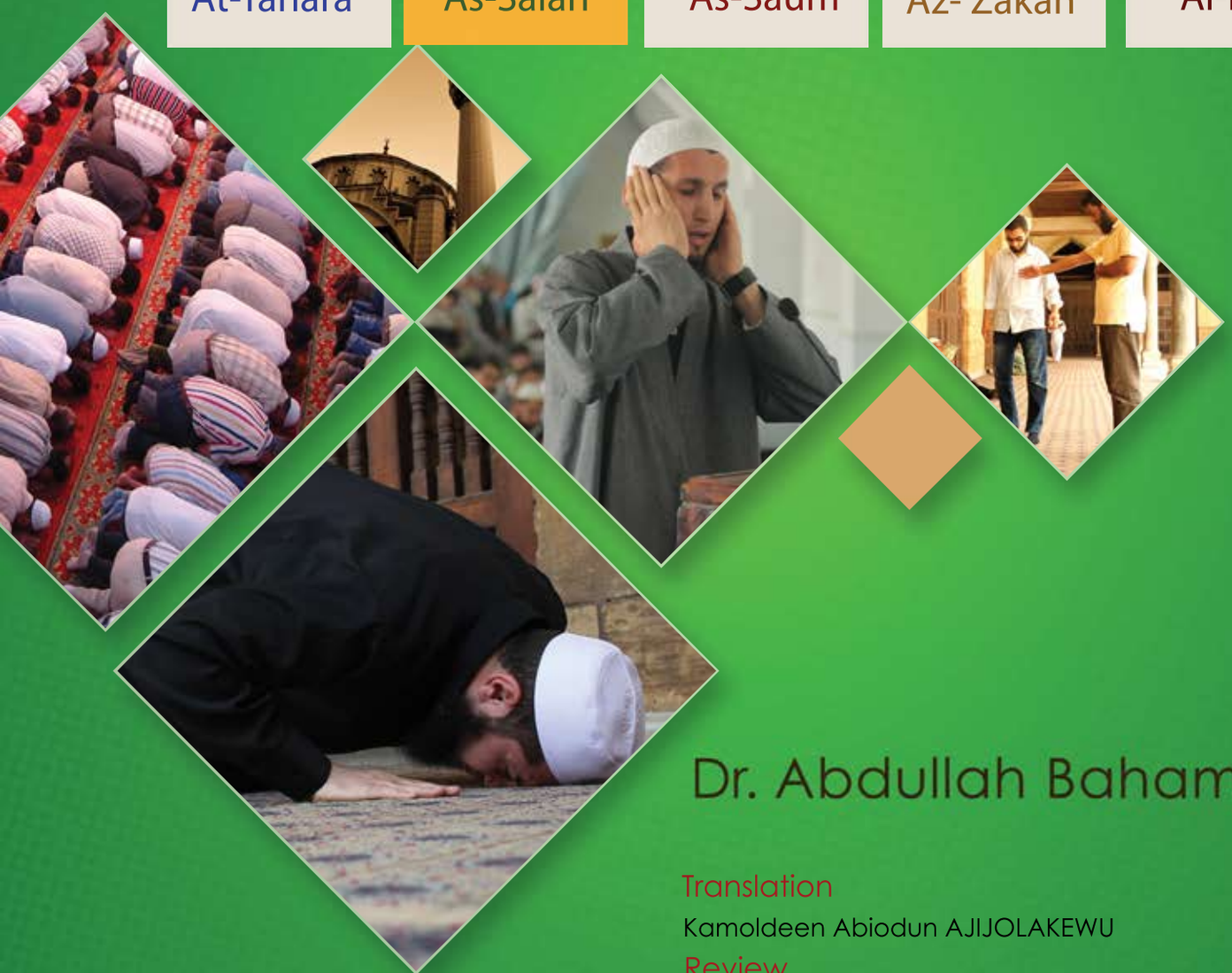
Illustrated Islamic Jurisprudence for the Acts of Worship

Simplifying and Teaching the Rules of Islam

At-Tahara | As-Salāh | As-Saum | Az- Zakah | Al-Hajj



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Salatul-Istisqa (The salat (observed) when Seeking Rain)

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Ṣalātul-Istisqa' (The Ṣalāt (observed) when Seeking Rain)

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Al-Istisqa'

This means seeking water (rain) from Allah (the Most High) during drought and times of low rainfall.

