of the mind
4. Touching the private parts (whether one's own or another's, with the exception of a very young child's)

¹i.e., a *siwāk*.

WHAT DOES NOT INVALIDATE WUDHŪ'

1. Touching a member of the opposite sex – This is the more correct view based upon the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) with his wives. However, some scholars say that it invalidates *wudhū'*. It should be noted that it is normally forbidden to touch a member of the opposite sex unless it is a spouse, child or close relative of those with whom marriage is prohibited.
2. Bleeding – This is contrary to some scholars' views, but it is confirmed by the practice of the Prophet's companions during his lifetime.
3. Vomiting
4. Doubt whether the *wudhū'* has been invalidated – If uncertain, assume that the *wudhū'* is still in effect.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT WUDHŪ'

1. When necessary, it is permissible to speak during *wudhū'* and also to dry oneself upon completion.
2. *Wudhū'* is not valid if there is a waterproof substance on any of the areas to be washed (such as nail polish and some types of makeup).
3. Anyone who is unable to control his urine or gas, a woman who bleeds at times other than her monthly period or after childbirth, and people with similar problems must clean the private area and then make *wudhū'* for each prayer after the *adhān* has been called. Anything that escapes after *wudhū'* and during prayer is excused, but this allowance does not apply to people without such problems.
4. There are no supplications mentioned in the *sunnah* to be said while washing each limb during *wudhū'*, but it is a *sunnah* to recite the *shahādah* after completion.

THE BATH OR COMPLETE ABLUTION / AL-GHUSL

A complete bath is required for the following:

1. The discharge of seminal fluid as a result of sexual feeling (not from illness or feeling cold) whether the person was awake or asleep (i.e., experienced a dream) – If one dreams but does not find liquid upon awakening, a bath is not required.
2. Sexual intercourse – This is realized by penetration, whether or not there is ejaculation.
3. The cessation of the woman's monthly period and bleeding due to childbirth
4. Death – The body of the deceased Muslim (except for the martyr) must be washed before it is prepared for burial.

The bath is preferred (but not obligatory) for the following:

1. Before attending the Friday sermon and prayer (*ṣalāt al-Jumu‘ah*) and the two feast celebration prayers (‘*Eid al-Adhḥā* and ‘*Eid al-Fiṭr*)
2. Before *iḥrām* for *ḥajj* or ‘*umrah*
3. When a non-Muslim embraces Islām – It is *sunnah* to pray two *rak‘ahs* after this bath.

REQUIREMENTS TO MAKE GHUSL VALID

1. The intention to remove from oneself the state of impurity or to do it in adherence to a *sunnah*
2. Washing the entire body (from head to toe) with water

THE SUNNAH OF GHUSL

1. Washing the hands three times and then washing the private parts
2. Washing the hands again and then making *wudhū’* as one would for prayer
3. Pouring water over the head three times, rubbing it into the roots of the hair
4. Pouring and rubbing water over the whole body, beginning with the right side – (Soap or other cleansing agents may be used.)

ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT GHUSL

1. One who is in a state of sexual impurity (*junub*) is not allowed to pray, make *ṭawāf*, touch the Qur’ān or recite it until he has taken the complete bath. One in this state may not sit in a mosque but may pass through it.
2. The woman's bath is like the man's, except that she is not required to undo braided hair when washing for sexual impurity. However, most scholars have ruled that she must undo her braids after a menstrual period or after post-childbirth bleeding.
3. During her monthly period, a woman may recite verses of the Qur’ān for the purpose of learning, teaching or remembrance.
4. One bath may be taken for two reasons, such as sexual impurity and Friday prayer, or Friday prayer and ‘*umrah*, if they occur at the same time, and as long as the intention is made for both.
5. A person who has completed the bath is automatically in a state of *wudhū’* unless one has done something to invalidate the *wudhū’*.
6. A person may enter a public bath (or swimming area) as long as one neither exposes the private area (from the navel to the knees) nor looks at the private areas of others. Men must not see this area of other men nor women of other women.

SUBSTITUTE ABLUTION / AT-TAYAMMUM

Tayammum means using a clean substance from the earth (e.g., soil, sand, dust, etc.) for purification instead of water. It is allowed in the following conditions as a substitute for both *wudhū'* and *ghusl*:

1. When there is no water available or an insufficient quantity for purification
2. When the water is extremely cold and there is no way to heat it
3. When the person is injured or ill and using water would cause further harm
4. When water is near but some danger prevents one from reaching it
5. When the amount of water available is needed for drinking, cooking or watering animals

HOW TO DO TAYAMMUM

1. Any substance that is of the earth (i.e., ground) is permissible, such as sand, clean soil, stones or dust that has settled on something.
2. Begin with the intention as in *wudhū'* and *ghusl*, saying, "*Bismillāh*."
3. Strike the ground (or the substance being used) with both hands, and then blow off any excess dust. Wipe the face with the hands. Then wipe the hands over one another to the wrists.

Tayammum replaces *wudhū'* or *ghusl* and enables a person to do any acts of worship that normally require *ghusl* or *wudhū'*. It does not need to be renewed for every prayer as long as the previous *tayammum* has not been invalidated.

WHAT INVALIDATES TAYAMMUM

1. All of that which invalidates *wudhū'*
2. The availability of sufficient water and the ability to use available water

ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT TAYAMMUM

1. If a person has already prayed with *tayammum* and then water becomes available, his completed prayer is valid and need not be repeated. However, if during the prayer water becomes available, the prayer becomes invalid, and one must make *wudhū'* and begin the prayer again.
2. If a person has done *tayammum* in place of *ghusl*, the completed prayers are valid and need not be repeated. However, one is obliged to take the bath as soon as water becomes available.
3. If for some reason one is unable to make either *wudhū'* or *tayammum*, the prayer must not be neglected or postponed. Rather, one in this circumstance must pray in an impure state and need not repeat the prayer later.

4. During *wudhū'* or *ghusl*, any injured part of the body covered by a cast or a bandage need not be uncovered or wetted but simply wiped over.

SPECIAL ISSUES CONCERNING WOMEN

1. Menstruation and Post-Natal Bleeding / al-Ḥaidh wan-Nifās

During her monthly period or during post-natal bleeding, a woman cannot pray, make *ṭawāf* or (according to most scholars) touch the Qur'ān (specifically, the Arabic *muṣḥaf*). However, she may recite what she knows by heart or read Qur'ānic verses from other books, even ones which explain the Qur'ān and contain large amounts of its scripture. She does not make up prayers missed during this time. She cannot fast but must make up any days of fasting missed during the month of *Ramadhān*. If she sees blood at any time during a day of fasting (from *adhān* at dawn until *adhān* at sunset), that day of fasting is rendered invalid (unless it is due to *istihādah* – see number 2 below), even if the blood was spotted only seconds before the *maghrib adhān*. She is also prohibited from sexual intercourse during these two times, although nothing else is forbidden between her and her husband. At the end of menstrual or postpartum bleeding the woman must perform *ghusl*. Normally, all traces of blood (whether red, blackish, brown or yellow) must be completely gone before she can take her bath for purification.

There is no minimum time for bleeding after childbirth. Whenever all traces of blood cease, she must take a bath. She is then considered purified in all respects and must re-establish prayer. However, the maximum time for refraining from the acts of worship listed above is forty days. If after that she is still bleeding (see number 2 below), she must take a bath and then make *wudhū'* for every prayer until the bleeding ceases. The rules which apply to the circumstances after childbirth also apply to the circumstances following a miscarriage. Blood following surgical procedures (such as a D and C) does not prevent prayer or fasting.

If a woman gets her period or starts post-natal bleeding during the time for prayer and has not yet offered that prayer, that prayer becomes a debt upon her. The prayer must be made up immediately after she stops bleeding and has performed *ghusl*. (For example, if *ṭuḥr adhān* is called and she has not offered the prayer before the onset of blood, she must pray that *ṭuḥr* prayer before any other prayer once she is again purified.)

NOTE: The call to prayer (starting with the first "*Allāhu akbar*") is considered the beginning of the prayer time. Therefore, any flow of blood which occurs during the call to prayer prevents the woman from offering that prayer and consequently requires her to make it up.

