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Translator's Foreword

IN THE NAME OF ALLĀH, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate. All praise is for Allāh, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, the Bestower of sincerity. May His peace, blessings, and mercy be upon the best of creation, His final Messenger, our beloved Master and Liegelord, Muḥammad ﷺ, the Imām of the people of *ikhlās*; and upon his beloved family, venerable Companions, and all those who follow him ﷺ in excellence until the Day of Arising. *Amīn*. The eminent 7th-century Levantine scholar Imām Nawawī relates the following ḥadīth in his famous collection of Forty ḥadīths (*Arba‘īn*):

Islam is built upon five: testifying that there is no deity except Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, establishing the ritual prayer, almsgiving, making the pilgrimage to the House, and fasting in Ramaḍān (*Bukhārī, Muslim*).

These five components of the religion serve as its foundation and are hence known as its “pillars,” since the “edifice” of Islam—or one’s entire religious practice—is most centrally based on them. No matter how large a structure one constructs, or how elaborately one decorates that structure, the whole edifice is in peril if its foundation is not firmly established. This is spiritually no light matter. Therefore, an appropriate measure needs to be taken by the believer to ensure his foundation is established in the most perfect and firm fashion. He must learn how the five pillars are performed and diligently apply that knowledge in consistent practice. He then may turn to his Lord in hope of acceptance, in gratitude for the ability to perform them, and in repentance from his shortcomings therein. Aside from the very belief in one’s heart, no

other affair, whether worldly or religious, is of greater import. No tree stands tall or bears fruit unless its roots run deep, providing strength to withstand the forces of nature and ensuring it is adequately nourished; the foundation is of utmost concern.

The text before us, then, is an invaluable resource for this weighty agenda. It is entitled “Ascent to Felicity in the Sciences of Theology and Jurisprudence of Worship” (*Marāqī l-Sā‘ādāt fī Ilmāyī l-Tawhīd wa l-Ibādāt*). It is a concise yet comprehensive manual on these two sciences, the latter based on the Hanafi school of law. Theology is an extension of the first pillar, since the testification of faith forms the basis of the entire corpus of Islamic beliefs, while jurisprudence of worship deals with the remaining four pillars. The text additionally covers the legal rulings pertaining to slaughtering, ritual sacrifice and hunting, and therefore as a primer, is quite broad in its range of subjects. At the same time, it does not delve into extraneous juridical and creedal minutiae that would otherwise overwhelm the reader, but is rather a clear presentation of the most salient issues pertaining to these two sciences.

“Ascent to Felicity” (*Marāqī l-Sā‘ādāt*) is not only lucid in its presentation and relevant to this lofty aim, but also reliable in its content. Its author, Imām Ḥasan ibn ‘Ammār al-Shurunbulālī, is recognized as a leading jurist of the late Hanafi school. He is more well-known for his other text on worship, *Nūr al-Idāh*—a work which gained unprecedented acceptance across Muslim lands wherever Hanafi law was taught, forming an integral part of the curricula of seminaries in modern-day Turkey, India, Pakistan, Egypt, the Levant, and the Caucuses. He also authored two excellent commentaries on *Nūr al-Idāh*, the lengthier *Imdād al-Fattāh*, and its summarized version *Maraqī l-Falāh*, both of which also gained widespread approval. The *Imdād* specifically is referenced over seventy times, despite it covering only five chapters, in ‘Allāma Ibn ‘Ābidīn’s magnum opus *Radd al-Muḥtār*, the source of legal verdict for the late Hanafi school throughout the Muslim world.

Not only is Ibn ‘Ābidīn’s reliance on the *Imdād* a testament to its being a seminal legal work, of which this text is a summarized presentation, but also reflects Imām Shurunbulālī’s aptitude as a jurist. Indeed, Ibn ‘Ābidīn specifically refers to Imām Shurunbulālī as *dhī l-ta’ālīf al-shahīra*, or “one who authored the very well-known works [of jurisprudence]” as well as *faqīh al-nafs*, a title of utmost reverence and veneration from one jurist to another (*Radd al-Muhtār* 1:3). Its meaning, as mentioned by Ibn ‘Ābidīn himself, is “one who is innately

endowed with the utmost understanding [of jurisprudence].”¹ He gives this title to only one other jurist in his entire marginal gloss, namely, the 6th-century master Qādīkhān.

