

THE
SECOND PILLAR



LEARNING MY SALAH

Salah - For a Continuous Relationship with Allah

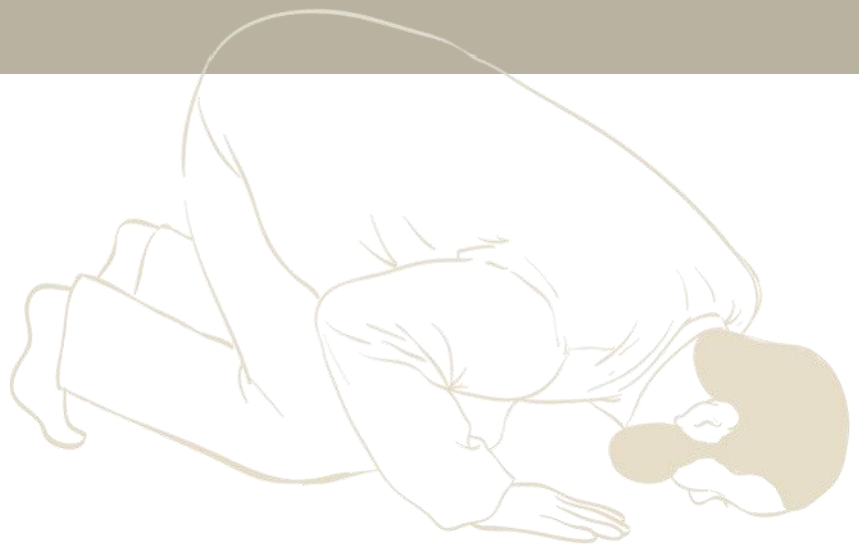
AHLAN
TIME TO EXPLORE

Learning My Salah

THE SECOND PILLAR IN ISLAM

“Indeed, I am Allah. There is no god except Me,
so worship Me and establish *SALAH for My
Remembrance*”

QUR'AN 20:14



THAT IS, offer constant prayer to Allah with sincerity
and a humble, attentive heart to strengthen your
remembrance of Him and your attachment to Him



www.explore-islam.com

Email: info@explore-islam.com

Prepared by Haya Muhammad Eid

Edited by Emily Richardson

*Supervised and reviewed by
AHLAN*

*Praying illustrations drawn by
Dr. Manal Rashad Abdul Aal*

Cover design by: Reham Badr

All images and icons used in this book are from Flaticon.com, FreePik.com, Openclipart.org, Freeiconspng.com, and Pixabay.com. Abstract geometric background [prayer step by step section] designed by Creative hat/FreePik.

This book may be freely used, copied, distributed, and transmitted so long as it is not altered in any way

CONTENTS

1 Introduction to *Salah*

<i>Salah Maintains a Continuous Connection with Allah</i>	8
FIVE DAILY PRAYERS...A Running River in Which You Cleanse Yourself Five Times a Day	10
Prescribed Times of <i>Salah</i>	12
Azan: Call to <i>Salah</i>	14
Essential Conditions for Validity of <i>Salah</i>	16
Description of <i>Salah</i>	18
Performance of <i>Salah</i>	19

2 Purification

<i>Are You Pure and Ready for Salah?</i>	21
Types of <i>Taharah</i> (Purification)	22
How to Perform <i>Taharah: Ghusl - Wudu' - Tayammum</i>	23-29
Permissibility of Wiping over Socks or Shoes	26
Brief Illustration of the Way to Perform Ablution	27
Purification after Answering the Call of Nature	28
Nullifiers of Ablution	30
Ablution Is a Purification That Is Not Only Physical, but Also Spiritual	31
Inner and Outer Purity	32

3 Steps of Offering *Salah*

<i>a-The Way to Perform the First Rak`ah (Unit) of Prayer</i>	
1. Standing Posture	34
2. Bowing Posture	40
3. Prostration Posture	44
<i>b-The Way to Perform the Second Rak`ah (Unit) of Prayer</i>	
4. Sitting Posture:	48
(a) Reciting the <i>Tashahhud</i> in a Two- <i>Rak`ah</i> Prayer	50-51
(b) Reciting the <i>Tashahhud</i> in a Three- <i>Rak`ah</i> or a Four- <i>Rak`ah</i> Prayer	52-53
(c) Offering the <i>Taslim</i>	51-55

• Brief Illustration of the Way to perform a Two- <i>Rak`ah</i> Prayer, a Three- <i>Rak`ah</i> Prayer and a Four- <i>Rak`ah</i> Prayer	56-61
• Wording of <i>Al-Tashahhud</i> and <i>Al-Salat-ul-Ibrahimiyyah</i>	62-63
• Conclude Your <i>Salah</i> with Supplication and Glorification of Allah	64

4 Why Should *Salah* be in Arabic?

Recitation of Al-Fatihah

- In the Case of Recent Muslims Who Have Not Yet Learned Arabic and Those Who Cannot Learn It
- Muslims Who Have Difficulty or Cannot Learn Arabic

67

69

5 The Merit and Method of Congregational *Salah*

A Believer to Another Believer Is like the Bricks of a Wall

72

Equal Rows Breaking down Barriers of Language, Race, and Social Class

74

The Time for Prayer Has Come

76

The Way to Perform Congregational *Salah*

78

6 Understanding *Salah*

The State of Heart and Mind Required during *Salah*

82

Necessary Composure While Performing the Various Acts of *Salah*

84

Helpful Ways to Acquire Humility and Focus during *Salah*

86

Beauty of *Salah*

88

Tranquility, Something Only Known to People Committed to *Salah*

90

Salah - The Purpose of Life

92

The First Thing You Will Be Asked About on Judgment Day

93

7 *Salah* Concessions for People with Valid Excuses

94

8 Supererogatory Worship that Allah Loves

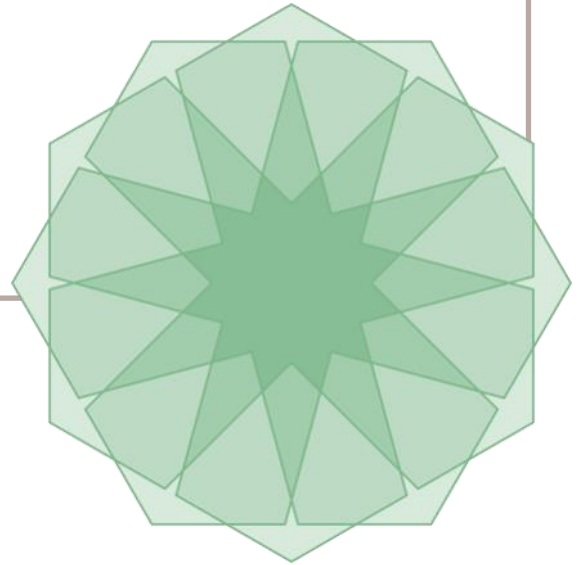
98

9 Important Vocabulary of *Salah*

100

10 Appendix: The Six Pillars of Belief	108
The Five Pillars of Practicing Islam	111

INTRODUCTION TO *SALAH*



“Establish regular prayers.
Indeed, performing prayers is a
duty on the believers at the
appointed times.”