2. Other bleeding / al-Istiḥādhah

Sometimes a woman has vaginal bleeding at times other than the usual monthly period or longer than the maximum of forty days after childbirth. If it is an extension of the normal period of bleeding, she should perform *ghusl* at the end of the specific time (in the case of periods, at the end of the usual number of days). She is then considered to be in a pure state and must do everything required of her (i.e., prayer, fasting, etc.). If bleeding or spotting occurs between monthly periods, no bath is required. However, in all of these cases certain rules apply:

- a. Renewal of *wudhū'* is required for every obligatory prayer. After each *adhān* is called, she must clean the private parts and replace any sanitary items to prevent the flow or spotting of blood onto the clothing. Then she must make *wudhū'* and pray. Any flow occurring after *wudhū'* is excused and she need not renew it until the next prayer time.
- b. In spite of continued bleeding, she may have sexual relations with her husband and perform all acts of worship as usual.
- c. There is no need for a second bath whenever the flow finally ceases, although some scholars prefer it.

PRAYER / ṢALĀH

Prayer is incumbent upon every Muslim (male and female) who is of sound mind and has reached puberty. There are five required prayers in every 24 hours and other voluntary *sunnah* prayers, by which the Muslim may gain additional reward. The obligatory prayer is called *fardh*.

TIMES OF REQUIRED PRAYERS

1. *Fajr* (dawn) – From the first light appearing in the sky (about one and a half hours before sunrise) until sunrise
2. *Thuhr* (noon) – From the decline of the sun (about 20 minutes after it has reached its zenith) until ‘*aṣr*’
3. ‘*Aṣr*’ (afternoon) – From mid-afternoon (when the length of a shadow is equal to the length of its object) until sunset
4. *Maghrib* (sunset) – From the setting (i.e., disappearance) of the sun until ‘*ishā*’
5. ‘*Ishā*’ (evening) – From the disappearance of the red glow in the sky (about one and a quarter hours after sunset) until midnight – Some scholars allow until *fajr* for cases of necessity.

A Muslim should try to pray each prayer at the beginning of its period. The additional time is allowed for those who are unable to or who find difficulty in doing so. Although it is not good to delay a prayer until the end of its period, a person who has completed one of the prayer's *rak'ahs* before the beginning of the *adhān* for the following prayer is considered to have prayed within the time limit.

If one unintentionally oversleeps or forgets a prayer until its time has passed, he must offer that prayer immediately upon awakening or upon remembrance.

Men should pray the obligatory prayers in a *masjid* (mosque) in congregation whenever possible. It is preferred that women pray at home.

ADHĀN AND IQĀMAH

1. *Adhān* is the call for prayer, announcing the beginning of the period for each prayer. Anyone not praying in congregation may begin prayer as soon as the *adhān* is called. (Although it is allowable to pray once the *adhān* has begun, it is preferable to wait until after it is completed, as additional reward is gained by repeating each line of the *adhān* after it is heard.)

2. *Iqāmah* is called when the *imām* steps forward to begin congregational prayer, letting the people know that it is time to line up for prayer.
3. Women may pray without saying the *adhān* or the *iqāmah*.

CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR PRAYER

1. The knowledge that the time for the particular prayer has arrived (for the five required prayers)
2. The state of purity from both major impurities for which a bath is required and minor impurities for which *wudhū'* is required (i.e., having a valid *wudhū'*)
3. Freedom of the body, clothing and place of prayer from contamination by any impurities, unless impossible
4. Adequate covering of the body – A man must be covered at least from the navel to (and including) the knees, and preferably, his shoulders. A woman must cover all of her body except the face and hands, being especially careful to completely cover the neck, ears and tops of the feet.
5. Facing the direction of the *qiblah* (the *Ka'bah*) – If there is no way one can determine this for certain, he should estimate as close as possible the correct direction of the *qiblah*. If someone is unable to face the *qiblah* because of prevention by an enemy, fear or illness, he may pray as is. This also applies to a traveler who cannot stop or turn towards the *qiblah*. For example, in an airplane one may pray sitting in the direction his seat faces when unable to stand and face the *qiblah*. However, a traveler who is able to stop and exit the mode of transportation must do so in order to pray the *fardh* prayer.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRAYER

Each prayer is made up of a specified number of *rak'ahs* (units consisting of standing, bowing and prostration) preceded by the intention made in the heart to perform that particular prayer. *Fajr* prayer has two *rak'ahs*, *thuhr* and *'aṣr* have four each, *maghrib* has three, and *'ishā'* has four. Most *sunnah* prayers are prayed two *rak'ahs* at a time. The order adhered to in each *rak'ah* is as follows:

1. Standing upright (unless one is unable), entering the state of prayer by facing the *qiblah*, lowering the eyes to the ground, raising open hands up to the level of the ears and saying, "*Allāhu akbar*."
2. Placing the right hand over the left on the chest. In this position one should recite *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, followed by another *sūrah* or some verses from the Qur'ān. (*Al-Fātiḥah* is recited alone in the 3rd and 4th *rak'ahs*.)

3. Saying "*Allāhu akbar*," bowing at the waist with hands supported on the knees, and reciting three times, "*Subhāna rabbi al-‘atheem*." This is known as *rukū‘*.
4. Returning to the standing position, saying, "*Sami‘a Allāhu li man ḥamidah*," and then reciting, "*Rabbanā wa lakal-ḥamd*."
5. Saying "*Allāhu akbar*" and prostrating by placing the forehead and nose on the ground, then reciting three times, "*Subhāna rabbi al-‘alā*." In this position the forehead, hands, knees and toes should be touching the ground. This is called *sujūd*.
6. Saying "*Allāhu akbar*" and taking the sitting position.
7. Saying "*Allāhu akbar*" and placing the forehead on the ground a second time. Reciting "*Subhāna rabbi al-‘alā*" three times.
8. Saying "*Allāhu akbar*," and if one has prayed the first or third *rak‘ah*, he should return to the standing position and repeat the above steps, numbers 3-8. If one has prayed the second or the last *rak‘ah* (in *maghrib* prayer, the 3rd *rak‘ah* is the last), he should return to the sitting position and recite *at-taḥiyyāt* and *at-tashahhud* (lifting the right index finger during the *tashahhud*). Afterwards, if it is the second but not final *rak‘ah*, one must return to the standing position, saying, "*Allāhu akbar*" and repeat steps numbers 3-8. If it is the last *rak‘ah*, he should remain in the sitting position and complete the *Ibrāheemiyyah* (prayer for blessings upon Prophet Muḥammad). The complete words for recitation are given in books that teach prayer.² At the end of the *Ibrāheemiyyah*, one may ask Allāh whatever he wishes in any language.
9. While turning his head to the extreme right, the worshipper says, "*As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāh*." Then he turns his head to the extreme left and repeats, "*As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāh*." This releases one from the state of prayer.

It is *sunnah* after the completion of any prayer to ask for Allāh's forgiveness, to praise Him and to make any supplication (*du‘aa‘*) to Him one wishes.

VOLUNTARY AND SUNNAH PRAYERS / AT-TATAWWU‘

Sunnah prayers are those additional prayers that were specifically practiced or encouraged by the Prophet (ﷺ). They are not obligatory, but one who performs them (or any of them) gains extra reward accordingly. Any other voluntary prayer can be done any time of the day or night except:

²See *The Path to Prayer* by Umm Muhammad, published by Dar Abul-Qasim.

1. Immediately (up to 20 minutes) after sunrise
2. When the sun is directly overhead (just before the noon *adhān*)
3. Immediately before sunset

As they compensate for deficiencies in the performance of the obligatory prayers, it is strongly encouraged to pray additional prayers as much as possible. It is preferable for men to pray them at home, although they may pray them in the mosque in addition to the five obligatory prayers.