The Proof of the Permissibility of Ṣalātul-Istisqa

Ṣalāt to seek rain is an emphatic Sunnah. This was performed by the Prophet ﷺ as reported in the hadeeth of Abdullah bn Zaid ﷺ,: "The Prophet ﷺ went to the praying ground to seek rain. He faced the Qiblah, turned his cloak inside out, and prayed two raka'at."(1)

The Time to Observe Ṣalātul-Istisqa

Ṣalātul-Istisqa is permissible when there is a drought and sparse rainfall, or the level of water in the streams and well is low, or due to the river drying up etc. It is recommended (to observe the Ṣalāt) after the sun rises and has ascended up to the length of a spear; which is about 20 mins after sunrise, which is the time of Ṣalātul-'Eid (the Ṣalāt observed during the two festivals).

(1) Agreed upon.

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Where to Observe Ṣalātul Istisqa

The Sunnah is for it to be observed on the praying ground and not inside the mosque, in accordance with the Prophet's ﷺ manner, except when there is need to do otherwise.

Description of Ṣalātul-Istisqa

1. It should be prayed as a two-raka'at Ṣalāt with neither the Aḍhan nor Iqamah. Recitations in both raka'ats are said aloud.
2. The person observing this Ṣalāt says the takbeer seven times in the first rak'ah after the initiating takbeer. In the second rak'ah, he says five takbeers apart from the one he says while standing up from the prostration.
3. He raises his hands with each takbeer, praises Allah and extols Him. He also seeks blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ between each takbeer.
4. After the Ṣalāt, the imam delivers a single sermon in which he seeks a great deal of forgiveness and recites Al-Qur'an over and over. Thereafter he supplicates, saying many of the authentic supplications of the Prophet ﷺ, with insistence, showing humility, helplessness and demonstrating how powerless he is in front of Allah (the Most High), raising his hands up even higher (than he does in ordinary supplications).
5. The imam faces the Qiblah, turns his cloak inside out, placing what is on the right on the left, and that of the left on the right, while he continues to supplicate to Allah.

Some of the rulings concerning Ṣalātul-Istisqa

1. For it to be preceded with preaching and reminding the people with that which softens their hearts, like talking about repentance from sins and avoiding any ill-gotten properties by returning them to their rightful owners. This is because sin is the cause of scarcity of rain, but repentance, seeking forgiveness and piety are causes of acceptance of one's prayers and the receiving of (Allah's) favors and blessings. He should also urge them to give alms, as that is also a cause of mercy.

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2. A specific day should be set aside for going out for Ṣalātul-Istisqa so that people can prepare for it.
3. It is the Sunnah when going to the pray to proceed in humility, submissiveness, servitude and subservience, while making one's need for Allah clear. This is why it is not permissible to beautify oneself or go out perfumed. Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ, said while describing the manner in which the Prophet ﷺ used to go to seek rain: "Indeed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went out wearing modest clothes (mutabaḍh-ḍhila[1]); (walking) in a humble and lowly manner until he arrived at the praying ground."[2]
4. To seek a great deal of forgiveness and supplicate much, while the two hands are raised, during the course of the sermon.

Recommendations during Rainfall

It is recommended to first stand in the rain, at the instance of the start of the rain, and to allow it to touch one's body as was done by the Prophet ﷺ. Anas ﷺ, narrated thus:"Rainfall befell us while we were with the Messenger of Allah. Then the Prophet ﷺ spread his clothes until they were wet from the rain. Thereafter we asked: "Oh Messenger of Allah, why did you do this?" He said: "Because, it (the rain) just departed from its Lord, the Most High."[3]



(1) Mutabaḍh-ḍhilan : Not well dressed or not in his finery.
(2) Source: Abu Dawud.
(3) Source: Muslim.

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Rain is a bounty from Allah alone

It is important for every Muslim to believe that, truly, rainfall is due to the bounty of Allah and His Blessings on His servants, and that it is not as said by some: "Rain falls as a result of so and so star." This is shirk (polytheism) - may Allah protect us (from it).