

PRAYER

A prayer in Arabic is “ Salah”, which means communication. It is the communication between man and his God. The prophet (SAW) said: “The obligation which distinguishes between believers and the unbelievers is prayer”. Therefore, whosoever resists prayer, becomes unbeliever. Prayer is a duty on the Muslim in all circumstances. Even if he is sick or frightened he should perform his daily prayers, standing, sitting or even lying.

The five obligatory daily prayers are the Morning Prayer (Fajr), the noon prayer (Zuhr), the afternoon prayer (Asr), the evening prayer (Maghrib) and the night prayer (Ishaa).It is our personal communion with God and is the foundation of our daily life. Prayer becomes the medium through which we search for peace, for inspiration, for protection against sinning, repentance, among many other things. It is therefore of paramount importance that you learn how to pray properly.

The best way to learn how to pray is through the help of another Muslim. Befriend a good practicing Muslim and ask him/her for help, but to get you started the following explanation should prove to be useful. As we mentioned above it is our duty to Allah to pray five times a day. Each prayer should be performed within the timeframes as described below, with the starting and ending times for each one being available at most mosques or better yet, on-line.

	PRAYER	TIME FRAME
1	Morning Prayer (Fajr). Two rakahs	Begins about one hour and twenty minutes before sunrise and ends about ten minutes before sunrise. It is recited out loud
2	Noon Prayer (Zuhr). Four rakahs	Begins when the sun passes the meridian and ends about two and a half hours afterwards. It is recited in silence
3	Afternoon Prayer (Asr). Four rakahs	Begins from the time the noon prayer time ends and ends about 10 minutes before sunset. It is recited in silence.
4	Sunset Prayer (Maghrib). Three rakahs	Begins soon after sunset and ends before darkness approaches. The first two rakahs are recited out loud, and the third is recited in silence.
5	Night Prayer (Isha). Four rakahs	Begins from the time the sunset prayer ends and extends till just before the morning prayer. The first two rakahs are recited out loud, and the last two recited in silence.

5.2.1 Dressing for prayer

Before offering your Salah make sure that you are properly dressed. For men and boys, the dress should be such that it covers their bodies from the navel to the knees at least.

Women are required to cover themselves from head to foot, leaving only the face and hands uncovered. The dress for Salah must be clean and free from all filth. During the monthly period women are free from obligation of Salah.

5.2.2 Place of Salah

Wherever a man might be, he can turn towards Allah in Salah and in devotion. The prophet (Pbuh) has said, "The (whole of the) earth has been rendered for me a mosque: pure and clean". Preferably Salah is to be offered in Jamah (congregation). Whenever possible, one should pray facing the Kabah, Makkah.

5.2.3 Preparing For Your Prayer (Wudu)

Before you approach prayer you should purify yourself by performing Ablution (Wudu). The first step in performing Wudu is to intend it in your heart and by uttering, or saying in your mind, the words "**Bismillah**" (in the name of Allah). Then rinse your palms up to the wrist three times, rinse your mouth thrice, wash your nose by sniffing water in it thrice, wash your face three times, then wash your hands up to the elbow, the right hand first then the left hand. Then wipe your head with wet hands, rub your ears with wet hands and finally wash your right feet up to the ankle thrice and repeat it with your left foot. When washing your hands, arms and feet you should always start with your right one and repeat it three times, as the Prophet taught us to do. After you are finished you should say "**shade an-la ilea illallahu, washadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh**".

If you go to the bathroom for any of your necessities, pass wind, sleep or become unconscious, you should purify yourself again by following the same procedure as described above before the next prayer. If you are in a state of major impurity (discharge of semen in erotic dreams or sexual intercourse) purify your body by taking a complete bath (Ghusl). Women should also take a bath after menstruation or childbirth. The procedure is as follows (1) have the intention of Ghusl, (2) wash the private parts, (3) perform ablution (Wudu) as you do before prayer (4) put water over the head (5) wash the whole body, head and hair thoroughly so as not to leave a dry spot (6) say ashadu an-la ilaha illallahu, washadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh. A Muslim is expected to do Ghusl at least once a week is on Friday before the congregational prayers, though nowadays it is hardly applicable as we take showers everyday.