USUAL SUNNAH PRAYERS

1. Two *rak'ahs* following the *adhān* before the *fajr* (dawn) prayer – The Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite *Sūrah al-Kāfirūn* (after the *Fātiḥah*) in the first *rak'ah* and *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* in the second *rak'ah*.
2. Two or four *rak'ahs* before the *ṭuḥr* (noon) prayer and two *rak'ahs* after it
3. Two *rak'ahs* after the *maghrib* (sunset) prayer, performed exactly as the *sunnah* before *fajr*
4. Two *rak'ahs* after the '*ishā*' (evening) prayer
5. Night prayers – Praying at night is strongly encouraged, especially after one has slept for a while; and supplication (*du'aa'*) is most likely to be answered at this time, particularly in the last period before dawn when most people are asleep. Allāh is especially close to His servants at this time.
6. *Witr* prayer – the last prayer prayed at night any time before the *adhān* of *fajr* – *Witr* is part of the night prayer. It is strongly recommended to pray three *rak'ahs* of *witr* prayer even if one is not able to pray other *sunnah* prayers. *Witr* can be 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9 (and some scholars include 11) number of *rak'ahs*. The Prophet (ﷺ) often prayed eight lengthy *rak'ahs* at night followed by three *rak'ahs* of *witr*.
7. During the month of *Ramadhān*, *taraweeḥ* prayers are prayed at night in congregation or individually.
8. *Dhuḥā* prayer contains from two to eight *rak'ahs* and can be performed in the morning any time from 20 minutes after sunrise until 20 minutes before the *ṭuḥr adhān*.

There are other *sunnah* prayers that the Prophet (ﷺ) practiced less often, but the main ones have been mentioned here. *Sunnah* and voluntary prayers are usually done two *rak'ahs* at a time, but the final *rak'ah* of *witr* may be prayed alone.

THE PROSTRATION FOR FORGETFULNESS / SUJŪD AS-SAHU

If one forgets to sit for the first *tashahhud* or forgets how many *rak'ahs* he has prayed, two prostrations are performed at the end of the prayer before or after saying, "*as-salāmu 'alaykum.*" When one is in doubt about how many *rak'ahs* have been performed, he should continue praying until he is certain that the prayer is not incomplete and then do the two prostrations for forgetfulness or doubt.

FRIDAY PRAYER / ṢALĀT AL-JUMU'AH

The Friday congregational prayer is a duty for men wherever there are groups of Muslims. Women and children may attend but are not required to do so. Travelers and sick people are excused.

The prayer is preceded by a speech given by the *imām* which begins after the *ṭuhr adhān*. One should listen to this quietly to benefit from it and avoid disturbing others. Following the speech, the *imām* leads the congregation in prayer, praying two *rak'ahs* which replace the usual four *rak'ahs* of the *ṭuhr* prayer.

It is *sunnah* before attending the Friday prayer to take a bath (*ghusl*) and to wear good clothes. (Women must take care to observe correct Islāmic attire not only in mosques but at all times.) It is also *sunnah* to pray two *rak'ahs* of greeting whenever entering a mosque.

'EID PRAYER / ṢALĀT AL-'EID

Muslims celebrate two yearly festivals – one following the month of *Ramadhān* and the other on the tenth day of the month of *Ḥajj*. On both of these occasions a special prayer is held shortly after sunrise, preferably in an open area outside the city, but nowadays also in mosques. Women and children as well as men are encouraged to attend. The prayer consists of two *rak'ahs* followed by a speech. It is also *sunnah* to take a bath (*ghusl*) before attending these prayers.

WHAT INVALIDATES PRAYER

The following things interrupt the prayer and require that it be repeated:

1. Loss of *wudhū'* (except for those unable to control themselves)
2. Eating or drinking
3. Speaking about something not connected to prayer
4. Laughing out loud
5. Excessive unnecessary movements – (Slight movements such as adjusting clothing, scratching or signaling with the hand are allowed.)

WHAT IS DISLIKED DURING PRAYER BUT DOES NOT INVALIDATE IT

1. Playing with clothing or part of the body unnecessarily
2. Looking up toward the sky
3. Looking at what is distracting or thinking of other things
4. Feeling the need to go to the bathroom – (Using the toilet should be done before prayer if one feels the need, followed by *wudhū'*.)

WHAT IS ALLOWED DURING PRAYER

1. Weeping or uncontrollable moaning from pain or other causes
2. Killing snakes or other harmful creatures
3. Taking a few steps when necessary
4. Carrying a small child or allowing him to cling to one's neck or body while praying
5. Signaling with the hand or bowing the head in response to a greeting or other speech
6. Correcting the *imām* if he forgets or makes a mistake during recital
7. Saying "*Subhān Allāh*" (for men) and clapping (for women) in order to draw attention to something important
8. Moving something out of the way of the place of *sujūd* (prostration)
9. Reading verses of the Qur'ān from a book or paper, if needed

MAKING UP PRAYERS

Anyone who unintentionally sleeps through the time of a prayer or forgets it must pray immediately upon awakening or remembrance. This is the only compensation for missing the prayer. One is not required to make up any prayers missed while unconscious; however, upon awakening, his responsibility to start praying again becomes immediate (including the prayer which is due at that present time).

THE PRAYER OF ONE WHO IS ILL OR DISABLED

All Muslims are required to pray as long as their mental faculties are intact and they can discern the time for prayer. Allowances for those unable to make *wudhū'* have been mentioned previously. One who is unable to stand or finds difficulty in doing so may pray sitting on the floor or on a chair. If a person is unable to sit, it is allowable to pray lying on his side, bowing the head slightly

for *rukū‘* and lower for *sujūd*. If he is unable to do even that, then one may perform prayer in any position he is capable of, moving his eyes to indicate *rukū‘* and *sujūd*. In addition, a person who fears harm from an enemy may pray without movement.

It has been made clear that there is never an excuse to neglect or postpone a prayer deliberately. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) informed us that prayer is the first thing Allāh will ask His servants about on the Day of Judgement. It is the foundation of Islām, and without it there is no Islām.

PRAYER WHILE TRAVELING

During travel and temporary stopovers, a person may omit the last two *rak‘ahs* of the four-*rak‘ah* prayers (i.e., *thuhr*, *‘aṣr* and *‘ishā’*). Although scholars have stipulated various lengths of time for a temporary stay, one may continue to shorten (without joining) prayers indefinitely as long as he does not settle in that place. When en route and during stopovers on a journey, one may join the *thuhr* and *‘aṣr* prayers (any time during the period of *thuhr* or *‘aṣr*) and may join *maghrib* and *‘ishā’* prayers (any time during the period of *maghrib* or *‘ishā’*). This allowance is granted by Allāh since it is often difficult to pray while on a journey.

The traveler need not perform *sunnah* prayers; however, the *sunnah* prayer of *fajr* and the *witr* prayer are encouraged even during a journey.

PRAYER IN ARABIC

Although *du‘aa’* (supplication) can be made in one's native language, *ṣalāh* (prayer) is recited in Arabic for the following reasons:

1. It is the language of the Holy Qur’ān, the word of Allāh, and the real mother-tongue of all Muslims.
2. The Arabic language unites all members of the universal religion, Islām, whereas different languages serve to separate people. It is the common ground for communication between Muslims of all nationalities.
3. No translation can take the place of the Qur’ān's original words. Adherence to the perfect original protects against deviations in meaning.

AZ-ZAKĀH

Zakāh means purification. It purifies the remainder of the Muslim's wealth, and it purifies his soul. Since all wealth and property come from Allāh, He has required that a small portion of it be given in service to the Muslim community. It is the right of Allāh and cannot be neglected or postponed.

Zakāh is required of every Muslim who possesses a certain amount of extra wealth. What constitutes extra wealth is based upon the following points:

1. It does not include one's basic living needs such as food, clothing, home, transport or the equipment or tools of one's trade or business.
2. The additional wealth must have been in one's possession for one lunar year.

The *zakāh* of a child or mentally deficient person is paid by his guardian. If a person dies before having paid *zakāh* which is due, the *zakāh* is paid from his property before distribution of inheritance.

Zakāh is a form of worship, thus the person paying it must have the intention of fulfilling the duty to Allāh and expecting reward from Him in the Hereafter. It can be paid before its due date, but it is forbidden to delay it after that, unless one is prevented by a reason beyond his control. If it is delayed, the obligation for payment remains. If the amount of *zakāh* is put aside for payment but is destroyed, lost or stolen while still in his possession, the owner is still indebted and must pay that amount.

The following list mentions the types of wealth on which *zakāh* is due, the minimum amount of wealth requiring *zakāh*, and the various rates of *zakāh*:

1. Gold – 85 grams and over – Once this amount has been acquired, payment must be made on the full amount (not merely that above 85 grams). The required payment is 2.5 percent of the gold's value. (Scholars differ as to whether women's jewelry is included or not, but certain sayings of the Prophet give more support to the view that it should be included.) *Zakāh* is not paid on precious stones such as diamonds, emeralds and pearls, unless they are retained for business purposes.
2. Silver and cash reaching the value of 595 grams of silver – The required payment is 2.5 percent of each. This includes money in banks or other places of investment or storage.
3. Goods to be sold or traded which have been in a person's possession for one lunar year – The rate is 2.5 percent of their value.
4. Agricultural produce over 653 kg. per harvest – The rate is 5 percent of the produce for irrigated land and 10 percent for land watered by rain. It is due immediately upon harvest.