(QUR'AN 4:103)

Salah Maintains a Continuous Connection with ALLAH



For anything in this universe to be built, Allah has decreed that it should have a foundation on which its structure can rest.

- The stronger the foundation, the stronger and safer the building will be. Any structural damage or defect can cause the whole building to collapse one day.
- *Salah* is the cornerstone of Islam and its second pillar. A person's Islam is incomplete unless they perform *Salah*.
- *Salah* derives from the Arabic word *Silah*, which means connection, because it connects the humans with their Maker and draws them closer to His Mercy. *Salah*, therefore, is your private contact and communication with the Originator of life and the Creator of everything—Allah. He, the Exalted, has enjoined it upon you to bring you closer to Him daily.
- *Salah* in Islam is the foundation; when performed regularly, it positively influences and transforms every thought, attitude, and action. Allah says in His Noble Book: “...and establish ***Salah***. **Indeed, *Salah* prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater.**” (Qur'an 29:45) In other words, maintaining regular communication with Allah provides you with guidance and success, fills you with strength and peace, and protects you from deviation and ruin.

MEDITATE ON THIS!

In your worldly affairs, you are very keen to strengthen your connection with people who serve your interests; how will it be for you when you strengthen your connection with the Creator and Owner of everything?

FIVE DAILY PRAYERS...

A Running River in Which You Cleanse Yourself Five Times a Day

- *Salah* is obligatory upon every **mature**, sane Muslim man and woman.
- Obligatory *Salah* is performed five times per day and night (each 24-hour period). It is very similar in its cleansing action to repeated bathing and washing with pure water, which cleanses one's body and clothes of impurities or dirt. The five daily prayers work in a similar way; they work like plentiful water, by which Allah (the Gracious) washes away sins.
- Explaining the purifying and uplifting effect of the five daily prayers, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his Companions, **“Tell me, if there was a river by the door of one of you in which he bathed five times a day, would any dirt remain on him?”** They answered, “None of it would remain.” He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“That is exactly like the five daily prayers with which Allah wipes out misdeeds.”** (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

*Imagine the effect of
Daily Prayers:*

The river is right at your door, not far
or hard to get to.

The dirt on your body is harming you.

Feel yourself bathing in the river,
getting rid of all the dirt on your body
and having your energy renewed.

You step back to life with a purified
soul, a calmer mind, and a relieved,
unburdened, and rejuvenated heart.

Prescribed Times of Salah



- The five daily prayers are of such significance and merit to the life of a human that Allah (the Wise and Knowing) has distributed them throughout the day in a unique pattern at different times, from sunrise to nighttime. In order, they are: **Fajr (Dawn) Prayer** – **Zuhr (Noon) Prayer** – **`Asr (Afternoon) Prayer** – **Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer** – and **`Isha' (Night) Prayer**.
- This way, remembrance of Allah (the Sublime and Majestic) is not restricted to just one time of the day or night; rather, praying at set times during the day maintains a continuous connection to and dependence upon Allah, keeping us constantly aware of our Creator and never oblivious to Him.
- Each of the five prayers has a specific time, prescribed by Islamic Law, during which it must be performed. Allah says: **“Establish regular prayers. Indeed, performing prayers is a duty on the believers at the appointed times.”** (Qur’an 4:103) If the appointed time of a prayer is missed, the prayer is not waived and must be made up for.

The Times of the Beginning and End of the Five Daily Prayers



Dawn Prayer:

From the break of true dawn (horizontal white light spreading across the horizon) until sunrise.



Noon Prayer:

From the time the sun passes its meridian (midday) until the shadow of a thing is equal to its length.



Afternoon Prayer:

From the time when Noon Prayer ends until the sun sets.



Sunset Prayer:

From sunset until the disappearance of red twilight.



Night Prayer:

From the disappearance of the red twilight glow until the middle of the night.

Local time varies around the world, and, therefore, prayer times vary from city to city. If you want up-to-date prayer times, you can download a mobile prayer times and *Qiblah* compass application or use the Athan Times computer application from Islamic Finder: www.islamicfinder.org.

AZAN: Call to Salah

*Allahu Akbar**
Allahu Akbar

Ash-hadu alla ilaha illa Allah

I testify that there is
no god but Allah

Ash-hadu anna Muhammadar
Rasulu Allah

I testify that
Muhammad is the
Messenger of Allah

Haiya `alas salah
Come to *Salah*,
Come to *Salah*

Haiya `alal falah
Come to success,
Come to success

Allahu Akbar,
Allahu Akbar

La ilaha illa Allah
I testify that there is
no god but Allah

ALLAHU AKBAR:

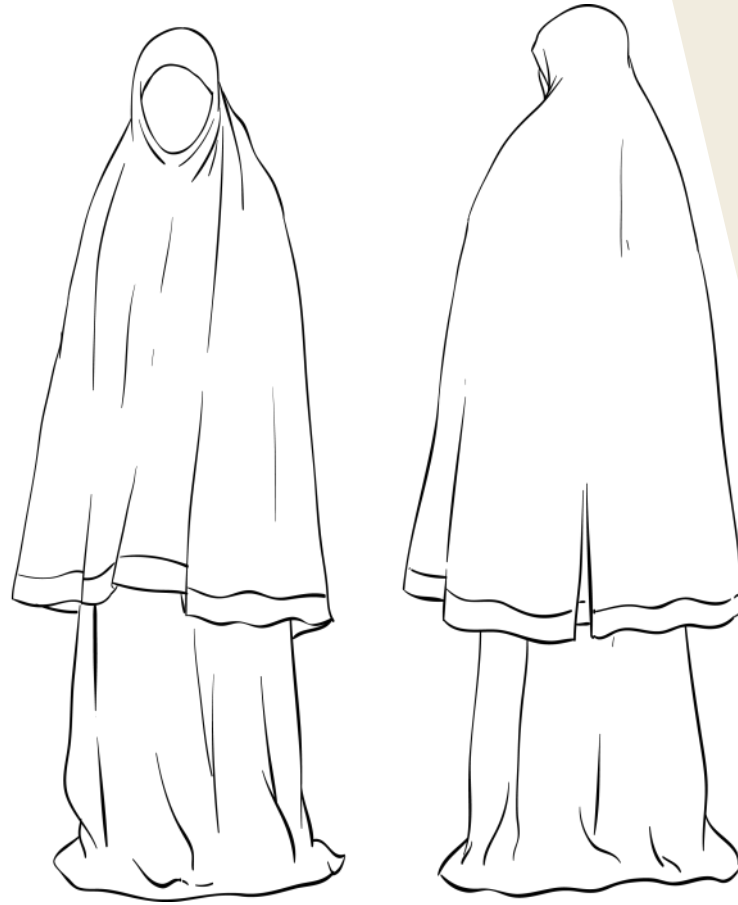
Literally means 'Allah is Greater'; it is an unfinished phrase serving as a reminder that no matter what you can possibly think of or might be busy with, Allah is Greater and more important than that.