Women are exempt from performing prayer during the days of menstruation and childbirth time. As for other times, they are required to perform prayer promptly.

A- The Partial Ablution (Wudu)

Before offering the prayer one must be in good shape and pure condition. It is necessary to wash the parts of the body, which are generally exposed to dirt or dust or smog. This performance is called ABLUTION (Wudu') and is preferably carried out as follows:



1. Declare the intention that the act is for the purpose of worship and purity, start by saying ***Bismillah***.
2. Wash the hands up to the wrists, three times.
3. Rinse out the mouth with water, three times, preferably with a brush whenever it is possible.
4. Cleanse the nostrils of the nose by sniffing water into them, three times.
5. Wash the whole face three times with both hands, if possible, from the top of the forehead to the bottom of the chin and from ear to ear.
6. Wash the right arm three times up to the far end of the elbow, and then do the same with the left arm.
7. Wipe the whole head or any part of it with a wet hand, once.
8. Wipe the inner sides of the ears with the forefingers and their outer sides with the thumbs. This should be done with wet fingers.
9. Wash the two feet up to the ankles, three times, beginning with the right foot.

At this stage the ablution is completed, and the person who has performed it is ready to start to start his prayer

When the ablution is valid a person may keep it as long as he can, and may use it for as many prayers as he wishes. But it is preferable to renew it as often as possible. It is also preferable to do it in the said order, although it will be accepted from those who fail to keep this order. Ablution in the said way is sufficient for prayer unless it is nullified by any reason.

B- Nullification of the Ablution

The ablution becomes nullified by any of the following:

1. Natural discharges (i.e., urine, stools, gas, etc.)
2. The flow of blood or pus and the like from any part of the body;
3. Vomiting;
4. Falling asleep;
5. Losing one's reason by taking drugs or any intoxicating stuff.

After the occurrence of any of these things the ablution must be renewed for prayer. Also, after natural discharges, water should be applied because the use of toilet tissues may not be sufficient for the purpose of purity and worship.

C- The Complete Ablution (Ghusl/Bath)

The whole body with the nostrils, mouth and head must be washed by a complete bath before commencing prayer in any of the following cases:

1. After intimate intercourse;
2. After wet dreams; or night discharge;
3. Upon expiration of the menstruation period of women;
4. At the end of the confinement period of nursing women, which is estimated at a maximum of forty days. If it ends before, complete ablution should be done.

It should be pointed out that at the start of the bath or ablution the intention must be clear that it is for the purpose of purity and worship. Also, a person who is performing an ablution, partial or complete, should combine his performance with some utterances glorifying God and asking Him for true guidance. The forms of such utterances are described in detail in the elaborate sources of the religion. One, however, can say one's own best utterances if one do not know the exact wording. That is sufficient as long as it is in the praise of God and is said with sincerity

5.2.4 How to Perform Prayer

Stand on a clean place, facing the Kabah in Mecca (northeast from US and Canada) and intend to perform the prayer. An example of how to make intention for the Morning Prayer is "I now intend to pray the morning obligatory prayer, facing the Kabah, praying to Allah". The intention for prayer could be in any language, but the actual prayer should be performed in Arabic, which appears difficult at first, but insha'Allah you will gradually you'll learn it through practice, insha Allah. You should practice reciting the Quran with another Muslim for proper pronunciation, or using any of the interactive tools available from any Islamic bookstore. You can also perform a search on the Internet for sounds and other manuals on how to perform your prayers.