5. Animals – Cattle over 30 in number, goats and sheep over 40 in number, and camels over 5 in number – The rate is as follows:

Cattle: For every 30, a one-year old. For every 40, a two-year old.

Goats and sheep: For 40-119, one. For 120-299, two. For 300-399, three. For each additional 100 over 300, one.

Camels: For 5-24, one sheep or goat for each five. For 25-35, a one-year old she-camel. For 36-45, a two-year old she-camel. For 46-60, a three-year old she-camel. For 61-75, a four-year old she-camel. For 76-90, 2 two-year old she-camels. For 91-120, 2 three-year old she-camels. For each additional 40, 1 two-year old she-camel or for each additional 50, 1 three-year old she-camel.

THE RECIPIENTS OF ZAKĀH

Zakāh is given to the following:

1. Poor and needy Muslims in need of food, clothing, housing or something by which to earn a living
2. Muslims in a position of weakness such as those near an enemy, minorities in need, new converts, or alliances needed to strengthen the community
3. A slave who wishes to buy his freedom – (not found today)
4. Official collectors of *zakāh* who do it as a full time job – (paid by the government from *zakāh* funds but not by individuals)
5. Muslims in debt who are unable to pay
6. Travelers who are stranded without enough money to return home
7. Those struggling in the way of Allāh (fighting for the cause of Islām against its enemies) – This includes paying soldiers, buying arms, equipment, food, clothing or anything else needed for *jihād*. It also includes people working in *da‘wah* (propagation of Islām) and students studying for *da‘wah* or teaching Islām. However, it does not include sending someone to *hajj*.

THOSE NOT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE ZAKĀH

It is not permissible to give *zakāh* to the following:

1. Anyone outside of the previously mentioned categories – In Muslim communities, mosques and schools can be built from personal charity (*ṣadaqah*) money, but not from *zakāh*. Other kinds of good works and projects can be financed by *ṣadaqah*. However, such projects may be aided in lands where Muslims are a minority under the aforementioned categories, numbers 2 or 7.

2. Non-Muslims and atheists, even Christians and Jews – Needy family members of other religions can be given *ṣadaqah* but not *zakāh*.
3. Relatives and descendants of the Prophet from the Banī Hāshim tribe – It is narrated in several *ḥadīths* that the Prophet (ﷺ) forbid this.
4. Close relatives which a Muslim is bound by law to support, such as children, parents and wives – However, if these relatives come under the category of those in debt or those working in *da‘wah* or fighting for the cause of Allāh, it is allowed to give them *zakāh* for that purpose. It is preferred to give *zakāh* to needy relatives that one is not bound to support such as brothers, uncles, etc., and a rich wife can give to a needy husband as long as it is not used to maintain her.
5. People who are able to earn an adequate living but choose not to due to laziness or to preference for spending all their time in extra worship – Begging by anyone who is not compelled by need to do so is detested.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT ZAKĀH

1. *Zakāh* can be distributed by the person who owes the *zakāh*, or it may be given to a trustworthy person or Islāmic organization for distribution.
2. It is preferable to choose the pious and righteous Muslims from among the eligible recipients of *zakāh*. Some scholars forbid the giving of *zakāh* to those who do not pray or are corrupt in other ways, except if it can help reform them.
3. *Zakāh* can be given openly or secretly, for Allāh knows the intention.

ZAKĀT AL-FIṬR

This type of *zakāh* is an obligation upon the head of every household and is due at the end of the month of Ramadhān before the ‘*Eid*’ prayer. It is due from every family that has more than a day and night's supply of food. For each person living in one's household (including servants and others), the head of the family must give the measurement of one *ṣā‘* (approximately 2.5 to 3 kg.) of grain, wheat, rice, barley, dates, raisins, corn or whatever is considered basic staple food for the people of the region. The recipients are the same as those for *zakāh* of wealth and property.

VOLUNTARY CHARITY / ṢADAQAH

Charity in Islām does not only mean financial help but includes every good deed which a Muslim does seeking the acceptance of Allāh. The following are examples: money, food, clothing or other possessions given to help the needy,

the community or the cause of Islām; work done to help others, acts of assistance to them or serving them; preventing harm from people and animals; kindness to any living being; helping family members in the home; comfort given to someone; visits to the ill or stricken; a smile or a nice word; the removal of something harmful from the road; remembrance and praise of Allāh; and every good act or word in general. Allāh judges and rewards by the Muslim's intention rather than the material value of his charity.

CONDITIONS IN WHICH ŞADAQAḤ IS NOT VALID IN THE SIGHT OF ALLĀH

1. If it is done with the intention of a worldly benefit, such as praise
2. If it is accompanied by hurting the recipient (i.e., making him feel indebted or reminding him of the charity later)
3. If it is from wealth gained by unlawful means, such as interest or stolen goods

ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT ŞADAQAḤ

1. It is allowable to give *şadaqah* to non-Muslims and to help animals.
2. It is *sunnah* to ask Allāh to reward those who give and distribute *zakāh* and *şadaqah*.

FASTING / AŞ-ŞIYĀM

In Islām fasting means completely refraining from eating, drinking and sexual activity from dawn until sunset. It is expected that during fasting the Muslim also refrains from all bad deeds and inappropriate speech as much as possible. (One should do this at all times but should be especially careful while fasting.) There are two types of fasting – obligatory (required) and voluntary.

THE FAST OF RAMADHĀN

Fasting the entire month of Ramadhān is obligatory on every Muslim who is of sound mind, has reached puberty, and is in satisfactory health. It is one of the five pillars of Islām. Anyone who is unable to fast the complete month (for a valid reason) must make up later in the year any days that were missed unless he remains unable to do so.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OBLIGATORY FASTING

1. The intention to fast, made (in the heart) before dawn
2. The avoidance of all that breaks the fast

Exempted from fasting are the very old, the ill person who is not expected to recover, and those who are employed in difficult labor such as mining and cannot endure fasting. They must compensate by feeding a poor person for every day missed. However, if a person in any of those circumstances feels that fasting will not cause harm to himself, then fasting is preferable.

If she fears for herself or her child, the pregnant or nursing woman may break her fast; however, she must make up the days, and according to some scholars, feed a poor person for each day as well.

The person who is ill but expected to recover may break the fast and make up the missed days later during the year. The same is true for a traveler; however, if one can fast during travel without hardship, it is permissible. The distance which allows a traveler to break the fast is unspecified. For this allowance it is not required that there be hardship or difficulty – merely travel.

A woman who is bleeding from menstruation or after childbirth is not allowed to fast, and if she does, her fast is not valid and must be repeated. Any day that she sees blood during the fasting period (even if only seconds before the *maghrib adhān*) cannot be counted and must be made up. However, vaginal bleeding outside these normal periods does not invalidate fasting. (Refer to the section "Special Issues Concerning Women" on page 9.)

It is forbidden to fast on the 'eid days of *Fiṭr* and *Adhḥā*, on the three days of sacrifice during *ḥajj*, and on the day before *Ramadhān* when in doubt whether or not the month has begun. One does not begin fasting until certain that the moon has been sighted for *Ramadhān*. If one is in the habit of fasting certain days voluntarily which happen to coincide with the "day of doubt," then fasting it is allowed.

