



Contemporary
IRSYAD
SERIES

BY OFFICE OF THE MUFTI





OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS

1 FOREWORD BY MUFTI

2 RITUALS

Principles of Rituals

- ✿ Practical Tips on Praying in constrained Circumstances (16)
- ✿ Jama' and Qaḍā' Prayers (17)

3 PERFORMING PRAYERS

- ✿ My work does not allow me to take a break to perform prayers. How do I pray? (18)
- ✿ What should I do when I am stuck in long meetings and I might miss prayers? (20)
- ✿ I sometimes have to miss Friday prayers due to my work. What should I do? (21)
- ✿ My work does not allow me to go for Friday prayers every week. What should I do? (22)



- ✿ What if I have exhausted all options and my job still does not permit me to attend Friday prayers, and I am unable to seek another job easily due to the job market? (22)
- ✿ How do I perform prayers in camp and during outfield exercises? (24)
- ✿ Is it permissible to perform in congregation the Sunnah prayers (*Taubah* and *Hājah* prayers)? Someone told me that it is an innovation (*bid'ah*), and that one must walk out of the congregation if an imam performs such prayers in congregation. (26)
- ✿ My friend said my prayers are not accepted because I do not wear the *tudung* – is this true? (27)

4 FASTING

- ✿ What is the ruling on fasting for those doing physically-demanding jobs or training? (29)
- ✿ Can I break my fast at my friend's house who is not a Muslim? Can I also invite her over for *iftar*? (31)



Jabir reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said,

“The believer is friendly and befriended, for there is no goodness in one who is neither friendly, nor befriended. The best of people are those who are most beneficial to people.”

[al-Mu'jam al-Awsat]

5 FOOD AND DINING

Principles of Food and Dining

- ✿ Is food grown with compost made up of non-halal food also non-halal? (39)
- ✿ My company is having a lunch retreat at a non-halal establishment. Can I join my colleagues? (40)
- ✿ Can I work in jobs that require me to deal with alcohol? (41)

6 SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Principles of Social Interactions

- ✿ How do we approach verses that have been misunderstood to justify hatred towards others? Such as in surah al-Māidah verse 51. (44)
- ✿ Can we exchange greetings and gifts with people of other faiths? (45)
- ✿ Can we participate in celebrations of other faiths festivities? (46)
- ✿ Can Muslims visit other houses of worship? (47)
- ✿ Can people of other faiths enter our mosques? (48)
- ✿ What if they do not cover their *'awrah* when they come into mosques? (49)



FOREWORD BY MUFTI OF SINGAPORE

To the Singapore Muslim community, our religious values have always been a guiding light in all aspects of our lives, and form an integral portion of our identity. The Islam we practise is very much a part of our everyday life, not apart from it. It encourages us to embark on a path of continuous improvement, because a good Muslim is not just one who observes religious rituals, but also one who is diligent in performing good deeds and has excellent ethics in all aspects of life.

It is thus important for us to continue to ensure that our understanding of religious texts and traditions is well-suited for Singapore's context and environment, while still staying true to the spirit and objectives of the Islamic rulings and teachings. Our practice of religion must hence be strongly rooted to the Islamic principles and cognizant of the higher objectives of the laws, and must be able to provide solutions to the changing needs as best as possible. In order to this, we must remain guided by our faith, ethical injunctions and reasoning ability. We must live in our time, at the heart of our society, and continuously strive for the perfect balance between the essential principles determined by divine revelation and actual lived circumstances.

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and his companions have always taken into serious account the evolving culture and norms, or '*urf*', of the community. In the development of our *fiqh* too,

we can see the influence of different cultures in the laws and rulings that were established. Imam Abu Hanifa, considered customs and social habits of a diverse range of communities as a secondary source to the law, so long as they did not contradict the Quran. Similarly, Imam Malik was heavily reliant on the concept of *istislah*, which is the consideration of the interest and welfare of the community, as one of the key principles for his *fiqh* methodology.

Imam Shafi'i, like many other Islamic scholars, strongly acknowledged *'urf* or social norms, as an important aspect that informs their jurisprudence. This is very much enlightening, and a reflection of the room that Islam provides for us in meeting the needs of different times and contexts. It is also proof of the scholars' sincerity, and their exertion in their efforts to provide solutions for their respective communities.

Today, in meeting our needs, we need to understand Singapore's context as a secular, multiracial and multi-religious society that is driven complex economic structures and advancements in technology. There is a compelling need for us to be discerning – we have to stay true to the higher objectives of our religion and the broader jurisprudential and ethical frameworks, without necessarily attempting to force fit historical solutions to our current challenges and issues.

