

12th Annual Imams' Conference

Recommendations of the Conference on *Contemporary Issues Facing Islamic Centers in the West*

AFFIRMING THE STATUS OF A MOSQUE, FINANCING THE BUILDING OF A MOSQUE OR CHANGING ITS FUNCTION

AFFIRMING THE STATUS OF A MOSQUE AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A MOSQUE AND A MUSALLA

The status of a mosque is attained by a perpetual endowment by an owner of a building or a separate portion thereof to be designated as a mosque. It being of a perpetual nature is a must for a structure to be considered a mosque. It does not include any portion that is not set aside specifically for prayer, even if it is physically connected to the mosque. If the endowment is a common area that cannot be divided, then such an endowment is not proper for a mosque.

It is permissible to rent a hall to perform the Friday and Congregational Prayers. Those halls will not have the same rulings as a mosque. However, if something is designated temporarily as a mosque, then it will take the rulings of the mosques with respect to respecting the place, not disturbing those who are praying therein and the permissibility of performing *itikaaf* therein, given that this is a matter of *ijtihad* among the scholars.

It is a condition to establish an endowment that is donating owner is explicit concerning it, specifies the place that is designated for it and separates it from his possession. However, if a group of people collect donations to build a mosque on a piece of land, then the specific portion that is built upon will be considered a mosque by convention.

It is permissible for establishers of the endowment to specify a specific floor of a building as a perpetual mosque endowment, even if there are floors above and below it which are not endowments.

Mosque status is not established for a piece of land that has been made an endowment but has not yet been built upon, even though the endowment part is affirmed. However, when the building is close to being finished in the form of a mosque, people are encouraged to treat it like a mosque with its proper etiquette.

Rooms or buildings attached to the mosque do not take on the same rulings as the mosque according to the majority of the scholars, even if they are given as an endowment to benefit the mosque or the people of the mosque. This is the case if those spaces are not specifically and perpetually designated for prayer and there is no outward sign of it meant to be a mosque, such as a minaret. This is especially the case if these places were explicitly exempted from being part of the mosque when the mosque endowment was established. It is permissible to build such adjoining rooms or halls with the income of the mosque.

The *Musallas* are placed designated for prayer but they do not meet all of the requirements for mosque status, such as being a perpetual endowment. As such, the regulations of a mosque do not apply to them except for those that are necessary to preserve the sanctity of the place and preventing people from disturbing those who are in prayer. The “prayer of entering the mosque” is not obligatory in such places. Women on their periods or with post-partum bleeding are allowed to enter and stay in such places (even for those who do not allow that in mosques). It is not forbidden to buy and sell in such places or to make announcements concerning lost items. Furthermore, the ownership of its owners will remain and it is permissible for them to change its usage to any other purpose. In our times, these *musallas* would include rooms that are specified for prayer (again, without a perpetual endowment) in businesses, factories, malls, universities, clubs and in houses as well.

It is not a condition for the soundness of the Friday Prayer that it be performed in a mosque according to the majority of the scholars. It is permissible to perform the Friday Prayers in the *musallas*. The case is different with respect to *itikaaf*, which does require that it be done in a mosque. It is best to adhere to the etiquettes of a mosque in the *musallas* in order to teach and train youngsters concerning such etiquette.

REPLACING ONE MOSQUE BUILDING FOR ANOTHER

If a mosque is dilapidated or can no longer fulfill its functions, it is permissible to replace it with another close-by building that will fulfill the needs of the people.

However, such a move is conditional upon first consulting with the congregation and getting the approval of the majority of them. It is also conditional upon ensuring that the people are never left at any prayer time without a place to perform their prayers. The first mosque should not be vacated until people have access to the new mosque.

There is no problem with buying land attached to the mosque in order to expand the mosque and then convert the original space into a multipurpose hall or gymnasium and build another mosque that is bigger and more accommodating to the needs of the worshippers.

SELLING A MOSQUE ENDOWMENT DUE TO ITS NO LONGER BEING NEEDED

The default rulings concerning endowments is that they cannot be sold except in a way that is beneficial for the endowment and is in accord with the goals of the establisher of the endowment. If a mosque is no longer able to accommodate the worshippers and they are in need of selling it in order to purchase a bigger place as a mosque, then it is permissible to sell it and to use that money to buy another mosque as, in so doing, they would have met the goals of the endowment and the needs of the Muslims. If it is decided to sell and replace it, it is also permissible to use it as collateral in order to assist in purchasing its replacement. However, if the old mosque can be maintained, it should not be abandoned, especially in non-Muslim lands where such places could be sold and then transformed into places of *shirk* or immorality.

