
ABSOLUTE ESSENTIALS OF ISLAM

FAITH, PRAYER, & THE PATH OF SALVATION
ACCORDING TO THE ḤANAFĪ SCHOOL

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based on Shaykh Amīn Jundī's
Iṣlāḥ 'Ilm al-Ḥāl



White Thread
P R E S S
L O N D O N

Contents

Preface	11
Belief	13
Belief in Allāh	13
Belief in the Angels	15
Belief in the Books	15
Belief in Allāh's Messengers	15
Belief in the Last Day	16
Belief in Destiny	16
The Rulings of the Sacred Law	17
Purification (<i>Tahāra</i>)	21
The Ritual Bath (<i>Ghusl</i>)	21
The Ritual Bath: A Detailed Description from Beginning to End	22
Ritual Ablution (<i>Wuḍū'</i>)	23
The Obligatory Acts of Ritual Ablution	23
The Ritual Ablution: A Detailed Description	24
The Nullifiers of Ritual Ablution	25

The Prayer (<i>Ṣalāt</i>)	27
Conditions of the Prayer	28
The Integrals (<i>Arkān</i>) of the Prayer	28
The Necessary (<i>Wājib</i>) Actions of the Prayer	29
Performing the Prayer	30
A Complete Description of the Prayer	30
The Actions Disliked (<i>Makrūh</i>) in the Prayer	35
Actions that Invalidate the Prayer	36
The Path to Salvation	39
Appendix 1: The <i>Sunna</i> Prayers	41
Appendix 2: Dealing with Doubts & Misgivings	43
Appendix 3: Selected Prayers & <i>Sūras</i>	47
Notes	53

Preface



The Messenger of Allāh (Allāh bless him and give him peace) said, “Whomever Allāh wishes well for, He gives understanding of religion” (*Bukhārī* 71, *Muslim* 1037).

Allāh has commanded us to worship and obey Him with sincerity, out of reverence, love and thankfulness. Allāh says in the Qur’ān, “And they are ordered to serve Allāh only, keeping religion pure for Him, to remain upright, and to establish worship and to pay the alms-due. That is true religion” (98:5).

This worship is not possible without knowledge. This short work outlines the absolute essentials of this knowledge—in faith, prayer, and key points related to one’s life and dealings. It is based on the methodology of traditional Sunni Islam according to the Ḥanafī school, the largest school of Islamic law. And its purpose is to make one’s worship valid, sound, and proper in a short amount of time.

And Allāh alone gives success.

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Amman, 2004

pronounce the words, such that one can hear oneself.³⁰ The follower does not recite Qur’ān in group prayers, regardless of whether the *imām* is reciting aloud or not, though he does say all the invocations and supplications of the prayer

11. For the *imām* to recite aloud in the Fajr (dawn), Maghrib (sunset), and ‘Ishā’ (evening) prayers. The one praying alone has the choice of reciting aloud or quietly, as in supererogatory night prayers.

Performing the Prayer

For the prayer to be valid, certain conditions have to be met. Before one starts one must:

1. Be in a state of ritual purity, whether through the ritual bath or ritual ablution
2. Ensure purity of body, clothing, and place of prayer
3. Cover one’s nakedness
4. Face the *qibla*
5. Ensure that the time of prayer has entered
6. Intend the specific prayer that one is performing and intend following the *imām* if praying in congregation.

A Complete Description of the Prayer

1. Stand, with your feet slightly apart,³¹ and utter the opening invocation.³² This is obligatory. It is necessary (*wājib*) to say, “*Allāhu akbar*.”³³ This invocation (*Allāhu akbar*) is repeated, without raising the hands, with each movement of the prayer except when rising from the bowing (*rukūʿ*). The one leading others utters it

aloud. It is recommended to keep one's gaze lowered throughout the prayer, in order to avoid distraction. When standing, this entails looking at your place of prostration.

2. Raise your hands (until level with the ears for men and to the shoulders for women) just before uttering the opening invocation, keeping the head upright throughout, and lower the hands as one pronounces the invocation. It is recommended to keep one's hands normally open, with the palms facing the *qibla*.
3. Place your right hand over your left hand (under the navel for men and on the chest for women).
4. In the first *rak'at* only, quietly recite the opening supplication (*thanā'*).
5. Seek refuge from the Devil (*ta'awwudh*) quietly, in the first *rak'at* alone, if reciting the Qur'ān in prayer. The one leading others and the one praying alone do so—as they must recite. When praying in congregation do not recite this—as one does not recite the Qur'ān behind the *imām*—unless one has missed one or more *rak'as*, in which case one recites this when one gets up to make up the *rak'as* missed.
6. Recite at least one verse of the Qur'ān when leading others, or praying alone. This is obligatory. When praying behind an *imām* one does not recite any Qur'ān, not even the Fātiḥa, in both loud and quiet prayers.³⁴

It is necessary (*wājib*) for the one reciting to recite the Fātiḥa, in two *rak'as* of obligatory prayers and in all *rak'as* of other prayers;³⁵ recite at least the equivalent of three short verses of the Qur'ān, in two *rak'as* of obligatory prayers, and in all *rak'as* of other prayers;