SUNNAHS FOR RAMADHĀN

Besides the basic requirements of intention and avoidance of what Allāh has forbidden during *Ramadhān*, there are practices taught by the Prophet (ﷺ) that are strongly encouraged for additional reward. They are the following:

1. The *suhūr* (pre-dawn meal) – from midnight until the *adhān* of the *fajr* prayer, when fasting begins – It can be a full meal, only a swallow of water, or any amount of food and drink. Its blessing is that it makes fasting easier during the day. One may not fast at night in any case.
2. Hastening to break the fast as soon as the sun has set
3. Making supplication (*du'aa'*) to Allāh during fasting and at the time of breaking the fast
4. Being on one's best behavior throughout the month – Generosity and the study of *Qur'ān* are particularly encouraged.
5. Attending *taraweeḥ* prayers at night in congregation or praying them at home, reading or reciting *Qur'ān*, and praying and making much *du'aa'* at night, especially during the last ten nights of *Ramadhān*

WHAT DOES NOT INVALIDATE FASTING

1. Pouring water over the head or immersing the body in water
2. Using *kuḥl* or eye drops, even if their taste is found in the throat
3. Kissing without sexual feeling and unintentional discharge of seminal fluid (although this requires *ghuṣl*)
4. Injections in the muscle or vein, and enemas
5. Drawing small amounts of blood from the body
6. Rinsing the mouth and nose with water as long as none is swallowed
7. Tasting food as long as none is swallowed
8. Smelling scents or breathing what is unavoidable of dust, flour or anything in the air

ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT FASTING

If during the night one becomes sexually impure or a woman ceases bleeding from menstruation or childbirth, the bath may be delayed until after dawn but should be done in time as not to miss the *fajr* prayer. If one is engaged in eating, drinking or a marital relationship when dawn (i.e., the *fajr adhān*) begins, one must stop the act immediately, otherwise the fast for that day is invalid.

WHAT INVALIDATES FASTING AND REQUIRES MAKING IT UP

1. Eating or drinking deliberately and smoking – (Eating or drinking while forgetting that one is fasting is excused.)
2. Vomiting deliberately – (If not deliberate, it does not affect one's fast.)
3. Menstruation and childbirth, even if in the last seconds before sunset
4. Intentional causing of seminal discharge (that which is caused by touch or contact, not merely by sight)
5. Sexual intercourse – This requires that the offender not only make up the day of fasting, but an additional penalty – the freeing of a slave; and if one is unable (because there are no slaves), fasting consecutive days for two months; and if one is unable, feeding 60 poor people from the kind of food normally consumed by the offender. This penalty illustrates the severity of the offense.
6. Although the person may have done none of the forbidden acts, the mere intention to break the fast breaks it, because a condition for the validity of the fast is the intention itself. Simply thinking of eating is not included in this.

MAKING UP THE FAST OF RAMADHĀN

The making up of any days missed during Ramadhān for a lawful reason remains an obligation that must be fulfilled. It can be done, however, at the person's convenience any time before the following Ramadhān. The days can be fasted consecutively or separately, and even in a period when days are shorter or the weather is better. This is from the mercy of Allāh who wishes to purify Muslims but not make hardship upon them. If one is unable to fulfill the fasting debt before the next Ramadhān, it should be done as soon as possible afterwards.

FASTING BECAUSE OF A VOW / NADHR

If a person has sworn an oath to Allāh to fast (or do any other form of worship), then that vow becomes a duty and must be fulfilled. Islām does not encourage this type of vow because it can cause difficulties for the person that

could not be foreseen. It is also disliked to "bargain" with Allāh, saying, "O Allāh, if You do what I ask, I will fast, give charity, etc." because Allāh is not in need of our worship. We are in need of Him.

If a person makes an oath to Allāh and is later unable to fulfill it, it must be expiated for by feeding or clothing ten poor people. If one is unable to do that, then he must fast three days. Otherwise, a sin has been committed.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT RAMADHĀN

1. A person who dies before making up any missed days of Ramadhān has died in a state of debt. It is encouraged, if possible, for someone close to the deceased to fast these remaining days in compensation for him. If before death one was unable to make up the days for a valid reason, such as continued illness, then there is no debt.
2. Allāh has revealed that the most blessed night of the year is *Laylat ul-Qadr* (the Night of Decree). It is better than 1,000 months (about equal to a man's natural lifetime) for those who wish to worship Allāh therein and ask for His favors and forgiveness. It is not known exactly which night it is, except that it occurs during the last ten nights of Ramadhān. It may be that Allāh did not reveal its exact time so that worshippers would exert their efforts in all of the ten nights as the Prophet did in hope of gaining the blessings of that night.
3. It is a *sunnah* practice to confine oneself to the mosque the last third of Ramadhān with the intention of becoming closer to Allāh through worship, study and the avoidance of worldly affairs. (However, it can be done at other times for limited periods without fasting.) If there is difficulty in this, a shorter period of a day or two or even a few hours is acceptable. It is completely voluntary for those who wish and are able.

VOLUNTARY FASTING

The same conditions are true for voluntary fasting as are for obligatory fasting, except that the intention may be made after dawn if one decides that morning to fast.

In addition to the days in which obligatory fasting is prohibited (as listed in "Requirements for Obligatory Fasting" on page 25), voluntary fasting is prohibited on Fridays alone and Saturdays alone. However, if they are joined with another day of fasting, either before or after them, it is allowed. It is also forbidden to fast every day of the year, however, one is allowed to fast every other day if so desired. In short, a person should fast at times and not fast at times.

A woman may not do any voluntary fasting when her husband is present except with his permission. If she does, he has the right to order her to break her fast. However, if he gives his permission for her to fast a certain day, he should not withdraw it.

SUNNAH FASTING

The Prophet (ﷺ) encouraged fasting at the following times:

1. Six days (any six) during the month of Shawwāl (which occurs after Ramadhān) except 'Eid day
2. The day of 'Arafah, when the pilgrims stand at 'Arafāt during *hajj* – (Those performing *hajj* should not fast on this day.)
3. The day of 'Āshūrā' (the 10th of the month of Muḥarram) and if possible, the day before it (the 9th)
4. Most of the month of Sha'bān or as many days as possible, beginning in the first half of the month
5. During the four sacred months: Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Ḥijjah, Muḥarram and Rajab
6. Mondays and Thursdays
7. The 13th, 14th and 15th day of every lunar month
8. Every other day (for those who have the strength and ability)

As in all *sunnah* acts of worship, the believer can earn extra reward for fasting any of these days but is not required to do so.

PILGRIMAGE / ḤAJJ

Ḥajj means directing oneself towards the holy city of Makkah to perform the rites of *ṭawāf* (circling the *Ka'bah*), *sa'i* (hastening between the mounts of Ṣafā and Marwah), standing at 'Arafāt, and the other pilgrimage rites in obedience to Allāh and seeking His reward. The details of these rites can be found in *ḥajj* guide books.

Ḥajj takes place in Makkah, 'Arafāt and Minā between the 8th and the 13th of the month of Dhul-Ḥijjah. It is obligatory once in a person's lifetime if he or she has the physical and financial ability. When one vows to perform *ḥajj*, that also becomes an obligation that must be fulfilled. All other performances of *ḥajj* are voluntary.

Ḥajj is required of the Muslim who has reached puberty, is sane, free (not a slave) and able. Ability includes the following:

1. Physical capability – Anyone too weak from poor health or old age who can afford to send a substitute to perform *ḥajj* on his behalf should do so.
2. Safety – The way should not be dangerous so that one fears for the safety of his life or possessions.
3. Transportation – either one's own vehicle or the price of a roundtrip fare
4. Supplies for the trip (food, clothing, other needs) or the price of them – Any money spent for the purpose of *ḥajj* must be completely *ḥalāl* (obtained lawfully). One should not go into debt to perform *ḥajj*, since if he does not possess sufficient funds, ability is no longer present. Financial ability also includes leaving adequate provisions for one's dependants.
5. Freedom to undertake *ḥajj* without the threat of harm at home by an oppressive government
6. An additional requirement for women is that they should be accompanied by a husband or *maḥram* (a close male relative which she cannot marry, such as a father, brother, son, nephew, etc.). If she does not have such a male relative who is Muslim, she is not required to perform *ḥajj*. Some scholars allow that for the obligatory *ḥajj* only, she may be accompanied by trustworthy women. A woman undertaking a voluntary *ḥajj* must also have the permission of her husband if she is married and must be accompanied by a *maḥram*.

Children may perform *ḥajj*, but it does not fulfill the obligation of their required *ḥajj* if they are below the age of puberty.

A person who had the ability and the intention to make *ḥajj* but died before doing so incurred a debt that can be fulfilled by someone else who is able. Anyone performing *ḥajj* on behalf of someone else must have previously performed his own obligatory *ḥajj*. This *ḥajj* will be considered as the obligatory one for the deceased, at the same time giving the substitute the reward of a voluntary *ḥajj*. One who had the ability to do *ḥajj* but later lost it (due to loss of finances, health, etc.) is like one who died in that someone should perform *ḥajj* on his behalf.