We need to develop a religious framework and approach that would allow us to live a meaningful religious life confidently in our current context.

The **Contemporary Irsyad Series** is hence an attempt to incorporate these principles I have mentioned, in order to provide guidance to the many questions we receive daily in the course of our work – it is an attempt to offer real solutions to current realities. It plans to move away from an exceptional understanding of Islamic jurisprudence. While the concept of ‘*darurah*’ has its roots in our tradition, to persist in this thinking and making it the approach of our day-to-day *fiqh* can be detrimental. This type of thinking, known as ‘legal exceptionalism’, makes two problematic assumptions:

1) The existence of Muslims in communities where they do not form the majority is a temporary circumstance; and that 2) an ideal form of Islamic government or polity will arise at some point in the future and they will then migrate and place their allegiance to this polity.

This form of thinking prevents Muslims from engaging with their lived realities in a pragmatic way.

It promotes a sense of escapism while waiting for a utopian state to emerge.

The truth is, every Muslim has the responsibility to not only perform his or her religious rituals, but also to embody and socialise positive norms. Such is the virtue of a Muslim, and he or she is not hindered by circumstances around him from demonstrating and embodying the beauty of Islam and its values and principles.

It is my sincerest hope that you will find this first volume of the series useful, and I pray that it helps us to find comfort and rootedness as we deal with new situations from day to day.

We seek Allah’s guidance and blessings in all that we do, and may He continue to shower our community with strength and resilience to live as good Muslims and contributive members of our society.

**DR MOHAMED
FATRIS BAKARAM**
MUFTI OF SINGAPORE



PRINCIPLES FOR RITUALS

Rituals have always been an integral part of our religion. The five pillars of faith spell out important rituals that a Muslim must perform out of faith and spiritual commitment to Allah s.w.t. Rituals also form a part of our core identity as followers of the Islamic faith – we do not perform the rituals of other faiths although we may work, eat and live together harmoniously with no problems.

While we are enjoined to seek for perfection and completeness of the rituals, it is important to also recall the Prophetic way (Sunnah) or not overdoing by going to the extremes, to the point that it causes harm or hardship.

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. once said:

“Religion is easy, and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded.”
(Narrated by Imām al-Bukhārī).

The Prophet s.a.w. repeatedly reminded us from falling into such a pitfall.

“This religion is very vast so approach it in a gentle manner and do not make yourself hate the worship of Allah, because the traveller who does not let his mount rest will not reach his destination and his mount will not be able to keep going” (Narrated by Imām Al-Bayhaqī).

In explaining this hadīth, Ibn Rajab in his book *Fatḥ al-Bārī* commented that one who does not let his mount rest will not reach his destination as his mount is no longer able to continue. Had he been kind to his mount and taken it easy during his journey, his mount would have been able to travel the distance and get him to his destination.

In making rituals difficult and overbearing, we will end up burdening ourselves with unnecessary difficulty that Allah s.w.t. has already lifted from us. In so doing, we wrongly project Islam as a religion that burdens its followers, when such hardships have actually been self-inflicted. Furthermore, this may turn away Muslims wishing to learn more of their religion out of fear and worry of not being able to uphold the teachings of their faith.

The truth is, Islam is a religion which underscores the need for balance. It recognises that humans are social beings with multiple responsibilities to juggle. It recognises our responsibility for our own self-care and well-being, our responsibility towards our family members, our workplace, our neighbours, and many others.

It requires of Muslims to strive for the hereafter and face some challenges, but not at the expense of neglecting other responsibilities or not fulfilling the rights of those under their care.

“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters” (al-Qaṣaṣ:77).

In today’s context, we may find situations that would make performing certain rituals challenging. The approach for this is to follow the Islamic principle of “simplify and not complicate” as postulated by the Qur’an and Prophetic injunctions.

This does not mean that we take rituals lightly. Rather, we employ the concept of ‘rukḥṣah’ or concession as permitted in Islam. In doing so, it allows us to still honour our commitment to our duties but in more manageable circumstances.

The Prophet s.a.w. had said:

“Simplify things and do not complicate them. Give glad tidings and do not repel people. Cooperate with each other and do not become divided.” (Narrated by Imām al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PRAYING IN CONSTRAINED CIRCUMSTANCES

(DURING URGENT MEETINGS, EXAMINATIONS ETC)

Table A

✦ WUḌU’:

- Perform only the essentials for *wuḍu’*. This includes washing your face and limbs only once and not thrice.
- You may also wish to keep your *wuḍu’* so as not to have to repeat it for the different prayers. This will help you save time when you take subsequent prayer breaks.