- The **Azan** is a call from Allah (Exalted and Glorified be He) to all Muslims to rise and perform the due prayer on time.
- The Azan is announced five times a day, before each prayer. The person who recites the Azan is called the **Muezzin** (caller to prayer). In the earliest times of Islam, before the introduction of minarets or the invention of loudspeakers, the Muezzin would stand in a high place to be seen by everybody and heard at the furthest distance possible.
- The Azan is a continuous reminder with each single prayer that praying is the means to success in the affairs of this world and the next. It is not in anyone's power to give that. All provisions, happiness, and prosperity rest in Allah's Hands alone.
- Therefore, **"Come to *Salah*,"** is followed by **"Come to success";** that is, there can be no prosperity without *Salah*. Or, to put it more plainly, you can only attain true success, happiness, and honorable provisions by aligning yourself with Allah, the Gracious.
- So when you hear the Muezzin reciting the Azan, repeat after him word for word, except for the parts **"Come to *Salah*,"** and **"Come to success."** Instead of them, say, **"There is neither might nor power except with Allah,"** and then get up to *Salah*... get up to success.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:
"When you hear the call (to prayer), say as the Muezzin says."
(Narrated by Muslim)

Essential Conditions for Validity of *Salah*

1. **Arrival of prayer time:** Being certain that the time of prayer has begun. Prayer before its due time is invalid.
2. **Purity:** Cleanliness of body, clothes, and place intended for prayer.
3. **Ablution (for minor ritual impurity):** Washing specific body parts with pure water in a certain manner with the **intention** of purification for prayer.
4. **Clothing requirement:** Men wearing clothing that, at the minimum, covers their body from the navel to the knees. Women wearing clothing that covers their entire body, except the face and hands.
5. **Facing towards the Qiblah:** Turning the whole body, before starting to pray, towards the **Qiblah**, which is the direction of the Sacred **Ka`bah** in Mecca.
6. **Intention:** Making the intention to offer prayer for the sake of drawing close to Almighty Allah. The place of intention is the heart; there is no need to verbally state it.



Any loose-fitting, non-transparent, modest dress covering the entire body except the face and hands



DESCRIPTION OF *SALAH*

***Salah* consists of equal units, each of which is called *Rak`ah* in Arabic.**

Each *Rak`ah* (unit or cycle of prayer) is made up of several postures, including standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting. It is performed in a continuous manner along with reciting Al-Fatihah (the first Qur'anic chapter) and any other memorized portion of the Qur'an, in addition to specific phrases of glorification, praise, and supplication.

The Number of Rak`ahs of Each Obligatory Prayer:

- ◆ Fajr (Dawn) Prayer: Two units
- ◆ Zuhr (Noon) Prayer: Four units
- ◆ `Asr (Afternoon) Prayer: Four units
- ◆ Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer: Three units
- ◆ `Isha' (Night) Prayer: Four units

Difference between Dua' and Salah

Dua' means literally supplication; calling out to Allah the Provider of all things for whatever needs we have. It has no prescribed form; it can be said at any time, day or night, in any language. It is spontaneous, using whatever words or phrases come to mind (one's own words or memorized supplications from the Qur'an and Sunnah) and does not require performing ablution or facing the *Qiblah*.

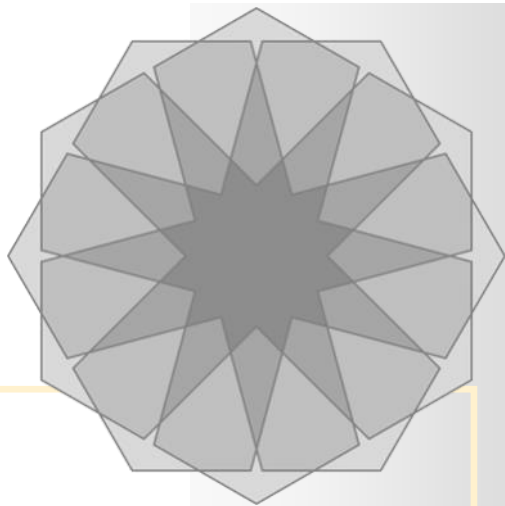
PERFORMANCE OF *SALAH*

Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) instructed his followers: ***“Pray as you have seen me praying.”***

(Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

For your *Salah* to be valid and accepted by Allah, the High and Lofty, you must perform it in the way authentically performed by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

- *Salah* is a physical form of worship composed of organized sayings and movements, intended for remembrance of Almighty Allah. During its performance, it requires complete disconnection from all life’s activities and distractions in order to step out and have space and time alone with Allah, the Exalted.
- *Salah* is an acknowledgment of Allah’s absolute Oneness and Sovereignty, an act of glorification of Him, an expression of praise and gratitude to Him, a manifestation of humility and submission to Him, a turn towards Him, a dependence on Him, a drawing near to Him, a beseeching of help and provision from Him, and an entrusting of oneself to His Protection and Care.



TAHARAH (PURIFICATION)

“Surely Allah loves the ones constantly repenting, and He loves the ones constantly purifying themselves.”

(QUR'AN 2:222)



Are You Pure and Ready for *Salah*?

- Islam is a religion of purity and cleanliness; purity of the heart and cleanliness of the body. Allah (Glorified be He) says: **“Surely Allah loves the ones constantly repenting, and He loves the ones constantly purifying themselves.”** (Qur’an 2:222)
- The eminent Muslim scholar, Hasan Al-Basri, would change into his best clothes whenever he stood to offer *Salah*. He was asked about this and replied, “Verily, Allah is Beautiful and He loves beauty, so I beautify myself for my Lord. He is the One Who says: **‘Take your adornment (proper clothes and cleanliness) at every *Masjid* (every time and place of prayer).’**” (Qur’an 7:31)
- In Islam, prayer is not only a form of spiritual worship; it is also a physical one. Essentially, it consists of physical cleanliness, purification, beautification, and tidiness. A prayer is invalid if purity is lacking. Purity of clothes, body, and place of prayer is a necessary precondition that Allah (the Great and Exalted) has stipulated for its validity. Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Allah does not accept *Salah* without purification.”** (Narrated by Al-Nasa’i)
- Purification unlocks the door to *Salah* and puts the person in the appropriate physical and emotional state for addressing Almighty Allah. Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“The key to *Salah* is purification.”** (Narrated by Abu Dawud)

TYPES OF *TAHARAH* (PURIFICATION)

Taharah, linguistically, means cleanliness from impurities, both physically and morally. Technically, it means lifting the state of *Hadath* (bodily ritual impurity) and removing defilements that preclude valid prayer.