REGISTERING THE OWNERSHIP OF THE MOSQUE AND USING IT AS COLLATERAL

It is not permissible to register the mosque in the name of the one who is donating the property because an endowment is not established unless the owner completely relinquishes the property from his ownership. The mosque should be registered as an independent organization and endowment or it could be registered under an institution that oversees endowments, such as NAIT.

The donor or establisher of the endowment may require that he is the administrator or executor of the endowment and he may formally register himself as such. However, it should be kept in mind that this may discourage people from donating to such a mosque.

The worshippers should not feel any hardship in praying in a mosque that others still have some rights over, such as a mosque that is being held in collateral until its payments are finished. They may freely perform their congregational and Friday Prayers in such a mosque as they wish.

It is not permissible to put a mosque a collateral unless it is has been decided to sell the mosque and replace it with a new one, given the conditions stated above. In that case it is permissible to use it as collateral due to the benefit accruing from it in purchasing its replacement.

FINANCING THE BUILDING OF MOSQUES

The default when it comes to building mosques is for the people to sacrifice the purest of their wealth as donations for its sake as an act of respect to the houses of Allah.

It is permissible to accept for the building of a mosque money that comes from individuals with both permissible and impermissible means of income. The prohibited aspect of such money has to do with the means with which it was earned and the sin falls upon its earner and does not transfer with the money to anyone else who receives it in a permissible manner. How to approach this matter is related to the concept of *al-siyaasah al-shariyyah* or administrative policies in the light of what is most beneficial and proper. As such, by accepting such money, it may encourage the donor to repent to Allah and, at the same time, not accepting such money may be an incentive for them to refrain from forbidden sources of wealth.

It is permissible for a non-Muslim to establish an endowment as a mosque or to donate money to the mosque but only with the condition that he will not have any authority over the mosque or be involved in any of its decisions. In that case, it would not be permissible.

It is not permissible to use interest-based loans to build mosques, this is because the sin of such loans is not removed except in absolute necessity and it is not conceivable that building a mosque would be an absolute necessity. The possible exception is if there is a possibility that the mosque be lost or lay in ruins and that all of the money that was donated to the mosque would then be lost. They should use every means to procure money from their congregations or reach others to avoid or remedy this situation.

It is not permissible to take an interest-based loan on behalf of the needs of the mosque or even an interest-free loan if that would require using the mosque itself as collateral.

THE MANNER OF DEALING WITH FIQH, AQEEDAH AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFERENCES WITHIN AN ISLAMIC CENTER

Unity is a mercy and division is a torment. It is impossible to avoid differences of opinions on secondary, detailed issues. What is not permissible, though, is bigotry and injustice towards others.

A *fatwaa* is the clarification of a Shareeah ruling. The *muftis* are signing their *fatwaa* on behalf of Allah. The *mufti* must safeguard the *fatwaa* from any influence of party or group affiliations. Similarly, he should seek the moderate and balanced opinions of the scholars and refrain from the infamous or anomalous opinions.

There is to be no repudiation in matters of *ijtihaad*. The issues related to *ijtihaad* are too many to be uniform. If every two Muslims who disagreed on an issue would boycott each other, there would be no brotherhood or protection of one another at all.

The administrative issues should be arranged among the people according to what is good and customary. The administration of the mosque must be in coordination with the Imam of the mosque. Acting in accord with the decision of the majority will be the way to resolve any conflicts, as long as that decision does not contravene a Shareeah ruling in which there is a sound text or a clear Consensus.

It is proper from a Shareeah perspective to be gentle and understanding towards those who hold *shaadh* (unique and rejected) opinions, especially in times of commotion, conflict and the religion not being well understood. This is the approach as long as those individuals do not try to force their views on the congregation. If that occurs, the welfare of the congregation takes precedence over the welfare of that individual in case of conflict.

One should do one's best to convey Islamic moderation as this would be most effective means of bringing people together upon the truth. Blameworthy differences that lead to bigotry and intolerance or which lead to mistaken views or rejected opinions must be avoided.

The default is that it is the Imam's responsibility to implement rulings and explain the Shareeah position on new issues. No one else should overrule him if he is qualified for that rule. If there is a dispute between the administration and the Imam on a fiqh issue related to the administration of the affairs or activities of the mosque, they must agree on an authority or reference that could resolve the dispute among them.