A woman bleeding from menstruation or post-childbirth also performs *ḥajj* but must postpone *ṭawāf* until she becomes pure.

SUMMARY OF ḤAJJ RITES

1. *Iḥrām* – the intention of making *ḥajj* (or *‘umrah*) and (for men) wearing the two unstitched *iḥrām* garments – Women wear their usual *ḥijāb* but do not cover their faces and hands (except temporarily when the need arises). It is *sunnah* to take a bath (*ghusl*) before *iḥrām*. The intention for *iḥrām* is made following one of the obligatory prayers, or one may perform a two-*rak‘ah* prayer for this purpose.

A person in the state of *iḥrām* must avoid the following:

- a. Sexual intercourse – This renders one's *ḥajj* invalid, requiring that *ḥajj* be repeated unless the intercourse was done in complete ignorance of the fact that it was forbidden at that time. All other forbidden acts can be ransomed in some way.
- b. Contracting a marriage for oneself or someone else
- c. (For men) wearing fitted clothing or shoes³
- d. Cutting the fingernails or removing or cutting hair from any part of the body
- e. Using scent or perfume on the body or clothing
- f. Hunting, pointing out prey to others, or eating anything killed as a result of his pointing out prey during the period of his *iḥrām*. This does not apply to seafood.

Anyone who commits one of these acts (with the exception of the first one) must compensate by either sacrificing a sheep in Makkah, feeding six poor people, or fasting three days. After this, one's *ḥajj* is still valid.

³Simple sandals which leave the ankles bare are allowable.

A person in *iḥrām* is allowed to bathe and change into clean garments. One is also allowed to wear a money belt, watch, rings, spectacles, etc.

Committing any sins or engaging in bad speech, heated arguments or fighting is forbidden during *ḥajj* and especially during *iḥrām*. Anyone guilty of such behavior must repent immediately and seek Allāh's forgiveness.

2. *Talbiyah* – saying, "*Labbayk Allāhumma labbayk*" ("I respond and obey You, O Allāh.") up until the time of throwing pebbles
3. *Ṭawāf* – In *ḥajj*, *ṭawāf* (circling the *Ka'bah* seven times) is done upon entering Makkah the first time, again after standing on 'Arafāt, and just before leaving to return home (if one lives outside the area limit). *Ṭawāf* is also part of *'umrah*, and it can be done also at any time voluntarily when one visits the sacred Ḥaram in Makkah. It is *sunnah* to make *ṭawāf* whenever entering the Ḥaram and as much as possible at other times. For *ṭawāf* one must be as in prayer, i.e., a state of purity (with *wudhū'*) and properly covered. Beginning opposite the Black Stone with the *Ka'bah* to one's left, he makes seven complete rounds, praising Allāh, asking for His forgiveness and supplicating Him (*du'aa'*). It is *sunnah* to kiss the Black Stone when beginning, if possible, but forbidden if it leads to harming other Muslims by pushing and crowding. It is also *sunnah* to pray two *rak'ahs* after completing each *ṭawāf* (of seven rounds) near the Station of Ibrāheem or any place possible, even if it is outside the Ḥaram itself. It is also encouraged to drink *Zamzam* water after *ṭawāf*.
4. *Sa'i* – The pilgrim then walks the distance between aṣ-Ṣafā and al-Marwah seven times, beginning at aṣ-Ṣafā and ending with al-Marwah. One recites Qur'ān or makes *du'aa'* and praises Allāh during this time.
5. Departure for Minā on the 8th of Dhul-Ḥijjah, if possible
6. Departure for 'Arafāt on the 9th of Dhul-Ḥijjah
7. The stay at 'Arafah – This is the most important part of *ḥajj*, without which it is incomplete and invalid. One should be certain to be within the borders of 'Arafāt at the specified time. Being in a state of purity is not a condition except for prayer. The time begins from noon (on the 9th) and extends into the night. However, it is required that one be present after sunset, even if only briefly. Leaving before sunset requires a ransom. If a person arrives any time after sunset up until *fajr*, the stay is valid. The *ṭhuhr* and *'aṣr* prayers are shortened and combined at 'Arafah. (Note: Those performing *ḥajj* do not fast on the day of 'Arafah.)
8. Return from 'Arafāt after sunset – People should leave quietly and without haste.

9. Spending the night at Muzdalifah – The *maghrib* and ‘*ishā*’ prayers are combined, and the ‘*ishā*’ prayer is shortened. The *sunnah* after that is to sleep rather than worship. One should depart after the *fajr* prayer before sunrise.
10. Throwing pebbles at *Jamrat al-‘Aqabah* – Seven pebbles collected on the way from Muzdalifah to Minā are thrown at the largest *jamrah* after sunrise or later in the day. (This is on the 10th, ‘*Eid* day.) One can now wear his regular clothes, but sexual intercourse is forbidden until after steps 11-13 have been completed. If one has marital relations after this partial release from *iḥrām*, a ransom is required and the *ḥajj* is not invalidated.
11. Slaughter of the sacrificial animal for those who performed ‘*umrah* at any time between the 1st of Shawwāl and the beginning of the specified days of *ḥajj*.
12. Shaving the head or cutting the hair – Shaving is preferable for men but forbidden for women.
13. Making the *ṭawāf* of *ḥajj* (*ṭawāf al-ifādhah*) – This *ṭawāf* can be postponed due to certain difficulties but is essential and must be done to complete the *ḥajj*. A second *sa‘i* is required of those doing the *tamattu‘* form of *ḥajj* (where ‘*umrah* was made first with a separate *iḥrām*) or of anyone who did not do *sa‘i* after the first *ṭawāf*.

Numbers 10-13 have been listed in the recommended order; however, there is no sin in changing the order of these acts. After these steps have been completed (and *sa‘i* if required), the pilgrim is completely released from *iḥrām*.

14. Staying in Minā each night until the throwing of pebbles is completed unless one has a valid reason not to.
15. Throwing pebbles – On the 11th of Dhul-Ḥijjah from any time after the decline of the sun (the time of the *thuhr* prayer), the pilgrim takes 21 pebbles (collected from Minā or elsewhere, not necessarily from Muzdalifah) and throws seven at the small *jamrah*, seven at the medium *jamrah*, and seven at the large *jamrah*, saying, "*Allāhu akbar*" with each throw. On the 12th, one repeats the stoning of the three *jamrahs*. One may leave Minā after this as long as it is before sunset, or he may remain one more day repeating the stoning again. If because of illness or another valid reason a pilgrim is unable to perform the stoning at any time, someone else should do it on his behalf. With this the *ḥajj* is complete except for those who must make the farewell *ṭawāf*.
16. The farewell *ṭawāf* (*ṭawāf al-wadā‘*) – This is performed immediately before leaving Makkah for the return journey. It is not required of menstruating women or of people living in Makkah.

THE LESSER PILGRIMAGE / 'UMRAH

Most scholars regard the *'umrah* as a *sunnah*. It can be done at any time during the year in contrast to *hajj*, which is at a specified time. *'Umrah* consists of the following:

1. *Ihrām* at the *meeqāt* for those living outside the vicinity; and for those living within the *meeqāt*, *ihrām* from home. (see number 1 of the section "Summary of Ḥajj Rites")
2. *Talbiyah* until *ṭawāf* is begun
3. *Ṭawāf* (as described in number 3 of the section "Summary of Ḥajj Rites")
4. *Sa'i* (as described in number 4 of the section "Summary of Ḥajj Rites")
5. Shaving the head or cutting the hair – This releases the person from the state of *ihrām*.

If for some reason a person is prevented from completing the main requirements of *hajj* or *'umrah*, then at least one sheep must be sacrificed in Makkah for compensation. It is allowable when entering *ihrām* to make the stipulation that if prevented from completion by circumstances beyond one's control, "I will be released from *ihrām* wherever Allāh obstructs me." Then the sacrifice need not be made if one is obstructed. If a Muslim begins but fails to complete the obligatory *hajj*, it must be undertaken again in a following year in order to fulfill the obligation.

Visiting the Prophet's Mosque in Madīnah is not part of *hajj* or *'umrah* but is encouraged in the *sunnah*. The Muslim should travel with the intention to visit the mosque, not the grave, but once there, one may pass by the graves of the Prophet and his two companions and greet them with a salutation of peace. Supplication is made only to Allāh and is not to be directed to the Prophet (ﷺ).