✦ PRAYERS:

- Perform only the essentials for prayers. For example, you can recite only al-Fātihah for each raka’ah – there is no need to recite *du’a iftitāh* and the surahs we normally do after reciting al-Fātihah. (Note: this should only be done when we are really constrained for time. Whereas in normal situations, take your time and communicate with Allah in serenity)

✦ THE SPACE:

- Bring a travel prayer mat with you. You do not have to go to a designated prayer place – it is sufficient for you to pray at a place nearby that is **visibly** clean from impurities (*najis*), and just spread your prayer mat facing the qiblah and pray. Even if you do not have a prayer mat, it is acceptable to pray on any clean surface. Dust is not an impurity, and traces of impurities that are not visible to the naked eye are excused. *However, be mindful of the needs of others too. Ensure that you are NOT blocking the path, NOT inconveniencing others, or worse, becoming a safety hazard yourself!*

JAMA' PRAYERS AND QADA' PRAYERS - DEFINITIONS

Table B

✦ JAMA' (COMBINING PRAYERS):

Jama' prayers refer to the combination of prayers. You can combine *Zuhur* and '*Aṣar* prayers, and prayers can be done either during *Zuhur* or '*Aṣar*. You can also combine *Maghrib* and '*Ishā'* prayers, and the prayers can be done at either prayer time. *Ṣubuḥ* prayers cannot be combined with other prayers.

When you know that you will perform an earlier prayer in the combination at the later prayer time (*Zuhur* or *Maghrib*), you should make the intention to combine this prayer with the later prayer ('*Aṣar* or '*Ishā'*). For example, you should make intention during *Zuhur* that you will combine the prayers with '*Aṣar* prayers later. Likewise, if you know that you will be bringing forward a later prayer in the combination, you should make the intention to combine it with the earlier prayer. For example, when you know that you will be bringing forward '*Aṣar* prayers, you should make intention to combine prayers during *Zuhur* time, and proceed to pray *Zuhur* and '*Aṣar*.

✦ QAḌĀ':

Qaḍā' is to perform a prayer that was missed outside its prescribed time and combination. In such situations, you should make intention to make *qaḍā'* for the missed prayer during the next prayer time. For example, you have prayed *Zuhur*, and then realizing during '*Aṣar* time that you will be missing '*Aṣar* prayer. You should hence make intention to *qaḍā'* your '*Aṣar* prayer. But please bear in mind that this should be used only as a last recourse – you should plan for *jama'* if you are not able to pray in time.

My work does not allow me to take a break to perform prayers. How do I pray?

Prayers at five stipulated times daily are obligatory and Muslims must perform this obligation – even a completely immobile person is obligated to pray. Hence, you should first try to discuss with your reporting officers. Understand their concerns and try to address it such that your work is not affected while still performing your prayers. If the concern is due to the fact that your position cannot be left void, then discuss with your colleague if it is possible for him to cover your duty for a short period. You should also make sure to return your colleague's favor at other opportunities.

If this is possible, you may consider the tips shared in **Table A**, so as to minimize time away from work as far as possible.

If you have exhausted all possible options and there is no opportunity for you to pray, then you may perform the *jama'* (combining) prayers **without shortening them** (*qaṣar*). However, if you have missed the opportunity

to perform *jama'*, you then have no choice but to perform *qaḍā'* (expiation) for the prayers you have missed. This however should be your last option.

Scholars such various schools of law, including from the Mālikī school of thought, Ibn Munẓir from Shāfi'ī, Ibn Sīrīn and Ibn Shabramah have said:

“Jama' is permissible as long as it does not become a routine or is normalized”.

Reminder! This only becomes an option if you have exhausted all other means to perform the prayer on time. In other words, it should not become a habit but only practised under exceptional circumstances as discussed above.



3 PERFORMING PRAYERS



What should I do when I am stuck in long meetings and I might miss prayers?

In such circumstances, we recommend to perform only the essentials of *wuḍū'* and prayers (**Table A**) so as to minimize time away from the meeting. Completeness of a prayer is in the fulfilling of essentials. There are the supererogatory actions that would bring us much reward and further enhance our prayers, and we should always strive to perform them under normal circumstances. Otherwise, performing the essentials would suffice as well.

However, if it is not possible for you to leave, then you may perform *jama'* (combining) or *qaḍā'* prayers (please refer to **table B** for differences between *jama'* and *qaḍā'* prayers).



I sometimes have to miss Friday prayers due to my work. What should I do?