The default or norm is for the responsibility for the khutbahs to be on the shoulders of the Imam. In his absence, he can assign an appropriate person to fulfill this Shareeah responsibility. This is the case if there was no stated agreement between the Imam and the Mosque that is contrary to that. There should be coordination in inviting lecturers or khateeb between the Imam and the administrators of the mosque.

It is not person to prayer in the mosque of sects that hold beliefs that violate the creed of Islam, such as Qadianis, Bahai and the Nation of Islam, those who still believe that there is a prophet after our Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The default is that an individual should not intend to pray in those mosques that violate the way of the Sunnah, such as the mosques of the Habashis and extreme Sufis, except for the purpose of advising them or ordering good and eradicating evil.

The default or norm is that the relationship between the Imam and the administration of the mosque should be built upon trust, respect and mutual cooperation. Furthermore, the rights and obligations of the Imam should be clearly laid out in his contract in order to avoid disputes and disharmony.

The default is for the Imam to exert himself to fulfill the role of conveying the message of Islam. He should be extremely cautious concerning any behavior related to money or women, so that the door is closed for anyone to attack his reputation.

There is no harm with women participating as members of an Islamic Center, both voting and being nominated, within the limits of the principles of Shareeah, when they are qualified to do so and when there is benefit for the community in doing so. The principles of Shareeah must be applied in order to ensure that no evils result from such participation.

The best way for the women to participate is for there to be women representatives in the meeting, that is via the creation of committees specifically for and of women. This will be the best use of their capabilities and in a way that does not conflict with the rulings of the Shareeah.

If there is a need for men and women to participate in the same general meetings to discuss an issue that needs a general input or decision and touches upon the welfare of all, the participants must strive to preserve the Islamic principles related to the mixing between men and women. These should be taken into consideration both with respect to how the meeting is set up as well as with respect to the behavior of the participants in the meeting.

The default is that no one should be prevented from attending the mosques of Allah in which Allah's name is mentioned. In general, a restraining order should not be resorted to in order to keep a troublemaker from attending the mosque except in a case of dire necessity where all of other means of advice and discussions have failed. When these have failed, using a restraining order would be permissible under the principle of accepting the lesser of two evils or repelling the greater of two harms and in giving preference to the interests of the congregation over the interest of an individual.

MUNDANE ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE WITHIN THE MOSQUE

EATING AND DRINKING IN THE MOSQUE

It is permissible to eat or drink in the mosque as long as such actions do not soil or pollute the mosque and do not cause hardships upon the worshippers. It is most appropriate to have a separate hall for the purpose of eating, sleeping and other activities.

SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN THE MOSQUE

It is permissible to have sports or entertainment activities in the mosque as long as they do not interfere with the purposes that the mosque has been established for of remembrance of Allah and reciting the Quran.

General principles must be adhered during any dawah or entertainment program: men and women cannot intermingle in inappropriate ways, such as looking at one another, uncovering the bodily parts that are meant to be covered, listening to music or inappropriate speech, the furniture and property of the mosque must not be damaged or harmed.

SHOWING MOVIES OF AN EDUCATIONAL OR ENTERTAINMENT VALUE IN THE MOSQUE

Where there is an overriding need or benefit and if there is no hall connected to the mosque, there is a concession for showing educational or entertainment movies in the mosque, even if they might contain some minor violations of Islamic Law. The decision on its benefits or harms is left to those knowledgeable or experienced people in the community to decide. They also must do their best to limit the quantity of the violations as well as point them out if they can. It is most appropriate for there to be a separate hall for these types of activities in order to avoid the difference of opinion on this issue and preserve the sanctity of the prayer hall.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND USING MICROPHONES IN THE MOSQUE

Making announcements as well as using microphones within the mosque, regardless of whether it be related to dawah activities or other issues that concern the Muslims, are permissible in general. They are disliked if they are for mundane purposes, such as announcing a lost item, buying and selling and so forth. An exception to this dislike status is if it involves the welfare of an individual, such as announcing that there is a lost child.

It is a condition for this permissibility that the announcements not disturb those who are praying or come in between them and their worship of their Lord. Thus, it would be best to do them before or after prayers. Such announcements should be made by the mosque administration or those that they have assigned for the task.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES RELATED TO MOSQUE'S FINANCES

AUCTIONS IN THE MOSQUE SELLING OF ITEMS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE MOSQUE

It is permissible for a mosque or a charitable organization to sell items that they have received due to the need of benefitting from their price if there would be some expenses to keeping the item, the item would take up a lot of space or the item would be exposed to being damaged or stolen.