SUPPLEMENT

In addition to the previously mentioned requirements of Islām, the subject of *fiqh* includes all questions in life. Learning whatever one needs in order to conduct his life in the manner pleasing to Allāh is an important form of worship.

More details about the previous subjects can be found in *fiqh* books compiled by scholars that deal with all aspects of worship and Islāmic law. Besides *ṣalāh*, *zakāh*, *ṣiyām* and *ḥajj*, they are concerned with funerals, inheritance, marriage, divorce, criminal punishment and court cases, oaths, business matters, guardianship, dress, eating and drinking, *jihād* and many other related subjects. Since the ordinary Muslim does not usually have complete knowledge in many of these fields, it is recommended to consult a recognized and trustworthy scholar if questions arise.

It is imperative, however, that every Muslim not only knows the correct method of worship but also the *ḥalāl* (permissible) and *ḥarām* (forbidden) of all things in one's personal life, as this is a responsibility for which all will be questioned on the Day of Judgement.

What follows is a brief study concerning that which is permitted and that which is prohibited in the life of every Muslim.

May Allāh reward every effort in His path.

ḤALĀL AND ḤARĀM

DEFINITIONS

Ḥalāl What is permitted or allowed

Ḥarām What is prohibited or forbidden – The transgressor is subject to punishment by Allāh in the Hereafter and may be subject under law to punishment in this life as well.

Makrūh What is disliked or unfavorable – to be avoided because it might lead to *ḥarām* but is less in degree (i.e., punishment is not certain).

Every human society has laws and restrictions – things that are permitted and forbidden. Absolute freedom is neither desirable nor possible for all members of society.

In the days before Islām there existed societies that were excessive in prohibition and denial of the physical self, such as Hindu Brahmans and Christian monks, as well as those extremely permissive, similar to today's western ones. The pre-Islāmic Arabs permitted drinking, usury, harming women and killing their children, but they had strict laws forbidding many good foods. The coming of Islām brought a return to the law of Allāh and a balance between human extremes.

GENERAL RULES CONCERNING WHAT IS ALLOWED OR FORBIDDEN

1. Basically, all things are allowed, except what is explicitly prohibited either in the Qur'ān or the *sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ). What is forbidden is a small part of the whole, pertaining only to what is harmful. This applies to daily life. Anything new that is neither known to be harmful nor mentioned as forbidden in Islāmic law is permitted.

However, in the realm of worship and religious practices which have been outlined and completed by Allāh, no new additions or innovations are allowed, as they would contradict the verse in the Qur'ān where Allāh states: "**Today I have perfected for you your religion.**"⁴ There was no *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām* revealed after that.

2. Permitting and prohibiting things (i.e., government) is the right of Allāh alone. The Creator has the natural right to govern His creation. Worship means obedience, and submission to Allāh's will is worship. It is Islām. Obedience to laws or individuals contradicting Allāh's law is *shirk* (associating equals with Allāh).

⁴*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:3.

3. Prohibiting what is allowed by Allāh and allowing what is prohibited by Him is a form of *shirk* in that it is obedience to others or to one's own desires. It is a sin even more serious than committing *ḥarām*.
4. Prohibition follows what is harmful. Certain things are forbidden for the benefit of mankind. Usually one understands the wisdom in it, but if not, he has no right to change the law or to object to it, for Allāh knows what is best.
5. There exists in *ḥalāl* that which makes *ḥarām* unnecessary. For example, interest can be replaced by lawful business gains, gambling replaced by competition in sport and religion, fornication replaced by lawful marriage, and forbidden food and drink replaced by healthy food and drink.
6. Whatever leads to *ḥarām* is therefore also *ḥarām*, and cooperation in the committing of *ḥarām* by another is also *ḥarām*, such as the buyer and seller of alcoholic drinks or the witnesses and clerks who handle interest deals.
7. Inventing strategies to permit something *ḥarām* is *ḥarām*, such as changing names of things to disguise their reality. Some modern-day examples are interest being called business, pornography being referred to as art, and alcoholic drinks being named refreshments.
8. Good intentions do not make *ḥarām* permissible. The end does not justify the means if it is *ḥarām*. For example, money made dishonestly is not suitable for charity. The believer is rewarded for every ordinary deed (such as eating, marital relations or honest business) because it provides one with a way of avoiding *ḥarām*.
9. The Muslim should avoid what is doubtful for fear of committing *ḥarām*.
10. What is *ḥarām* is forbidden to everyone. There are no exceptions for any group or class of people.
11. Dire necessity makes lawful what is originally forbidden, such as eating unlawful food to sustain life. One resorts to the unlawful only after making every effort to find *ḥalāl*. This exception is not to be taken lightly but used only in the most extreme need.

"Allāh does not wish to make difficulties for you, but He wishes to purify you and complete His blessing upon you that perhaps you may be thankful."⁵

Since avoiding what is *ḥarām* (prohibited) by Allāh and His Messenger is part of the first pillar of Islām (i.e., testifying that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh and that Muḥammad is the messenger of Allāh), the following list has been prepared of what is *ḥarām* according to the Qur'ān and

⁵*Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:6.

sunnah and consequently punishable by Allāh in the Hereafter. Whoever avoids them in obedience to Allāh not only averts punishment but is rewarded as well for faithfulness and patience.

THAT WHICH IS ḤARĀM IN THE MUSLIM'S PERSONAL LIFE AND DEALINGS

Private and Family Life

1. Adultery, fornication and anything that could be a means leading to it, which includes: the failure of women to observe the correct Islāmic dress code, a man and a woman being alone together (unless there is a *maḥram* relationship between them), deliberately looking at or touching members of the opposite sex, and unnecessary social mixing of the sexes
2. Homosexuality
3. Incest, marriage of those related by nursing, and marriage to those forbidden to marry such as fornicators or two sisters at the same time, etc.
4. The marriage of a Muslim woman to any non-Muslim man, and the marriage of a Muslim man to a woman other than a Muslim, Christian or Jew
5. A marriage contracted for a temporary period of time
6. Forcing a woman to marry against her will
7. Not being just and fair to each if there is more than one wife
8. Sexual intercourse during the wife's menstrual period or in her anus
9. Talking to others about what takes place in the marital bed
10. Harming the wife or the husband in any way
11. Abortion, unless the mother's life or health is in danger
12. Divorcing a woman in an unlawful manner or abandoning her while refusing to divorce her (unless she agrees)
13. Refusing to recognize one's own children
14. Refusing to recognize one's own parents, taking the name of another, or claiming to be the child of another – (Orphans should be cared for, but their true identities should be kept if known.)
15. Deceiving an adopted child into thinking he is actually the offspring of the adopting family, or legal adoption in the western way
16. Favoring some of the children over others – injustice
17. Failure to bring up one's children as Muslims
18. Disobedience to parents except if they order something that is *ḥarām*, and unkindness to them.

Social Life, Customs and Entertainment

1. Severing relations (i.e., refusing to speak) with another Muslim for more than three days (for personal reasons)
2. Ridiculing and belittling others and name-calling
3. Spying and eavesdropping on others and suspicion of others' intentions
4. Gossiping about others – (This does not include warning people in order to protect them from harm, testifying in court, or complaining of injustice.)
5. Killing and injuring people, or harming them in general
6. Attacking, molesting or slandering women in particular
7. Suicide
8. Stealing or harming property
9. Lying and cheating
10. Bribery and having any connection with it – (An exception could be if it is the only way to obtain one's right.)
11. Refusal to give *zakāh*
12. Wasting one's money and property; extravagance and showing off
13. Selling anything that is *ḥarām*
14. Deception and taking advantage of people in business transactions
15. Monopolies
16. Buying what one knows is stolen or gained unlawfully
17. Usury and interest – witnessing it, registering it or assisting others in it
18. Gambling and games of chance including lotteries
19. Consulting magicians and fortunetellers or believing in them – (Believing in superstitions, wearing charms or hanging objects, thinking that they have supernatural powers, are all considered *shirk*.)
20. Any kinds of entertainment in which there is behavior, speech or dress contrary to Islāmic morals or beliefs or anything else which is *ḥarām*
21. Businesses based on *ḥarām*, such as the production or sale of alcoholic drinks, illegal drugs, statues, crosses or symbols of other religions; prostitution; dancing; growing plants which are harmful or doing so with the knowledge that they will be used in something *ḥarām* – Also, holding a job which involves *ḥarām* (unless it is absolutely impossible to find other work to support oneself)
22. Refusing to work to support oneself or family if able – This is in reference to men.