IMĀM SHURUNBULĀLĪ

Born in a village in Upper Egypt in 994/1586, his father took him to Cairo at the tender age of six. He memorized the Qur’ān and subsequently studied the Islamic sciences under numerous scholars, specifically Qur’ānic recitation under Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī and Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Masīrī, and jurisprudence under Imām ‘Abdullāh al-Nahrīrī, ‘Allāma Muḥammad al-Mahabbī, and Shaykh ‘Alī ibn Ghānim al-Maqdīsī. He then went to Azhar University, which at that time was the sanctuary for advanced students. He pursued higher education there and surpassed his peers, for he was foremost in his knowledge of juridical passages and maxims. Word spread of his rank and skill, and he eventually became one of the most renowned juristconsults of the entire Muslim world. He assumed the post of professor at Azhar, whereby numerous aspiring students sat at his feet and benefited from his knowledge, many of whom themselves later developed into notable scholars of law. These included, from Egypt, ‘Allāma Ahmād al-‘Ajmī, Sayyid Ahmād al-Ḥamawī, Shaykh Shāhīn al-Armanāwī, and from the Levant, ‘Allāma Ismā‘il al-Nāblūsī (father of the illustrious saint and jurist, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nāblūsī). Moreover, the high demands and taxing lifestyle of his roles as professor, juris-consult (*muftī*) and jurist, did not in the least take away from his occupation as writer. He authored over sixty works, ranging from the aforementioned two commentaries, as well as his distinguished *Shurunbulāliyya*,² to numerous smaller treatises covering an array of specialized legal matters.

Upon visiting Cairo, one contemporary described him as follows: “[He is] the shining lantern of Azhar and its brilliant star . . . He gives life to eager minds . . . [and] possesses a beautiful character and magnificent eloquence . . .

¹ In Arabic, *shadid al-fahm bi 'l-tab‘* (*Radd* 4:305, quoting *Al-Talwīh*).

² This work is a marginal gloss (*hāsiyya*) on *Durar al-Hukkām fi Sharḥ Ghurar al-Āhkām*, spanning all chapters of law in the Ḥanafi school, and considered by some to be the most magnificent of his works (*ajalluhā*). It specifically became well-known during the Imām’s life, as many scholars and students benefited from it, and as such is deemed the greatest indicator of his expertise and proficiency (*malaka*), as well as his profound depth (*tabaḥḥur*) of knowledge in jurisprudence (*Tarab al-Amāthil*, addendum to *Al-Fawā’id al-Bahiyya*, 466).

MANDATORY REQUISITES (*WĀJIBĀT*) OF THE PRAYER

Among them²²² are the following:²²³

1. To say the words *Allāhu akbar* specifically [as opposed to other phrases of remembrance] to begin every prayer [i.e., for the *tabrīma*];
2. To recite the *Fātiha*²²⁴ as well as a *sūra* or three verses²²⁵ after it, in any two *rak'as* of the obligatory prayer and in all *rak'as* of the voluntary prayer;
3. To do the above recitation specifically in the first two *rak'as* of the obligatory prayer;
4. To perform prostration with [most of] the forehead and [the hard part of] the nose;
5. To perform the second prostration before moving on to other parts of the prayer;
6. To be still for at least a moment²²⁶ in every integral of the prayer;²²⁷
7. The first sitting,²²⁸

²²² If a mandatory requisite is omitted, the prayer is still valid yet deficient. If it were omitted on purpose, it is sinful and hence mandatory (*wājib*) to repeat the prayer, just as it is if one does something prohibitively disliked (*makrūh tahriman*) during the prayer. If omitted by accident, then one must perform the forgetfulness prostration at the end of the prayer (see related section, p. 106) (*Hadiyya* 65; *Durr* 1:306–7).

²²³ It is also mandatory (*wājib*) to rise from the first sitting as soon as one has recited the *tashab-hud*. If one forgets and instead remains sitting until he recites *Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad*, he has missed this requisite. If he recites less before recalling and standing, then it is excused (*Durr*, *Radd* 1:313; *Hadiyya* 66). Another mandatory requisite is to perform each obligatory (*fard*) and mandatory (*wājib*) element of the prayer in its proper place. If, for example, one finished the recitation and then accidentally remained standing while thinking—not engaged in any sort of remembrance, but rather silent for the length of time it takes to say *Subḥāna 'Llāh* three times in a measured pace—then he missed this requisite by delaying bowing, and would therefore need to perform a forgetfulness prostration (*Durr* 1:315).

²²⁴ That is, the entire *Fātiha*, as each verse is mandatory. An exception is if one fears the time expiring for *fajr*, because sunrise actually nullifies the prayer. In that case, he simply recites one verse to fulfill the obligation and complete the prayer on time (*Hadiyya* 65; *Durr*, *Radd* 1:307).