It is permissible to sell such an item just described in the form of an auction in a mosque, where the people bidding to buy the item are donating for the benefit of the mosque or charitable organization. After they buy the item, it is permissible for them to return it, whether it is gold or any other time, to the original person who donated it.

It is permissible to hold such auctions in the mosque given the following conditions:

- i. It must be for the benefit of a the mosque or a charitable organization and it cannot be for any personal benefit.
- ii. It cannot take place so often that the mosque loses its fundamental purpose of being a place for the remembrance of Allah and the prayers.
- iii. The item auctioned must not be so large that it takes up space that is needed for the prayers.

- iv. Voices should not be raised or shouting take place above what is needed.
- v. The times chosen for such auctions must be such that the auction will not be disturbing the worshippers.

KEEPING A PORTION OF THE MONEY DONATED FOR THE HOST MOSQUE AND THE ONE WHO COLLECTED THE FUNDS

If one cannot find volunteers to raise donations for the mosque or charitable organizations, it is permissible for them to assign a monthly wage for such workers, according to what is appropriate pay for such work. One could also assign to the person a specific percentage of what was collected, at what would be considered a reasonable level. It is also permissible to assign to them a wage from the category of zakaat known as, "those employed to collect zakat," or from a general donation fund.

It is permissible for the mosque to keep a reasonable percentage of the donations collected for any charitable organization or purpose in order to cover its expenses as it remained open for the collecting of the funds. The percentage given to it must be reasonable. If the amount were announced, most of the donors would accept it and would not consider it repugnant. In most cases, there not being aware of it makes them hesitate in giving for that cause.

THE COLLECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF ZAKAAT AL-FITR

The default ruling concerning zakaat al-fitr is that it cannot be delayed beyond its proper time, with is Salaat al-Eid. A group of jurists say that the most virtuous time for giving zakaat al-fitr ends with the Eid Prayer but the permissible time of giving it continues until sunset on the day of Eid.

The jurists agree that the responsible to pay it does not lapse with the lapsing of the time. It is a debt that is not dropped except by fulfilling it, as it is the rights of humans. The obligation is to give it during its time to the poor or to the agents [such as the mosque representative] who will distribute it to the poor. If the zakaat reaches the agent, then it is the same as if it reached the poor, even if the agent is late in distributing it.

The mosque or a charitable institution that collects zakaat al-fitr is, at one and the same time, the agent or representative on behalf of the poor in taking the funds as well as on behalf of the rich in distributing the funds according to some contemporary jurists. As such, there is no prohibition in delaying the distributing of the funds if there is some need or overriding benefit, being analogous to that being permissible with respect to zakaat on wealth.

Zakaat al-fitr must be dealt with in its own independent account as its recipients differ from those of other forms of donations. It is not permissible to mix its funds with the general donations.

The default ruling for zakaat al-fitr is that it is to be distributed as food, as that was the practice at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is permissible to distribute it as food due to need or overriding benefit, due to the difficulties of storing grains [and other acceptable foods], transporting them and distributing them. This is the opinion of a group of scholars, including Ataa, al-Hasan al-Basri, Umar ibn Abdul Azeed, al-Thauri, Abu Hanifah and others. Abu Ishaq al-Sabee, who was a Follower, said, "I found them giving the charity of Ramadhan [that is, zakaat al-fitr] in money according to the value of the food."

There is no harm in transporting the zakaat al-fitr to people who are more in need in a different land or to give it to one's relative [other than those one is financially responsible for], as giving to one's relative is both keeping the ties of kinship and charity.

The majority of the scholars say that one is not allowed to pay zakaat al-fitr on behalf of a person one is not responsible for without that person's permission. Based on that, it is not permissible to give [or distribute] the zakaat al-fitr beforehand for one who has not given that permission to do so on their behalf. Similarly, it is not permissible to borrow for that purpose, not from the funds of the mosque or from others, even if not doing so may delay the distribution of the zakaat al-fitr to its rightful recipients. The delay would be considered a type of fulfillment of the act and it would suffice; however, giving on behalf of someone without his permission is not valid.

It is permissible for the mosque to announce that if anyone would like them to be their agents in giving zakaat al-fitr, they should inform the mosque which would make a list of these people. In this case, the mosque can borrow from general donations and pay the zakaat at its proper time and then demand from those who registered that they repay the mosque what the mosque gave on their behalf.