TAHARAH IS OF TWO TYPES:

1. **Purification from discernible impurities:** This is the process of purifying oneself from any visible physical impurity [such as urine, blood, or vomit] on the body, garment, or place of prayer that prevents the validity of that prayer. In this case, purification is accomplished by the removal of the defiling substance from the affected area by washing, sprinkling, or scrubbing with water.
2. **Purification from indiscernible impurities:** This is the process of purifying oneself from indiscernible impurity related to the body, referred to in Arabic as *Hadath*, that prevents a person from prayer and similar acts of worship. Ritual impurity can affect either the entire body, termed in this case as major ritual impurity [by causes such as sexual discharge, menstruation, or postpartum bleeding], and is eliminated by complete body wash; or it can affect specific parts of the body, termed in this case as minor ritual impurity [by causes such as sleep, passing wind, urine, or feces], and is eliminated by ablution.



Alternative purification method in the case of inability to obtain or use water: When water is unavailable or there is danger of sustaining physical harm by using it due to sickness, old age, or severe cold, *Tayammum* (dry purification with clean earth) can be performed as a substitute for purification with water (i.e., ablution and ritual bathing).

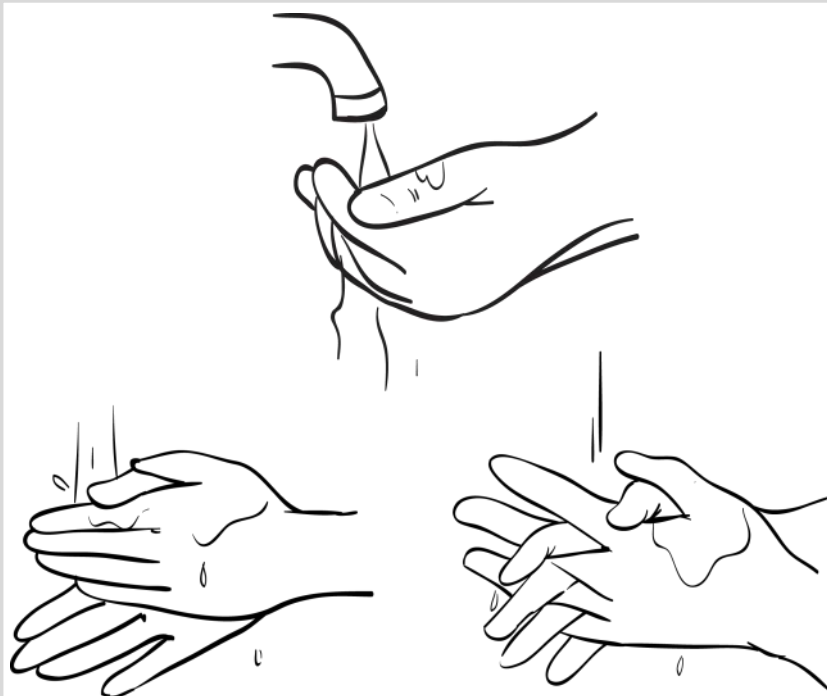
HOW TO PERFORM *TAHARAH*

1-GHUSL (RITUAL BATHING):

- Wash your entire body, including the roots of your hair (scalp), with pure water after forming the intention to purify yourself by sincerely focusing your mind on it, and saying at the start, “*Bismillah* (in the Name of Allah).”
- **Situations that necessitate *Ghusl*:**
 - (1) After sexual intercourse.
 - (2) Emission of *Maniy* (semen or vaginal fluid) with lust, whether awake or in a wet dream.
 - (3) After cessation of menstrual or postpartum bleeding.

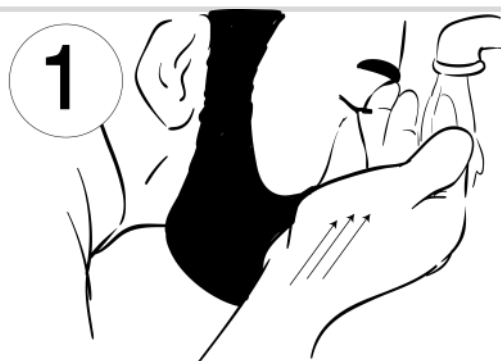
2-WUDU’ (ABLUTION):

1. Make intention. Intend in your heart to perform ablution, and start it by saying, “*Bismillah* (in the Name of Allah).”



2. Wash your hands three times. Wash your both hands up to the wrists, starting with the right hand. Ensure that the water runs between your fingers.

3. Rinse your mouth three times. Take a handful of water (in your right palm) and rinse your mouth, swirling the water around inside, and then spit the water out each time.



4. Inhale water into your nose three times. Take a handful of water (in your right palm) and sniff some water into your nose and then expel it. (If necessary, use the left hand to help blow it out).



5. Wash your face three times. Wash your whole face by cupping your hands together, filling them with water, and taking it to your face. Ensure that every part of your face, from the top of the forehead to the tip of the chin and from ear to ear, gets washed.

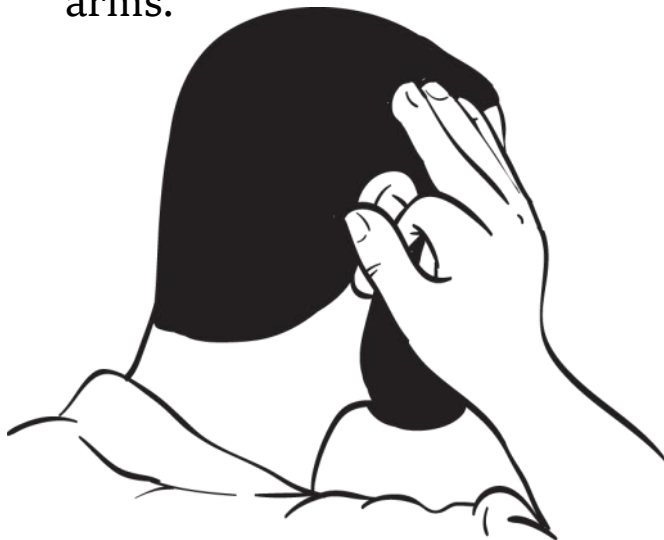
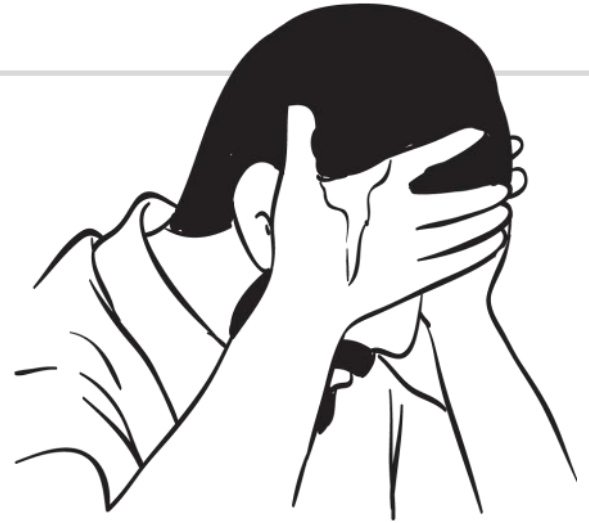


Bearded men have to wash their beard as well because it is considered part of the face. If it is a thin beard through which the skin is visible, the hair to the skin underneath should be washed. If it is thick and covers the skin, only the outer surface should be washed, and it is a recommended act of **Sunnah** to run wet fingers through it.