On days when you really cannot leave your job to perform Friday prayers, then you may perform *Ẓuhur* prayers instead. Jurists have allowed leaving Friday prayer for a valid excuse. In his book *Mukhtaṣar*, Imām Khalīl from the Malikī school of thought explained:

“Excuses for missing it [the Friday prayer] include: extreme mud, heavy rain, leprosy, illness, having to care for the weak/ill or being confined in a place for whatsoever reasons etc.”

Hence, when you are confined to your work due to an unavoidable issue, then it falls under the reasons stated.

My work does not allow me to go for Friday prayers every week. What should I do?

When you are put in this situation, discuss with your reporting officers, and seek to assure them that your working hours and productivity will not be compromised even if you attend Friday prayers. Maybe you can offer to either come earlier for work or go back later to make up for time. If this is possible, then practise *amānah* (trustworthiness) and honour the trust by only performing Friday prayers.

If you really have a very tight schedule and are unable to attend Friday prayers on time, then you may consider joining halfway during the (sermon) or even during the prayer itself.

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من أدرك من صلاة الجمعة ركعة فقد أدرك

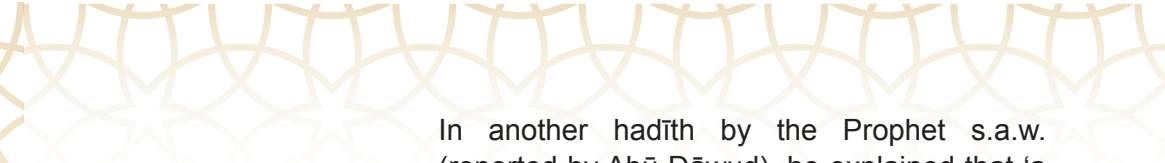
The Prophet s.a.w. said: *Whoever [joins in late in such a way that he/she] completes a raka'ah of the Friday prayers, he would then be considered as having offered his Friday prayers with the congregation.* (Nasā'ī, no. 1425)

What if I have exhausted all options and my job still does not permit me to attend Friday prayers, and I am unable to seek another job easily due to the job market?

The Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. cautioned against leaving the Friday Prayers without a valid excuse stating that one who abandoned three Friday prayers,

“Allah will seal his/her heart.” (Reported by Ibn Mājah).

Clearly, Friday prayers are important. However, what did the Prophet s.a.w. mean by a “valid excuse”?



In another hadīth by the Prophet s.a.w. (reported by Abū Dāwud), he explained that ‘a valid excuse’ is fear and sickness.

The scholar Ibn Qudāmah r.a. in his book al-Mughnī explained that fear is of three types: fear for one’s self, fear for one’s wealth or property, and fear for one’s family.

Hence, if your job does not allow you to pray Friday prayers as long as you are in the job, and you are unable to find another job in order to provide daily sustenance for you and your dependents, then fiqh awlāwiyāt or fiqh of priority applies. You should prioritise obligations that affect not just the individual, but the immediate dependents or the community at large, over obligations that impact only the individual. And these obligations serve as valid excuses for him until he manages to find a different job.

This is also the opinion of a contemporary jurist Shaykh ‘Abdullah Bin Bayyah, and Dār al-Iftā’ of Egypt.

You should also continue accessing the spiritual messages and reminders on Friday by listening to the sermon or reading its text from the MUIS website.

You should also continue to be a positive representative of Islam with the hope that those around you would be able to understand that a Muslim is one whose acts of rituals and spirituality do not affect his productivity at work. In fact, performing these rituals has a positive impact on him and his work ethics – it is a constant reminder for him to strive for excellence in all aspects of his life, including his professional life.

How do I perform prayers in camp and during outfield exercises?

When you're in this situation, one of the key tips is for you to find opportunities to pray as soon as you are able to do so. For example, you should quickly find an opportunity during break time, or during field exercises when you are not on guard duty. Do not forget to always inform your buddy or reporting officer so that he is aware that you're taking a short break.

You may also consider following the tips we shared in **Table A**. In fact, you may also consider performing '*mashu al-khuf*' to further facilitate the process. This means that you do not have to take off your boots when taking *wuḍu'* – you just have to wipe over your footgear with water. There are a few conditions for this action:

- ✿ You must have performed your *wuḍu'* before you put on the boots. In other words, you must be in a state of ritual purity when you put on the boots.
- ✿ It can only be performed for purifying yourself from minor impurity (e.g. after you have passed wind, urinated or defecated), but not if you are in major impurity (e.g. in a state of *janābah* after having a wet dream).
- ✿ The boots/or the shoes you are wearing, must cover at least up to your ankles.