FUNDRAISING DURING THE FRIDAY KHUTBAH, BETWEEN THE TWO KHUTBAHS OR BETWEEN THE KHUTBAH AND THE IQAAMAH FOR THE PRAYER

It is forbidden to do fundraising during the Friday Khutbah as it is not consistent with the purpose of the Khutbah, it would involve stepping over the people to collect the money and pass out the donation forms or take down the names of volunteers, and other numerous actions that take place during fundraisers.

There is no harm if the Khateeb calls upon the people to give donations on a Friday, regardless of whether that is done during the khutbah while the collection is done afterwards or if it is done before the khutbah is started and the khutbah is delayed and made shorter.

It is disliked to collect donations while the Imam is sitting between the two *khutbahs* or between the *khutbah* and the *iqaamah* of the prayer, as it may lead to a long divide between the two of them while moving from one khutbah to the other or from the khutbah to the prayer without a long break is one of the conditions for the validity of the Khutbah. It can also cause hardship for the worshippers. It is sufficient to have it before the khutbah or after the prayer.

If there is a great need, perhaps to a sudden emergency—and the people of knowledge should determine how great is the need—then one may do so at those times but should not make the time long for collecting donations and should not make that a regular practice. What is meant by a “long” or “short” time is based on custom, as everyone unexplained concept in the Shareeah then refers back to what is customary.

USING ZAKAAT FUNDS TO BUILD A MOSQUE, ADORN A MOSQUE OR MAINTAIN A MOSQUE

The vast majority of the scholars state that the category of zakaat recipients under, “for the sake of Allah,” is restricted to those participating in jihad who are not receiving a stipend from the public treasury or whose stipend is not sufficient for their needs. The Hanbalis add to this the one who is going to make the obligatory pilgrimage but cannot meet its expenses. Based on this, it is safest to use only voluntary charity in building mosques and not use zakaat except due to necessity.

Since the understanding of jihad includes “jihad with the word,” it is sanctioned to use zakaat funds for those who are working in the field of dawah, to support and assist their efforts. They are included among the recipient category, “for the sake of Allah,” mentioned in the verse. This is the resolution of the Fiqh Assembly of the Muslim World League.

The zakaat recipient category, “those in debt,” is inclusive of mosques that are in debt. They can pay their debts from the zakaat funds. As for the monthly payments that a mosque pays as a result of busying a piece of land, building on it or expenditures on dawah program, zakaat can only be used for what is immediately due of those debts.

Adorning the mosque is reprehensible. Charitable donations, even voluntary donations, should not be used to adorn the mosque except for a small amount that is customarily considered acceptable, that will not distract the worshippers and which is not considered extravagance.

INVESTING EXCESS MOSQUE FUNDS IN INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE MOSQUE

It is permissible, as a principle, to invest the zakaat funds in investment projects that will result in ownership of the proceeds by the recipients of zakaat or will be under the authority of those responsible for collecting and distributing zakaat. However, this can be done only after the immediate dire needs of those deserving zakaat are met and there is sufficient guarantees that the money will not be lost. (See the resolution of the Fiqh Assembly of the OIC.)

If the wealth used was wealth that was donated for the purpose of the mosque endowment, then permission must be taken from the donors of the endowment to invest that money. If they permit the purchase of stores or houses where the rent is used for the benefit of the mosque, it is then permissible.

If the monies used are the excess of general voluntary charity, then the matter is very flexible, since the contributors did not specify in what manner their funds should be used. Hence, the funds may be used in whatever manner the mosque administrators feel will bring about benefit to the mosque.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES RELATED TO THE FRIDAY KHUTBAH AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY

USING POWERPOINT AND OTHER MEANS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY DURING THE KHUTBAH

It is permissible for the Khateeb to use modern technology, such as smart phones, tables and laptops and other devices that will assist him in delivering the Friday Khutbah.

It is preferable not to use Powerpoint and other presentation software or modern devices during the Friday Khutbah, as nothing comparable to that has been narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and it is not certain that it would be beneficial or needed. This is especially the case if the Khateeb was simply going to present text. The sanctity of the Khutbah may also be violated if he uses forbidden means,

such as music, pictures of women and the like.

It is disliked for the Khateeb to address individuals in the congregation without any need, as that is not affirmed in the practice of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and falls under the category of the actions that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) avoided. It is permissible if there is some need to do so, as when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told one who entered the mosque not to sit until he prays two rakats.