6. Wash your arms three times. Wash your right arm all the way from the fingertips up to (and including) the elbow. Repeat with the left arm.

7. Wipe over your head once. Then, having wet your hands with new water, wipe them over your head, front to back. Ensure not to use the water left over from washing your arms.



8. Clean both ears, inside and out, once. With your hands still wet with the same water, simultaneously wipe the inside of both ears with your index fingers and the back of your ears with your thumbs.

9. Wash both feet three times. Wash your right foot from the toes up to (and including) the ankles. Ensure that the water goes between the toes. Repeat with the left foot.



Permissibility of Wiping over Socks or Shoes



With the aim of providing ease, if you are wearing socks or shoes, you are permitted to wipe over them instead of having to take them off and put them on again in order to wash your feet during ablution. The wiping is done by passing your wet hands over the upper surface of your socks or shoes, from the extremity of your toes to the shin.

Three conditions must apply for the wiping to be valid:

- 1-The socks or shoes are worn while being in a state of ablution.
- 2-They are pure and clean.
- 3-They completely cover the feet up to the ankles.

The period for wiping over socks or shoes: Residents are allowed to wipe over them for one day and night, and travelers are allowed to do this for three days and nights.



Brief Illustration of Ablution

Bismillah



1

Washing the hands



2

Rising the mouth



3

Sniffing water in and out the
nose



Washing the face

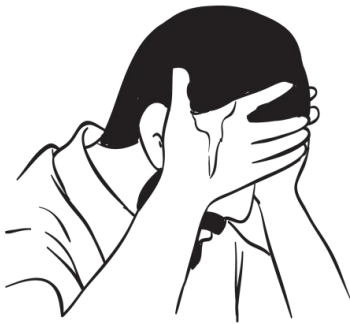


4



5

Washing the arms



6

Wiping over the head



7

Cleaning the ears inside and out



8

Washing the feet

At the end of ablution, it is **Sunnah** (a supererogatory act following the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) for you to say:

“I testify that there is no god except Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger. O Allah, make me one of those who repent and make me one of those who purify themselves.” (Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi)

Purification after Answering the Call of Nature

This can be done by one of two methods:

Istinja': Cleansing the private parts with water after urination or defecation.

Istijmar: Cleansing the private parts after urination or defecation with a hard material, such as stones or tissue paper, three times or more until the area is fully clean.



3-TAYAMMUM (DRY ABLUTION):

- Intend in your heart to perform *Tayammum*, and then say, “*Bismillah* (in the Name of Allah).”
- Strike the palms of both hands once on clean earth or any pure and dry substance of the earth (such as dust, clay, sand, rocks, or pebbles).
- Shake off or blow off any extra dust or sand.





- Wipe your entire face with your hands.

2



- Wipe the back of your right hand with the palm of the left, and the back of your left hand with the palm of the right.

3

Nullifiers of Ablution

1. Any discharge, no matter how small, from the front or back passage, such as urine, excrement, wind, *Wadi* (dense white post-urination fluid), *Madhi* (prostatic fluid), or *Maniy* (sexual fluid).
2. Deep sleep (as opposed to light sleep in a sitting or standing position that involves no loss of consciousness).
3. Absence of the mind due to insanity, fainting, drunkenness, intoxication, or medications that produce unconsciousness.
4. Touching the private parts (front or back passage) directly with the hand without a barrier.
5. Eating camel meat.

- **Factors that prevent the validity of ablution:** Presence of any physical barrier between the skin and water such as grease, wax, glue, nail polish, and similar substances that act as a screening layer and prevent water reaching the skin. This is because one of the essential conditions for *Taharah* to be valid is that the water must come in direct contact with the skin and fingernails.
- **Difficulty sustaining ablution:** People who have a condition that constantly invalidates their ablution, such as urinary or flatus incontinence or *Istihadah* (abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual or post-partum period), should perform ablution before every prayer.

Ablution Is a Purification That Is Not Only Physical, but Also Spiritual

Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) signals the secret effect that the practice of ablution has on you, saying:

“When a Muslim or believing servant of Allah washes their face (in the course of ablution), every sin that they have looked at with their eyes will be washed away from their face along with the water—or with the last drop of water. When they wash their hands, every sin that their hands have committed will be washed away from their hands along with the water—or with the last drop of water. When they wash their feet, every sin towards which their feet have walked will be washed away along with the water—or with the last drop of water. Until, by the end of it, they emerge pure of sin.” (Narrated by Muslim)

Try to keep these meanings in your mind and to emotionally experience them while performing ablution. Your performance of ablution is an expiation for your sins, for which you may hopefully expect to receive reward from Allah, the Gracious.

Inner and Outer Purity

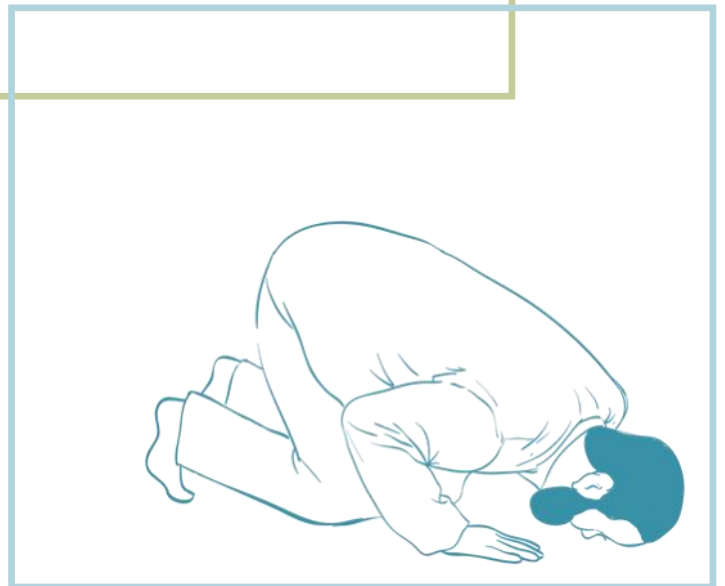
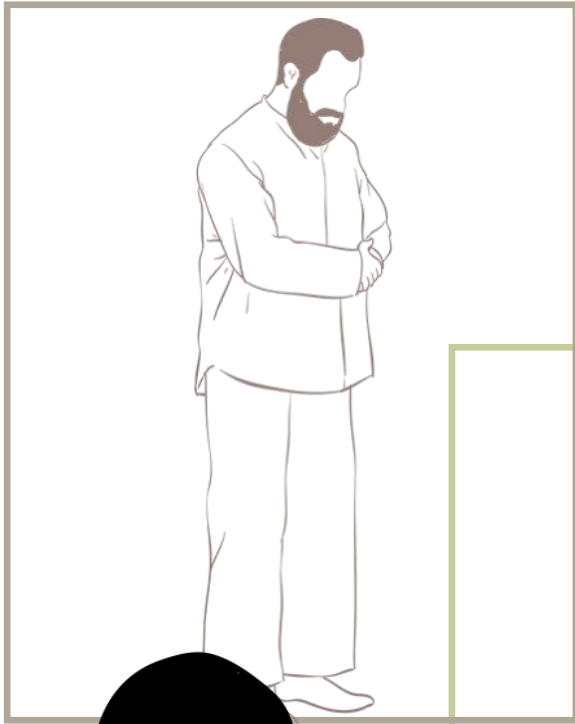
The eminent Muslim scholar, Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah (may Allah be merciful to him), said in his book, *Secrets of Salah*, that ablution has an outer and inner reality.