²²⁵ That is, three short verses, the shortest being *Thumma nazar*, *Thumma 'abasa wa basar*, *Thumma adbara wa 'stakbar* (*Qur'añ* 74:21–3), or one long verse of equivalent length or more, such as *Āyat al-Kursī* (2:255) or the like (*Durr*, *Radd* 1:308).

²²⁶ That is, for enough time to say *Subḥāna 'Llāh* once (*Hadiyya* 66; *Durr* 1:312).

²²⁷ That is, in bowing (*rukū'*) and prostration (*sujūd*), as well as in the standing after bowing (*qawma*) and in the sitting between prostrations (*jalsa*) (*Hadiyya* 66; *Radd* 1:312).

²²⁸ That is, the sitting after the first two *rak'as* in a three or four-*rak'a* prayer, for the length

8. To recite the entire²²⁹ *tashabbhud* in both sittings;
9. To say the word *as-salām*;²³⁰
10. To recite the *qunūt*²³¹ in the witr prayer [see p. 192];
11. To recite the [six] extra *takbīrs*²³² in the two *‘Id* prayers;
12. For the imām, to recite Qur’ān out loud in [the first two *rak‘as* of] the loud obligatory prayers;²³³
13. For both the imām and the one praying alone, to recite Qur’ān silently in the other *rak‘as* of the obligatory prayers.²³⁴

EMPHASIZED SUNNAS OF THE PRAYER

Among them²³⁵ are the following:

of time to recite the *tashabbhud* therein. The sitting after the forgetfulness prostration is also a mandatory (*wājib*) requisite (*Hadiyya* 66).

²²⁹ Hence, omitting a part of it takes the same ruling as omitting all of it, namely, requiring a forgetfulness prostration if by accident, or being sinful if on purpose (*Durr, Radd* 1:313).

²³⁰ That is, twice when ending the prayer, each one being mandatory. Adding ‘*alaykum wa rahmatu ‘Llāh* is a *sunna* (*Hadiyya* 67; *Durr, Radd* 1:314).

²³¹ Any supplication (*du‘ā*) fulfills this requisite (see related note, p. 97) (*Hadiyya* 67; *Durr* 1:315).

²³² That is, three in the first *rak‘a* and three in the second, each one being mandatory (*Durr, Radd* 1:315). This is the optimal method according to the Ḥanafi school, yet to do seven in the first *rak‘a* and five in the second is also valid, for which one must follow the imām in prayer (*Marāqī l-Falāḥ* 2:155–6).

²³³ Namely, both *rak‘as* of fajr, the first two *rak‘as* of maghrib and ‘ishā’, both *rak‘as* of the Friday prayer and two *‘Id* prayers, and the *tarāwīh* and congregational witr in Ramadān. For these *rak‘as*, a man praying alone has the choice of reciting aloud or silently, even if making up the prayer. Women do not recite aloud for any prayer (*Mukhtār* 1:76; *Hadiyya* 67; *Radd* 1:315).

²³⁴ Namely, all *rak‘as* of zuhr and ‘aṣr, the third *rak‘a* of maghrib, and the third and fourth *rak‘as* of ‘ishā’ (*Hadiyya* 67; *Radd* 1:315).

²³⁵ The following are also emphasized *sunnas* of the prayer: while standing, to keep the feet about four-fingers apart (*Imdād* 267); to lengthen the first *rak‘a* of only fajr, while for other prayers the first and second *rak‘as* should be approximately of similar length; to place one’s hands on one’s thighs when sitting, such that the fingertips are parallel to the knees, without grabbing the knees; to point with the right index finger when pronouncing the testification of faith in the *tashabbhud*, raising it with *Lā ilāha* and lowering it back down with *illa ‘Llāh*; for the imām when ending the prayer, to pronounce the second *salām* less audibly than the first one; for anyone, to begin with the right when turning the head with the closing *salāms*; and for the latecomer (*masbūq*), to wait until the imām says the second closing *salām* before rising to make up his missed *rak‘a*(s), to see if the imām needs to perform a forgetfulness prostration, since following the imām is mandatory (*wājib*). (*Hadiyya* 69–71; *Durr, Radd* 1:320–1, 332, 484; *Marāqī l-Falāḥ, Taḥṭāwī* 1:375).

The following are emphasized *sunnas* that are specific to men, while women do the opposite. While bowing, men clutch the knees with the hands and spread the fingers wide, keep the legs straight without bending the knees, and bend over fully such that the head is even with the bot-