✿ You must not take off the shoes. Once you take it off, you can no longer perform *mashu al-khuf*. Hence, you do not take off your shoes even when you are praying.

✿ If you have stepped on impurities (*najis*), you should wash off the impurities before performing your *wudu'*.

✿ If you are in local vicinity you can only perform *mashu al-khuf* within a period of 24 hours. If you are travelling and you are a *musāfir*, you can still perform *mashu al-khuf* within 3 days, as long as you fulfill the previous conditions.

It was recorded in a hadith by Imām Muslim:

“The Prophet s.a.w. stated one day and one night for the one who is not travelling, and three days and three nights for the one who is travelling, i.e. for wiping over the khufūf”.

Is it permissible to perform in congregation the Sunnah prayers (Taubah and Hajjah prayers)?

Someone told me that it is an innovation, and that one must walk out of the congregation if an imam performs such prayers in congregation.

That is an incorrect and misguided view. First and foremost, you need to understand what is an unlawful innovation in Islam. Imām Shāfi‘ī stated that there are two kinds of innovation.

- i) Acts that do not go in harmony with the Quran, Sunnah, traceable tradition (*Athār*) and the consensus (*Ijmā’*) of Muslim scholars.
- ii) Innovations that bring about goodness and kindness. These innovations are permissible.

As a result, things that are new and unprecedented, but are in line with the spirit of Islam and do not contradict its basics, are not considered as impermissible innovations.

The Prophet s.a.w. used to pray only 8 *raka‘ah* in congregation, and prayed the remaining *raka‘ah* on his own. It was reported that ‘Umar r.a. had differed from this tradition as he gathered people to perform all 20 *raka‘ah* in congregation instead of only performing 8 *raka‘ah*.



The same can be observed in Makkah al-Mukarramah where 20 raka'ah of *Tarāwih* prayers are performed in congregation. We also see the practices of completing the recitation of 30 Juz in *Tarāwih* throughout Ramadan and the recitation of khatam Al-Qur'an prayers on the 27th night of Ramadan. All these were never performed by the Prophet s.a.w. in the manner that it is currently practised.

Hence, on that basis, it is permissible to perform any kind of supererogatory prayers (Sunnah) in congregation.

The scholar of the Shāfi'i School, Imām Khāṭib Shirbinī r.a., stated in his book *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj*:

“It is not from the Sunnah that the supererogatory prayers are offered in congregation. However, if one did offer them in congregation, it will be permissible without it being makrūh (disliked).”



My friend said my prayers are not accepted because I do not wear the tudung – is this true?

Praying is obligatory and is one of the pillars of Islam. Covering of one's 'awrah is also an obligation that one should try to observe as far as possible. However, not being able to fulfil one act does not nullify the other, as these are separate obligatory acts.

It is not up to humankind to decide if one's acts of rituals, faith and goodwill are futile or otherwise. Everyone has their own struggles they need to work on in order to become better Muslims. Let's hence focus on ourselves, and leave matters beyond us to God, the All-Knowing.





What is the ruling on fasting for those doing physically-demanding jobs or training?

✦ There are differences in opinion amongst the scholars on this issue. **The first one** allows for Muslims working under such circumstances to break their fast when they could no longer endure it. However, this opinion requires that the Muslim must begin his day fasting, and to continue fasting to the point that he feels immense hunger and thirst, and he worries that it could pose a threat to his health or endanger himself. Once he reaches that stage, he may then break his fast for that day. In fact, if the threat to his health is no longer a worry but a certainty, then it is compulsory upon him to break his fast. This is the opinion held by Shaykh Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī and this is also credited to scholars of the Ḥanafī, Malikī, Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanbalī schools of laws.

✿ **The second opinion** is reflected in a fatwa by Dār al-Iftā' of Egypt. It takes the view that for those who are most certain that their strenuous work will cause them hardship if they were to fast, they are allowed to begin the day without fasting.

✿ **The third opinion** posits that workers in such situations are allowed to not fast at all if the work is their form of livelihood. This is the opinion of some contemporary scholars such as Professor Quraysh Shihāb.

✿ Workers who had to miss their fast must make up for it on another day after the Ramadan period.

✿ In the extreme instance that there is no one day in which the worker is able to take a break from his work even after Ramadan period, then there is no sin upon him for not being able to make up his fast. It is thus sufficient that he pays the *fiḍyah*¹ only as long as they continue to work in such conditions, and are not able to find a time which would permit them to make up their

fast without endangering their health or life. This is the opinion of some Hanafite scholars, as recorded in Ḥāshiyah Ibn 'Ābidīn (2/420).