Outwardly, it is the cleanliness of the body and the body parts of worship.

Inwardly, it is the purity of the heart from the defilement and filth of sins and misdeeds through repentance. This the reason why Allah (Exalted be He) combines repentance with purification in His Saying: **“Surely Allah loves the ones constantly repenting, and He loves the ones constantly purifying themselves.”**

(Qur'an 2:222)

Steps of Offering *Salah*



The Way to Perform the First *Rak`ah* (Unit of Prayer)

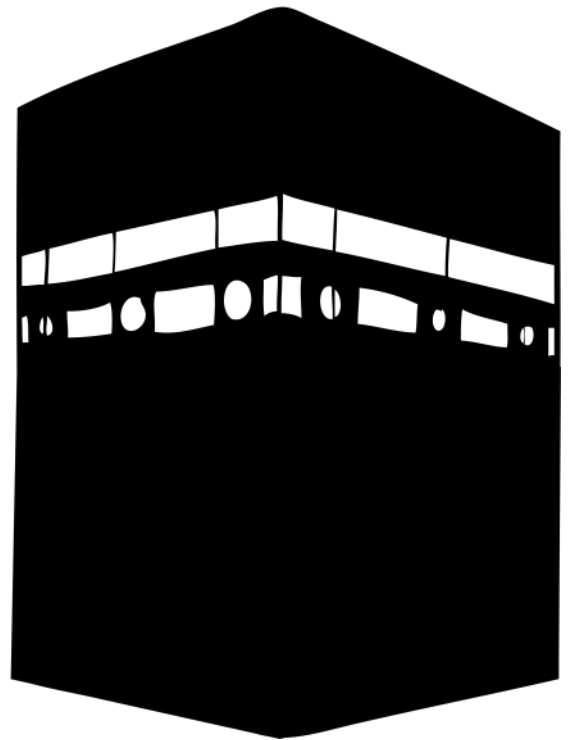
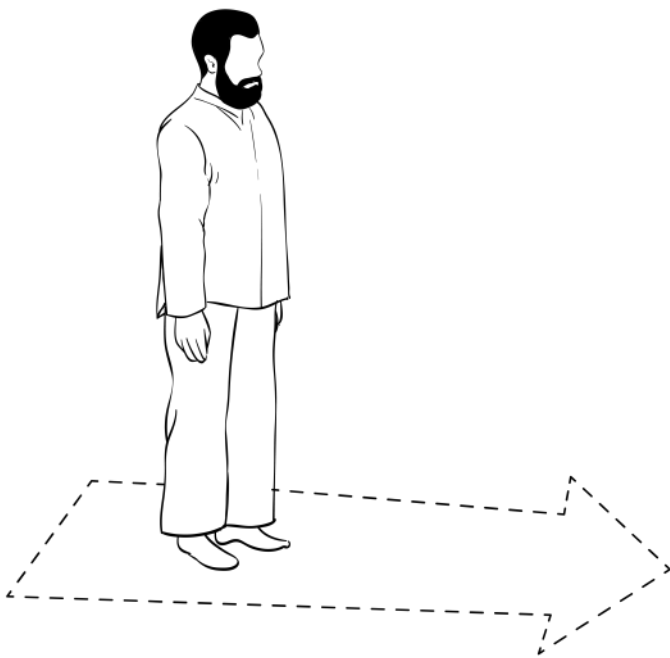
1. *Standing Posture*

- Saying aloud “*Allahu Akbar*” to declare entry into prayer.
- Recitation of Al-Fatihah or the Opening Chapter of the Noble Qur’an.
- Recitation of additional portion of the Qur’an.



“And from wheresoever you start forth (for prayers),
turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid Al-
Haram (the Sacred Mosque at Mecca).”

(QUR'AN 2:149)



1. Stand with your whole body directly facing the *Qiblah* (direction of the Sacred *Ka`bah* in Mecca), without deviating to the right or left or looking away.