INSTANTANEOUS TRANSLATION OF THE KHUTBAH

There is no harm in having an instantaneous translation of the khutbah if there is some apparent need for that. It would be better to translate it while the Khateeb sits between the two khutbahs as this way one avoids the problems of the devices used to transmit the translation suddenly failing.

GIVING LECTURES IN THE MOSQUE BEFORE THE FRIDAY PRAYER

There is no prohibition if needed to give the people a lecture in the mosque before the Friday Prayer in Arabic or any other language that the worshippers would understand, in order to remind them and instruct them in the affairs of their religion. However, this should not take away from the status of the Friday Khutbah nor empty it of its importance and purpose.

BRINGING CHILDREN TO THE MOSQUE

Bringing children to the mosque is an issue in which different people's interest clash. The mosque has an interest having its property protected and preserved. The worshippers have an interest in having a quiet place that does not have distractions. The parents have an interest in coming to the mosque and having their children attached to the mosque.

The presence of children in the Prophet's mosque is a reality that no one can deny. However, no one can deny either that their movements have to be controlled so that they do not disturb the prayers of the adults or do not violate the sanctity of the mosque..

Children are not all alike. They can be divided into three categories:

- i. Those who understand the sanctity of the mosque and the obligation to respect it. (It is expected that by reaching seven years of age they should understand this.)
- ii. Those who are known to obey their parents and other adults in authority over them, in that they will do what they are asked to do when told to stop doing something. Those children should not be kept away from attending the mosque, even if they are below the age of seven.
- iii. Those known for stubbornness and obstinacy and who will not respond to the instructions given to them nor do they recognize the sanctity of the mosque. These are the ones whom the early scholars disliked to have brought to the mosques.

The mosque administrations must make an effort to accommodate the children and bring their hearts closer to the mosque. They should have programs that are appropriate for them. They should do this while maintaining the sanctity of the mosque and respect the serenity of the worshippers.

USING OTHER THAN ARABIC IN ACTS OF WORSHIP AND DAWAH ACTIVITIES

Arabic is the language of the Quran and Sunnah. Learning it is one of the outward rites of the people of Islam. All Muslims should be concerned with learning Arabic and give it its due attention. Preserving it is also one of the outward rites of the faith. Similarly, the next generation must be brought upon it. For those who cannot speak Arabic, they should try to learn Arabic so that they can get complete benefit from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is obligatory upon non-Arabic speakers that they learn the Arabic that is required of them to fulfill their acts of worship.

The norm concerning supplications is that one supplicates to Allah by His Divine Names. He is not to be called on except by His Most Beautiful Names. After that, one may state words of praise or qualities in any language one wishes.

Making statements about Allah is more flexible than the question of what names belong to Him. The Divine Names cannot be translated. If they are translated, they are actually no more than a translation of the meaning and the indication of what those names imply. Such translations are included in the category of giving information about Allah and not naming Allah by those words.

A translation of the meaning of the Quran is not the Quran. Instead, it is like a book explaining the Quran. As such, it is not permissible to be used in the prayers.

It is permissible to supplicate to Allah in any language as long as the person understands what he is saying.

The default concerning the transmitted words of remembrance and supplications is that their exact wordings are intended by the Shareeah, such as the call to prayer, the opening *takbeer* for the prayer, the words said in the sitting in the prayer and so forth. These are to be said in Arabic. However, if a person is not capable of saying them in Arabic, he may exchange them for other expressions, such as *Allaahu Akbar*, *Al-Hamdulillah*, *Subhaanallah*, *Laa Haula wa Laa Quwwata ila-bilaaah* and similar expressions that are easy for the person. If he is not able to do that, he may read a translation in his language until he is able to learn how to pronounce the Arabic and its meaning in Arabic.

It is permissible for one who does not know Arabic to follow along with the Imam during Salaat al-Taraweeh by reading a translation of the Quran without actually stating the words he is reading, until he is capable of understanding what he is hearing of the Book of Allah, if there is a need to do so.

It is permissible for someone praying by himself and who is not capable of knowing Arabic to read the *Qunoot* in the language he is familiar with until he learns Arabic. He must exert himself to learn Arabic and seek help in doing so. As for the Imam of a congregation, it is not permissible for him to do the *Qunoot* in any language other than Arabic as that would contradict one of the outward signs of the people of Islam and that there is going to be an alternative of having someone who knows Arabic lead the prayer.