✿ In summary, we would like to advise Muslims who are working in strenuous conditions to assess their own health conditions. If they are unable to fast without falling sick and putting their lives at risk, then they should not fast. Fasting is obligatory, but the preservation of life is a priority. They should remain in good health so that they may continue with their work and support themselves and their dependents, which is also a very important responsibility. God is Most Forgiving, and He would not punish them for something in which they are not capable of performing.

¹In Singapore, Muslims may make their *fiḍyah* payments at mosques islandwide

Can I break my fast at my friend's who is not a Muslim? Can I also invite her over for iftar?

On this matter, the Quran provides the following principle:

“And Allah does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or driven you out of your homes. God loves the just”. (Al-Mumtahanah:8)

There is hence no reason as to why one cannot break fast at the house of a friend of a different faith, or invite them over, as this is in line with the spirit of neighbourliness and friendship taught in the Qur'an.

In fact, to turn down the invitation of your friend of another faith, who has generously extended the invitation to you to celebrate and honor the Muslims' special occasion, would be inappropriate. You can always

inform your host politely of your dietary requirements or even offer to contribute to the dinner by bringing your own food if you do not want to inconvenience them.



For further elaborations on dietary requirements using the utensils that have been used to eat non-halal food, please refer to the topic on food and dining.



5 FOOD AND DINING



PRINCIPLES OF FOOD AND DINING

Consuming only what is lawful (halal) is an important virtue in the Islamic faith. The injunction to eat what is permissible is mentioned in more than 20 verses in the Quran. The Prophet s.a.w. expressed his strong disapproval and even amusement at those who choose to consume what is impermissible, but then begs for favours from God. In a hadith reported by Imām an-Nawawi, the Prophet s.a.w. had said:

“The Almighty has said: ‘O you who believe! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you’ (Al-Baqarah:172). Then he mentioned the case of a man who having journeyed far, is dishevelled and dusty, and who spreads out his hands to the sky saying ‘O Lord! O Lord!’ while his food is haram (unlawful), his drink is haram, his clothing is haram, and he has been nourished with haram, so how can his supplication be answered?” (Narrated by Imām Muslim)





Given the emphasis on eating what is lawful, it is hence understandable that Muslims tend to be extra cautious when it comes to the food they eat. However, there needs to be an understanding on the distinction between lawfulness and excessive caution.

The position of the Shāfi‘ī school of thought is adopted for MUIS’s halal certification procedures and requirements. In order to qualify, applicants must comply with MUIS Halal Certification conditions. For example, according to the Shāfi‘ī school of thought, utensils must be ritually cleansed if it has been used for pork dishes.

It is commendable and safer to opt for food with halal-certification given the abundance of options here in Singapore. However, this does not mean that all non-certified food is not halal.

For Muslims working in non-Muslim majority companies, company retreats and dining may not take place at a halal-certified establishment all the time, and facilities provided may not be distinguished for halal and non-halal food consumers. Some companies accommodate the Muslim officers' dietary requirements, while some may find it a challenge to do so for every occasion. MUIS has received many queries pertaining to the issue, and we understand that this is a situation that needs to be addressed and requires practical guidance.

This segment of the booklet aims to provide some guidelines in helping Muslims in such situations to make decisions pertaining to food and dining without halal-certification, or using facilities that are not used exclusively for halal food.

✿ Using Shared Equipment

For equipments which are not used exclusively for halal food, like shared fridges and microwaves in an office, the halal status of the food is not affected if there is no direct contact or cross mixing between halal and non-halal food.

Imām Muhammad ‘Abdullah al-Jurdānī mentioned in his book *Fatḥ al-‘Allam bi sharḥ Murshid al-Anām*,

“And if a vessel containing milk is placed over impure fire (as it uses dry dung fuel, which is dried animal faces that is used as fuel source), and something from it (the fuel source) flies into the milk, it is forgiven.”

Based on this view, food that has been **unintentionally** mixed with negligible amount of non-halal ingredient is still permissible to be consumed – what more for food which has been placed in tightly-closed containers.

✿ Utensils

According to the Shāfi‘ī school of thought, dishes and utensils which have come into direct contact with pork needs to be ritually-cleansed or ‘*sertu*’ before they can be used for the handling of halal food.

However, there are other scholarly opinions, including the Hanbalī school of thought, which view that ritually-cleansing the utensils is not a requirement, but an encouraged act.

Jābir r.a. had related the following: *“We used to go on military expeditions with Allah’s messenger and acquire the dishes and drinking vessels of pagans. We would use these things and did not consider doing so to be objectionable”*.