Following is a description on how to perform the Morning Prayer. It consists of two units and each unit are called a Rakah:

- One enters the prayer by raising hands up to the ears and saying "**Allahu Akbar**" (Allah is Great) as seen in the picture to the right.
- Then lower your hands and place the right hand over the left one about the navel.
- Then recite in a low voice: "**Subhanakalla-humma wa bihamdik, wa tabarakas-muka, wa ta'ala jadduk, wa La Illaha Ghayruk**".

Meaning: 'Glory be to You, O Allah, and Yours is the praise and blessed is your Name, and exalted is Your Majesty, and there is no god besides you'.



Then recite:

- "**Authu billahi minash shaytanir rajeem**" meaning 'I seek refuge of Allah from the condemned Satan'.
- Then recite the Opening Chapter of the Quran (Surah Fatihah).
- "**Bismillahir rahmanir raheem. Al-Hamdu lillahi Rabbil Aalamiin. Ar-Rahmanir Rahiim. Maaliki yawmid-diin. Iyyaaka nàbudu wa iyyaaka nasta in. Ihdinas Siraatal Mustaqiim - siraatal-lathiina an amtaalayhim-gayril-magduubi-alayhim-waladdaaalliin**".



Meaning 'In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds. Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgement. You alone we worship, and your aid alone we seek. Show us the straight way. The way of those on whom you have bestowed your grace, those whose portion is not wrath and who go not astray.'

Then read any portion of the Quran :Example, recite Chapter 112 (Surah Ikhlas):

" Bismillahir rahmanir raheem. Qul hu-wallaahu Ahad, Allaahus Samad. Lam yalid, wa lam yuulad. walam yakulla huu kufuwan ahad." Meaning 'Say: He is Allah, the One. Allah the Eternal, Absolute. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him'

Another example will be outline in Annex A

Then say :

"**Allahu Akbar**". Meaning 'Allah is Great'

Then bow down, bending your head and back straight at a right angle, while putting both hands on the knees. This position is called Ruku, and in this position recite three times:

"**Subhana Rabbiy al-Atheem**". Meaning 'Glory to my Lord the Great'

Then return to the standing position while saying



"Sami alahu Liman Hamidah, Rabbana Lakal Hamd". Meaning 'Allah accepts any who are thankful to Him; Our Lord, praise is to You. When saying this hands remain on the sides.

Then say **"Allahu Akbar"** and prostrate yourself with toes of both feet, both knees, both hands and the forehead and nose touching the ground. This position is called Sujud.

Recite three times:

"Subhana Rabbiy al- Ala". Meaning 'Glory to my Lord, the Most High'.

- Return to the sitting position while **saying "Allahu Akbar"** and after a brief pause prostrate once more saying:
- **"Allahu Akbar"**, Recite: **"Subhana Rabbiy al-Ala"** three times while in prostration.

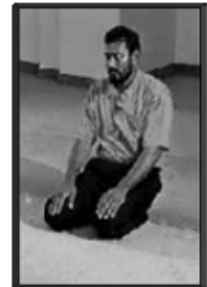


Then stand upright again saying "Allahu Akbar".

This completes one unit or one Rakah.

While standing in the second unit (Rakah) again recite Sura Fatiha and some other verses from the Quran, bowing, prostrating and repeating what you did and said during the first Rakah. However, after the second prostration, instead of standing up, you should sit upright and recite the following:

"At-tahiyato, lillahi was salawato wattayyibat.. As-salamu alayka ayyuhan nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa baraktuh. As-salamu alayna wa ala ibadillahis saliheen. Ashhadu an la ilaha illallahu, wa ashhadu



anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh" (while saying this last sentence you should extend the index finger on your right hand to re-emphasize the oneness of God). Meaning: 'all reverence, all worship, all sanctity are to Allah. Peace be upon you, O prophet, and the mercy of God and His blessings. Peace be upon us all and on the righteous servants of God. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah alone, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger

Then recite:

"Allahumma salli ala Muhammad wa ala ali Muhammad, kama sallayta ala Ibraheema wa ala ali Ibraheem, fil alameena innaka hameedun majeed. Allahumma barik ala Muhammad wa ala ali Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibraheem wa ala ali Ibraheem, fil alameena innaka hameedun majeed". Meaning: 'O Allah, exalt our leader Muhammad and the people of our leader Muhammad, as You did exalt our leader Abraham and the people of our leader Abraham. O Allah, bless our leader Muhammad and the people of our leader Muhammad, as You did bless our leader Abraham and the people of our leader Abraham, verily You are Praiseworthy, and Glorious'

And lastly say a short supplication such as the following:

"Rabbana atina fiddunya hasanatun wa fil akhirati hasanatun wa khina adhabanna"

Meaning: 'O Allah, bestow on us the best in this world and the best in the hereafter and save us from the punishment of the Hellfire.

You finish your prayer by saying **"as-salamu alaikum wa rahmatullah"**

While turning your face to the right and again saying **"as-salamu alaikum wa rahmatullah"** while turning your face towards the left. Meaning, 'peace and mercy of Allah be upon you'.



This completes two Rakah prayer (units) or any two the Morning Prayer

5.2.5 Obligatory Prayers (Fard Salah)

The Morning Prayer is two Rakah

The early afternoon, late afternoon and night (Zuhr, Asr and Isha) prayers consist of four Rakah each. The first two Rakah of these prayers are performed in the same manner as the Morning Prayer. But after reciting the Tashahhud you should stand and continue to pray the third Rakah (unit) reciting only Surah Fatiha and not joining it with other passages of the Quran. Then in the fourth Rakah, sit down as you did in your second Rakah and recite the Tashahhud, supplication and ending the prayer as above.

Sunset prayer (Maghrib) prayer consists of three Rakah. First two Rakah are the same as above. Stand up for the third Rakah reciting Surah Al Fatiha, and then complete this Rakah as you did the fourth Rakah above.

It important to note that the first two Rakah of Morning, or Maghrib or Isha prayers are loud (only while you are standing reading, Sura Fatiha and something from Quran) any others are Silent

5.2.6 Sunnah Additional Prayer

As you can see in the chart below, each Salah is composed of (a) Fard, the prescribed prayers, (b) Sunnah additional prayers. The Holy Prophet (Pbuh) said these additional prayers before or after the prescribed (Fard) prayers. These are therefore recommended. The sequence of these additional prayers in each Salah is given below:

NAME Of Salah	Number of Sunnah Before Fard	Number of Fard	Number of Sunnah After Fard
Fajr	2	2	
Zuhr	4	4	2
Asr	-	4	
Maghrib	-	3	2
Isha	-	4	2 + Waatr

Waatr consists of multiple two complete Rakahs (minimum two complete Rakahs) and Single complete Rakah.

5.2.7 Friday Prayer (JUMA)

Muslims gather once a week for a congregational prayer called Jumaa consisting of a short speech followed by two rakahs. It is obligatory for all Muslims males to perform the Friday prayer in congregation, so if you work locate the mosque closest to your office and talk to your supervisor to let him/her know that you will be absent during that time. If you are a student, contact your local Muslim Association to find out where Jumaa is offered. It is highly recommended to take a complete bath (Ghusl) on Friday mornings before the Jumaa prayer

5.2.8 Disliked Acts in Salah

The following are disliked, but are not believed to invalidate your salah.

1. Don't make salah if needing to relieve oneself in the bathroom. Go to the bathroom first.
2. Don't make salah if the food is already served. Eat first.
3. Don't look upwards. Don't look around. Fix your eyes downward on the area where you will make sajda. Don't make excessive movements, unless out of necessity.
4. Don't intertwine your fingers while preparing for Salah or during the Salah. Men should not pray with garment hanging beneath the ankle
5. Reluctance to stand in the front line in congregational prayer.
6. Leaving gaps in lines of congregational prayer.
7. Resting only the tip of the head on the floor during sujood.
8. Hasty performance of prayer which does not allow repose and calmness in rukoo' or sujood.

Crossing in front of a praying person.