23. Keeping pigs or dogs (except the dog used for guarding, hunting, leading the blind or some other necessity)
24. Harming animals or killing them unnecessarily

Clothes, Ornaments and Decorations

1. The exposure of what is forbidden to be exposed (both of women and men) and failure of women to wear *ḥijāb* (complete covering) in the presence of men other than *maḥrams* (those she would never be eligible to marry) and husbands
2. The wearing of gold or silk by men – (Both are allowed for women.)
3. Dressing to resemble the opposite sex
4. The wearing of extravagant clothes with the purpose of showing off – (Good or expensive clothes are not forbidden except with that intention.)
5. Surgery or operations for the purpose of beautification – This does not include corrective surgery. Filing the teeth is also *ḥarām*.
6. Tattooing of the body, plucking of the eyebrows, and use of hairpieces
7. Statues and replicas of human and animal forms
8. The displaying of pictures, especially with the intention of reverence
9. Eating and drinking from gold or silver dishes or utensils

Food and Drink

1. The meat of pigs or anything containing pig byproducts
2. Blood (which has flowed from the veins of an animal)
3. Animals which have died (i.e., have not been slaughtered for the purpose of eating or have been killed for eating by means other than slaughtering) – The exception is fish, seafood and locusts.
4. Animals killed or slaughtered by other than Muslims, Jews or Christians, and those killed in the name of something other than Allāh or slaughtered upon idols or alters dedicated to other than Allāh
5. Domestic donkeys and those animals and birds which hunt and kill by fangs and claws
6. Anything poisonous or harmful, whether swallowed or inhaled
7. Alcoholic drinks and anything containing them, including medications
8. Drugs, plants or any other substances that affect the clarity of the mind and are addicting – This includes injections of these items, except for medical necessity.

May Allāh keep us from ḥarām, provide for us from ḥalāl, and bless us with His favors.

A MUSLIM'S CHARACTER

The way to achieve the high moral standard required in Islām is through remembrance of Allāh at all times and awareness that He is always with us, seeing and hearing us, and knowing our innermost thoughts and secrets. Certain qualities make the true Muslim a living example of the teachings of the Qur'ān. They include the following:

1. Obedience to Allāh and the Prophet and to those in positions of authority as long as they do not order something against the teachings in the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*
2. Honesty – A Muslim does not steal, lie or cheat but is careful to keep promises and trusts.
3. Generosity – giving willingly in the cause of Allāh (i.e., in spreading Islām and helping others) from that which one has been granted – Muslims should not envy one another but should be satisfied with what Allāh has given them.
4. Modesty – A Muslim should not be proud or conceited because of what Allāh has given him. Instead, he should respect others and be pleasant and sympathetic, especially to his Muslim brothers and sisters. A Muslim strives to do good because of Allāh's reward, not seeking to be praised by others.
5. Cleanliness – A Muslim is to be clean and neatly dressed according to the environment in which he lives. One's first concern is to keep to Islāmic dress requirements, then to appear in a pleasing manner.
6. Balance in spending – being neither extravagant nor stingy
7. Patience – doing one's best in the face of difficulties and not getting angry or discouraged, knowing that the reason for all things is in Allāh's wisdom
8. Courage – not being afraid to speak the truth, even about oneself, or fighting for the truth if necessary
9. Caution – One should be careful to avoid anything that might lead to what is forbidden by Allāh, guarding especially one's eyes and ears from seeing and hearing too much; preventing one's tongue from unnecessary, empty speech (especially from talking about others); and controlling one's mind from thinking or assuming bad things about others.
10. Self-control – Success in this battle depends upon the effort. Some do not try hard and lose early in life; some have gains and setbacks, and the battle continues until death; and some succeed in gaining control. The best weapons are an open, understanding and balanced mind, and a sincere, sensitive and strong heart.

The moral decline of those peoples who have blindly imitated western culture in the last decades is an unfortunate reality today. Having departed so completely from the standard that divine religion has set for mankind, modern society has come to think of its accustomed way of life (however deviant) as acceptable and good. The concept of freedom has generally replaced righteousness, even among some who still call themselves Muslims.

Social customs of other cultures such as drinking, dancing and dating can never be considered lawful in Islām. As is clearly defined in the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, Islām can never accept or compromise with any practices involving disobedience to Allāh and His prophet, no matter how widespread or commonplace they may be.

The person who accepts Islām as submission to the will and law of the Divine Creator has taken a covenant that none will be obeyed other than Allāh and His messenger, thereby rejecting all other ways of life as false and harmful. One does this in the realization that truth, patience and restraint are what are pleasing to Allāh and best for the soul, and that following one's own desires in disobedience causes harm to one's own soul and angers Allāh.

It is a duty to remind all of our new brothers and sisters who have not yet had the opportunity to study Islām in depth and appreciate its values fully to constantly review the foregoing list of what is *ḥarām* and to carefully avoid all things in it, seeking reward from Allāh. One should also ask a knowledgeable person about anything in which he or she has doubt. Parents must take seriously the raising of children as good Muslims and not leave them to learn from a corrupt environment.

From the moment of acceptance, Islām is a new, clean and pure life which erases whatever mistakes occurred before it. We must all do our utmost to keep ourselves in this pure state which is pleasing to Allāh, continually taking account of ourselves before Him, repenting from sin, and striving to be accepted by Him. This is the true manifestation of "*Lā ilāha ill-Allāh*" in the heart of the believer, and this will be his salvation on the Day of Judgement.

ABOUT ŞAḤEEḤ INTERNATIONAL™

In 1989 three American converts to Islam joined together to form ŞaḤeeḤ International. Initially established to edit and typeset Islamic literature in English submitted by authors to Dar Abul-Qasim of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, shortly thereafter the group began to translate and author material of its own as well. Their most notable title was published in 1997 – *The Qur'an: English Meanings and Notes*, based on accepted Arabic *tafseer* and rendered in clear, contemporary English. Scholars now regard it as one of the most accurate Qur'an translations available. Their book, *Clear Your Doubts About Islam: 50 Answers to Common Questions*, published in late 2008, quickly became a bestseller. Other titles include *In the Light of Surah an-Nur*, *Fasting in Islam*, and *Zakah and Sadaqah*.

Executive Director: Amatullah J. Bantley was born in Rochester, Minnesota in 1966 and holds a degree in Business Management. She embraced Islam at the age of 20 and moved to Jeddah a year later. In 1995 she founded The Path to Knowledge, which held exclusive distributorship for Dar Abul-Qasim in the USA for five years. When the previous owner closed Dar Abul-Qasim in 2005 due to poor health, Amatullah aspired to reopen it in order to continue sharing the knowledge she had gained while working with the publisher. She obtained ownership in 2007 and now hopes to bring Dar Abul-Qasim into the international arena as a renowned publishing house concentrating on authentic, well-written Islamic reading material.

Author and Translator: Umm Muhammad, Aminah Assami was born in southern California in 1940 and embraced Islam in 1974 in Syria after completing intensive Arabic language courses. In 1981 she moved to Saudi Arabia and has translated *tafseer* and taught basic *fiqh* at the Islamic Cultural Center in Jeddah since 1990. She has authored and/or revised more than 80 Islamic books in English, mostly for Dar Abul-Qasim, and has become known as a reliable Islamic author with an effective writing style. Her precise wording and terminology in conveying concepts from Arabic to English is unmatched, and she concentrates on using concise, meaningful language. She has gained an impressive reputation and is appreciated by a dedicated reading audience. Among her many works are *The Global Messenger*, *Realities of Faith*, *The Path to Prayer*, *The Marriage Procedure in Islam*, *The Forty Hadith of al-Imam an-Nawawi* (with commentary), and *From the Guidance of Surah Ya Seen*.

English Editor: Mary M. Kennedy was born in Orlando, Florida in 1965 and graduated from The Florida State University in 1986 with an English/Business Pre-Law major. She embraced Islam in 1985 and moved to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in early 1987. Her expertise in the English language has been a valuable asset to the team's production of appealing literature. Having been on leave for several years, she returned at the beginning of 2009 to continue her work with ŞaḤeeḤ International.