In his commentary on Ṣahīh Muslim, Imām al-Nawawi added that the dishes had been used for cooking of pork and for alcoholic beverages by the pagans.

The richness of views in our Islamic tradition allows for solutions out of different situations. Where necessary, we may follow opinions from other schools of laws, especially when you have been invited to events arranged by friends or families from other faith groups.





Is food grown with compost made up of non-halal food also non-halal?

Composting is a process of recycling food as fertilisers, rather than disposing them. It is a natural function that happens with or without human intervention.

Kitchen and garden refuse will be tossed onto a pile in the garden. This pile is then left for a year and turned in with the existing soil. This produces a rich, non-contaminated soil.

The question of doubtfulness on the purity of the crop should not surface as the source of compost does not affect the purity and permissibility of consuming the crop.

My company is having a lunch retreat at a non-halal establishment. Can I join my colleagues?

Islam permits one to attend or join an invitation from friends of other faiths as long as it does not require participation in any religious rites or involves actions that clearly contradict Islamic teachings. It is important not to exclude ourselves from such gatherings in the spirit of camaraderie and being part of a bigger team.

If one is given the choice to choose the venue, then one should always choose the halal-certified options. This advisory is meant for those who do not have such a choice.

When dining at non-halal establishments, one can observe the following tips:

- ✿ Choosing either seafood or vegetarian options
- ✿ Request for no alcohol or animal fat to be used in the cooking.

If there is fear of the utensils being mixed with utensils used for non-halal dishes, one may consider to follow the opinions of other schools of laws as highlighted in the beginning of this chapter.

However, if you are uncomfortable, you may choose to just consume a halal beverage.

Can I work in jobs that require me to deal with alcohol?

Muslims are prohibited from consuming alcoholic beverages. They are also to avoid working in jobs which principally involve alcoholic beverages. However, in situations such as there are no available jobs apart from one that requires you to deal with alcohol beverages, but that is not the primary job scope, this is allowed, as its sole purpose is to support oneself and one's family.

For example, if you are working at a supermarket where you would need to handle the packaging of either alcoholic beverages or other non-halal items, this would not be considered as your primary duty. A view within the Ḥanafī school of law has allowed for such a concession to be made especially in a country where a majority of its population are not Muslims. The Ḥanafī scholar, Imām Al-Zayla'ī in *Rad al-Muḥtār 'ala al-Dur al-Mukhtār*, held the view that the wages of one who is hired to transport wine, or to herd pigs are halal according to Imam Abū Ḥanīfah.



PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

✿ Diversity of humankind is a social reality as it is the will of God.

✿ Universality of humankind does not require uniformity in human experience.

✿ The essence of an inclusive society is such that we must first treat others how we want to be treated. We need to build a society that cares and respects one another in spite of the differences – a society that is bounded by our common humanity.

✿ Islam recognises diversity of humankind and acknowledges the diversity of religions. One of the primary goals of the Sharī'ah is the preservation of religion. This involves not only the protection, preservation and promotion of Islamic values and practices, but also translates into the protection for the freedom of belief (as opined by a Muslim scholar, Ibn Ashur).

Henceforth, Islam does not compel others to accept the religion, and every individual is entitled to the freedom of belief, conscience and worship.

✿ Importance of respecting and upholding established social norms ('urf or 'ādah) of a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. Where there are differences in the interpretation of religious texts, we should choose those which are best suited to our local norms.

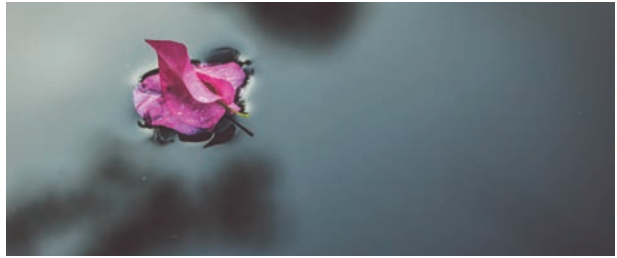
✿ Respecting the practices of other faith or religious orientations does not mean we subscribe to them. It only means we do not denigrate nor disrespect their views. Allah s.w.t. says in the Qur'an in Sūrah al-An'ām, verse 108: *“And do not insult those who invoke other than Allah...”*

How do we approach verses that have been misunderstood to justify hatred towards others?

Such as in surah al-Ma'idah verse 51:
"Oh you who believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies: they are allies only to each other. Anyone who takes them as an ally becomes one of them- God does not guide such wrongdoers."