2. Intend in your heart which of the five prayers you are going to pray, without uttering your intention out loud.

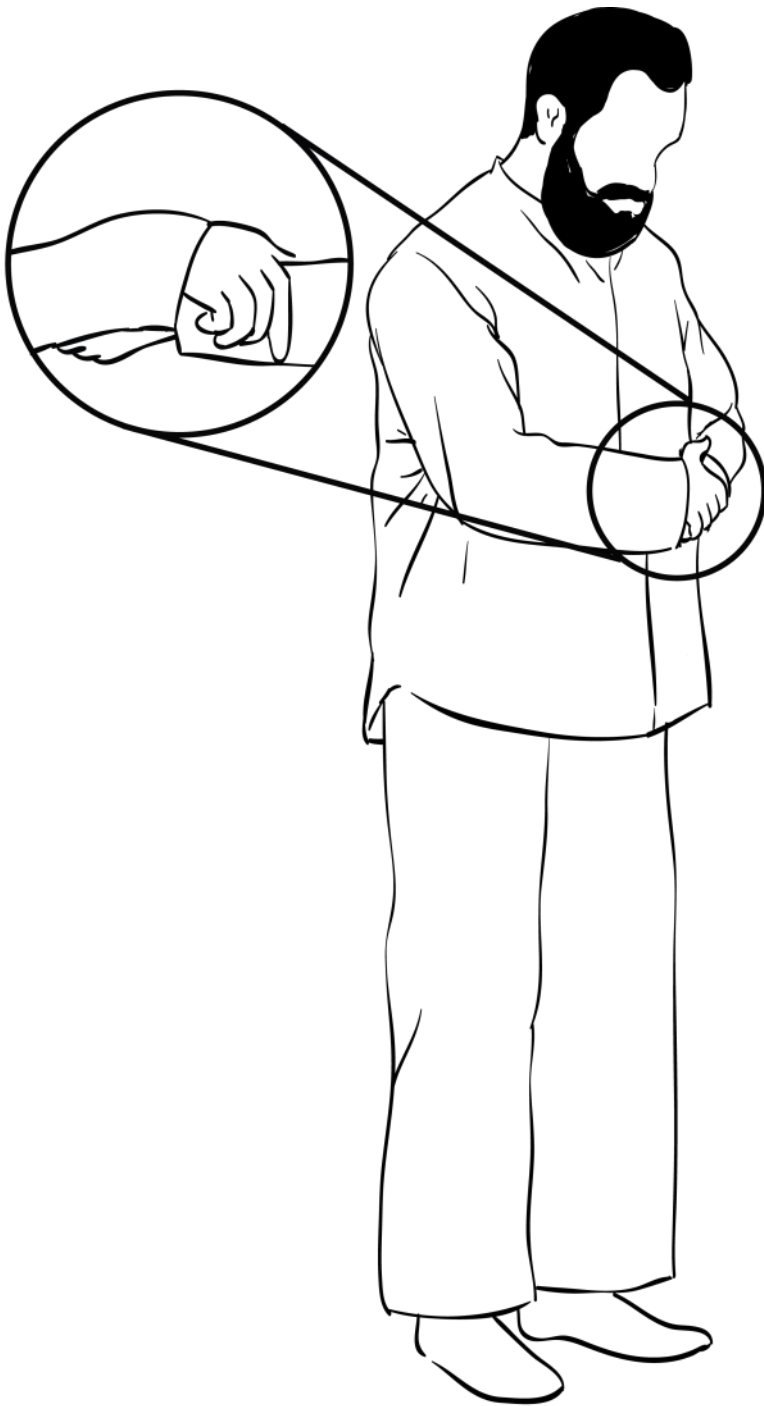
الله أكبر

*Allahu
Akbar*

3. Raise both your hands to shoulder (or earlobe) level, with your fingers stretched upward and both palms facing outward toward the *Qiblah*, and say *Takbirat-ul-Ihram* (saying ‘**Allahu Akbar** [Allah is Greater]*’ upon starting prayer).

**Allahu Akbar*, literally Allah is Greater, means Allah is far vaster, loftier, and more important than anything that may preoccupy, distract, or delay a Muslim from prayer.





4. Place your hands upon your chest with your right palm resting over the back of your left hand.

5. Keep your gaze fixed on your place of prostration.

6. It is recommended that you recite *Du`a' Al-Istiftah* (opening supplication when starting the prayer). This is not an obligatory act of prayer; rather, it is *Sunnah* (supererogatory act following the example of Prophet Muhammad). The shortest and easiest opening supplication made by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is to say:

“Subhanaka Allahumma wa-bi hamdika, tabaraka asmuka, wa ta‘ala jadduka, wa la ilaha ghayruka (Glory and praise be to you, O Allah. Blessed be Your Name, and exalted be Your Majesty. There is no god but You.”

7. Seek Allah’s Protection from the evil of the devil, saying: **“A`udhu-Billahi mina Al-Shaytan-ir-Rajim** [I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed].”

8. Utter *Basmalah* (saying, **“Bismillahi r-Rahmani r-Rahim** [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful]” and recite Chapter Al-Fatihah.



**Chapter Al-Fatihah [1: 1-7],
whose meaning can be translated as:**

1. In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Bismillahi r-Rahmani r-Raheem.

2. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of existence,

Al-hamdu lillahi Rabbil `Alamin,

3. The All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful,

Ar-Rahmanir-Raheem,

4. the Owner (Master) of the Day of Judgment.

Maliki yawmi-d-Din.

5. It is You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.

Iyyaka na`budu wa-Iyyaka nasta`een.

6. Guide us to the Straight Path,

Ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim,

7. the Path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not the path of those who have incurred Your Anger, nor of those who have gone astray.

***Sirata alladheena an`amta `alayhim, ghayri-l-maghdubi
`alayhim walad-daalleen.***



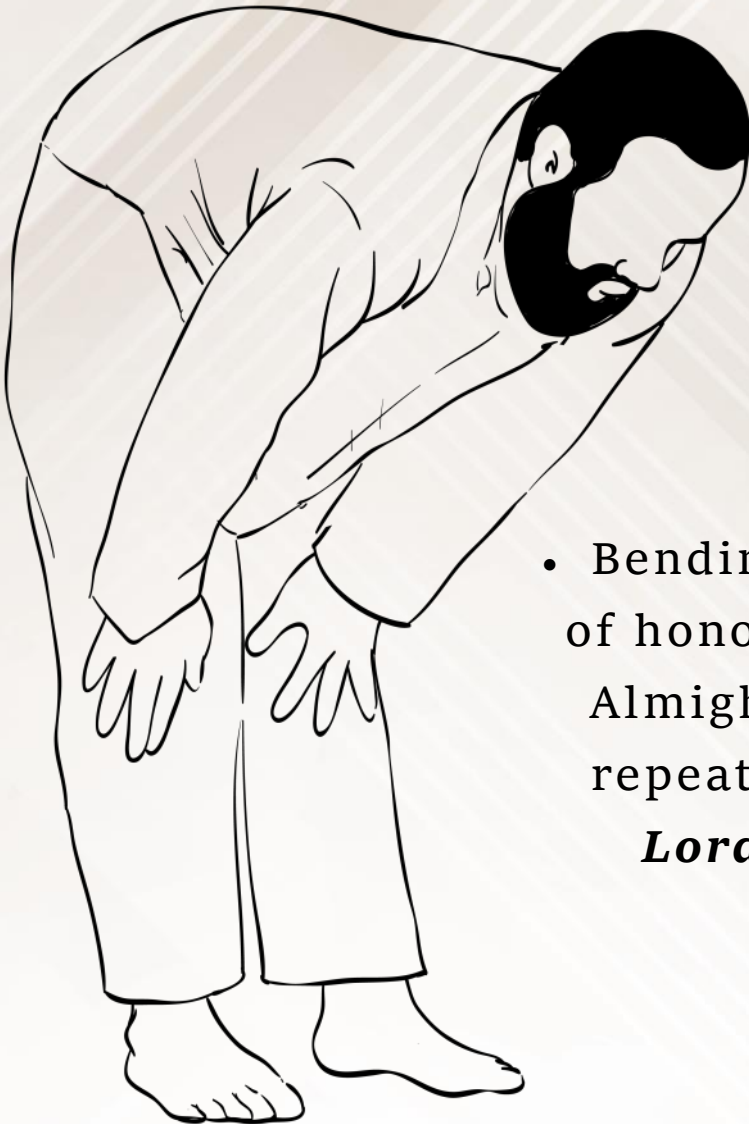
Amen

Say, "He is Allah, the One God..." [Chapter Al-Ikhlās 112]

9. Upon completion of reciting Al-Fatihah say, "***Amen***" – which means "O Allah, please respond (to or accept my supplication)."

