

## The Obligatory Prayers

“Obligatory prayer and fasting occupy an exalted station in the sight of God.” (Baha’u’llah)

The obligation to recite one of the daily obligatory prayers begins at the age of maturity (15 years). You can choose any one of the three obligatory prayers.

### The Short Obligatory Prayer

- To be recited daily, between noon and sunset.
- It is recited facing the Qiblah (point of adoration, i.e. Bahji, ‘Akka).
- It is preferable to stand in an attitude of humble reverence (Q&A 82).
- Ablutions (washing your hands and face in preparation) should precede the recitation of the prayer.

### The Medium Obligatory Prayer

- To be recited three times a day - between sunrise and noon, between noon and sunset and between sunset and two hours after sunset.
- The morning obligatory prayer may be said as early as dawn (i.e. before sunrise).
- It is recited facing the Qiblah (point of adoration, i.e. Bahji, ‘Akka).
- The ablutions (washing your hands and face) are accompanied by the recitation of certain verses.
- Certain movements accompany the remaining verses, as set out in the printed text.

### The Long Obligatory Prayer

- To be recited once in twenty-four hours.
- It is recited facing the point of adoration (the resting place of Baha’u’llah, Bahji).
- Ablutions (washing your hands and face in preparation) should precede the recitation of the prayer.
- Certain movements accompany each verse, as set out in the printed text.
- The prostrations (kneeling with your forehead to the ground) may be done on any clean surface.

### Missed obligatory prayers

- When travelling, the obligatory prayer may be omitted when there is no security, i.e. no safe place to say it.
- On arrival in safe surroundings, perform a prostration in place of each prayer missed, and after the final prostration sit cross-legged and recite the designated verse (see below).
- The same rule applies to an obligatory prayer missed at home (Q&A 61).

### Miscellaneous points

- The daily obligatory prayers are to be recited individually. (The only obligatory prayer to be said in congregation is the prayer for the dead.)
- Do not recite the obligatory prayer when you are ill (Q&A 93).
- The elderly (those over seventy) are exempt from reciting the obligatory prayers.
- In times of bitter cold, it is advisable to use warm water for your ablutions.
- If there is no water, or the use of water would be harmful to your face or hands, you may instead repeat five times the words “In the Name of God the Most Pure, the Most Pure”.
- You do not need to wash your face and hands a second time if you have just washed them.

- But you should still wash your face and hands if you have just taken a bath. (This shows that ablutions have a significance beyond washing – Kitab-i-Aqdas, note 34).

Short Obligatory Prayer

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee.  
I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth.  
There is no other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Prostrations and verse to be recited on reaching a safe place

Perform a single prostration in place of each unsaid Obligatory Prayer, and while prostrating say "Glorified be God, the Lord of Might and Majesty, of Grace and Bounty." If you are unable to do this just say, "Glorified be God." On completing these prostrations, sit cross-legged (men and women alike) and repeat 18 times "Glorified be God, the Lord of the kingdoms of earth and heaven." (Kitab-i-Aqdas 14)