Interpretations of Qur'anic verses to justify hatred towards anyone are both incorrect and not suited for our multi-religious society. Such interpretations ignore the fact that these verses refer to forming alliances with non-Muslims who seek to harm the Muslim community, and were revealed in times of political hostility.

The exegete al-Ṭabarī and other scholars emphasised that these verses are not a blanket prohibition, and hence understanding the context and reason behind revelation is crucial.



In fact, based on verse 8 of Sūrah al-Mumtaḥanah in the Qur'an provides a broad permission for Muslims to be just and treat humanity with kindness as friends.

"Allah does not forbid you to be kind and equitable to those who have neither made war on your religion and nor driven you out of your homes. Indeed, Allah loves those who are equitable." [al-Mumtaḥanah: 8]

Can we exchange greetings and gifts with people of other faiths?

In extending our *rahmah* towards our non-Muslims friends, we are encouraged to share food, exchange gift and wish each other good will. As for wishing them on their festive seasons, it is not an act that is prohibited in Islam. Those who call against Muslims from wishing their non-Muslims friends a joyous celebration on their religious festivals generally warn that such practices may render one to commit shirk or act of disbelief that may render one's faith to be nullified. Such viewpoints are incorrect.

One does not profess nor subscribe to the belief of the other religious communities by merely wishing them well on their religious or traditional festivals. Congratulatory expressions on the celebration of other faiths are meant to cement better social relationship among Muslim and non-Muslims. It is not about agreeing to the religious doctrines or subscribing to the other faith's creed and belief system.

Contemporary scholars such as Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah and the Mufti of Wilayah Persekutuan, Datuk Seri Dr Zulkifli Mohamad al-Bakri, also hold the same views on the issue.

Can we participate in the celebrations of other faiths' festivities?

With regards to Muslims' participation in the celebrations of other faith communities, it is important to be clear on the purpose and intent behind it. When it contains religious elements and is held for that purpose, Muslims may observe and attend the event although they should not partake in the rituals. For events held as a cultural and communal practice, Muslims are also religiously permitted to attend.

Attending the gatherings or functions of other communities with the intention of respecting and appreciating other cultures will further strengthen ties between Muslims and non-Muslims, and could help promote mutual respect among different cultures and people.

"When a (courteous) greeting is offered to you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. God takes careful account of all things."

[Ān-Nisaa':86]





Can Muslims visit other houses of worship?

Muslims can visit other houses of worship, as long as we do not participate in any acts of ritual. This is part of maintaining ties with those of different faiths, but share our values of humanity and compassion, and love for peace.

It was reported by Ibn Khaldūn in his book *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn* that Sayyidinā ‘Umar r.a. accepted the invitation to be shown around a church while in Jerusalem when he was the Caliph, and on other instances he had asked Sayyidinā ‘Alī r.a. and other Muslims to accept the church’s invitation for a meal, as recorded by Ibn Qudāmah in his book *al-Mughnī*.

Can people of other faiths enter our mosques?

Yes. The scholar Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah narrated in his book *Zādu al-Ma‘ād fī Hadyi Khayri al-‘Ibād* on how the Prophet s.a.w. had allowed for a delegation of 14 Christian chieftains and bishops from Najrān who came to Medina to sign a treaty with him, to pray in his mosque. They were having a meeting in the mosque when it was time for their evening prayers, so they requested to be given the permission to pray. Initially there were some companions who were reluctant to allow them to do so, but the Prophet s.a.w. gave his definite approval.

What if they do not cover their 'awrah when they come into mosques?

A mosque is the house of God, whose mercy and compassion extends to everyone. We are all guests of Allah s.w.t., hence we should treat His other guests with warmth and hospitality. We can recommend to, and encourage them to dress appropriately, but not from a position of perceived superiority.

Let us take heed from the example shown by Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. It was reported by Muslim that a Bedouin came into the mosque to urinate (openly) in its compound. This obviously shocked the companions who then tried to stop him. However, the Prophet s.a.w. then said: "Don't interrupt him; leave him alone". So they left him alone, and when he was done, the Prophet s.a.w. called him and then gently advised him to not do it again. The Prophet s.a.w. then gave orders to his companions to bring a bucket of water and wash it.

So we see how the Prophet s.a.w. treated someone who even urinated in the mosque's compound with such gentleness and accorded him with dignity, then there is no room for harshness and condescending attitude towards

people who do not cover their 'awrah in the mosque.

This also applies for Muslims who come into the mosques wanting to pray, but not covering their 'awrah. The mosque is the house of God where everyone is welcomed as long as they want goodness from the visit. Our duty is to offer advice in the most honourable and appropriate way.



Office
OF THE
MUFTI