10. Recite whatever chapter or verses you have learned of the Qur'an.

2. Bowing Posture



- Bending down as a gesture of honor and glorification of Almighty Allah, along with repeating “***Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great***” thrice.

1. Raise both hands up to shoulder (or earlobe) level and bow down while saying, “*Allahu Akbar.*”

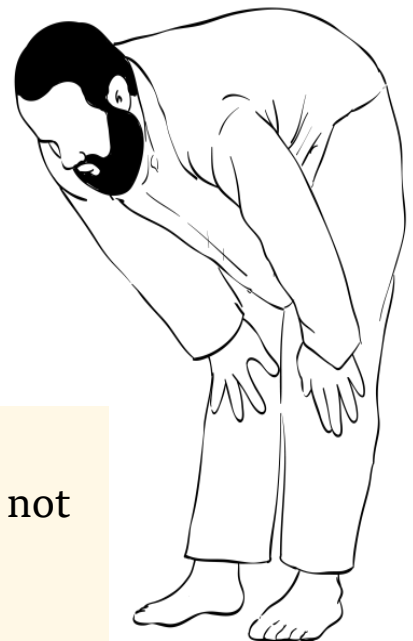


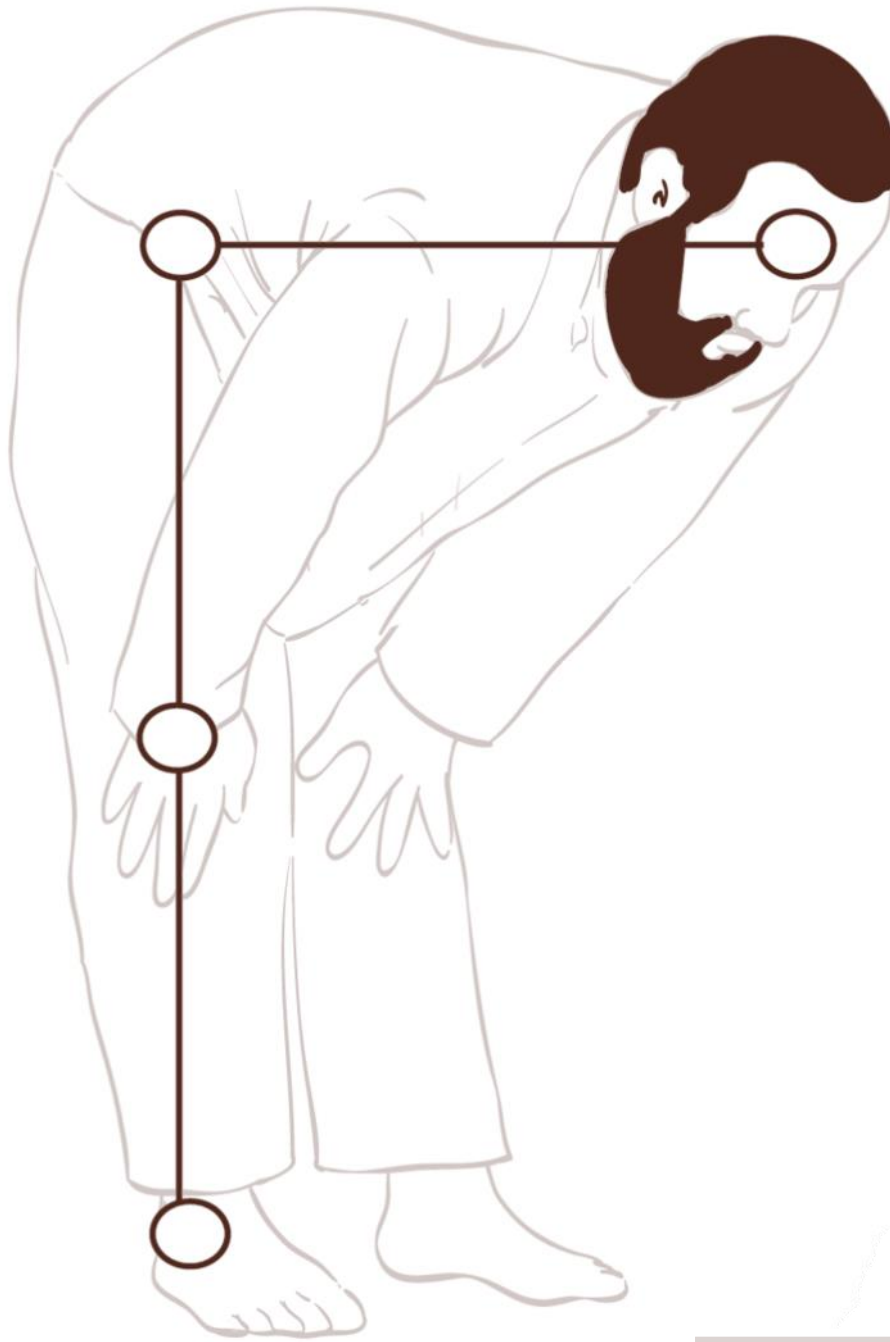
الله أكبر
Allahu Akbar

2. Finish *Takbir* (saying, “*Allahu Akbar*”) before reaching the bowing position – which means that as you move from standing to bowing you say, “*Allahu Akbar.*”

3. Place both your hands on your knees, with the fingers spread out, as if clasping your knees.

4. Keep your legs straight and do not bend your knees.





5. Stretch your back straight and keep your head level with your back, neither raising nor lowering your head above it.

*Bowing Is
Performed Once
in Each Rak`ah*



6. While in the bowing position, say three times, “***Subhana Rabbiyal `Azim*** (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great).”

In addition, it is a recommended **Sunnah** to say, “***Subhanaka Allahumma Rabbana wa bihamdika, Allahumma ighfir li*** (Glory and praise be to You, O Allah our Lord. O Allah, forgive me).”

7. Raise your head from the bowing posture, lifting both hands to shoulder (or earlobe) level.

8. As you change posture from bowing to standing, say: “***Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah*** (Allah listens to those who praise Him).”

9. Then, after straightening up and standing still, say, “***Rabbana wa lakal-hamd*** (our Lord, and to You is due all praise).”

It is recommended as an act of **Sunnah** to say in addition: “***Hamdan kathiran tayyiban mubarakan fihi*** (...abundant, good, blessed praise).”



3. Prostration Posture

- Demonstration of submission to Almighty Allah, along with repeating “***Glory be to my Lord, the Most High***” thrice.



1. Kneel on the ground to perform the first prostration. On your way down, say, “**Allahu Akbar**” without raising your hands. Finish saying *Takbir* before putting your forehead on the ground.

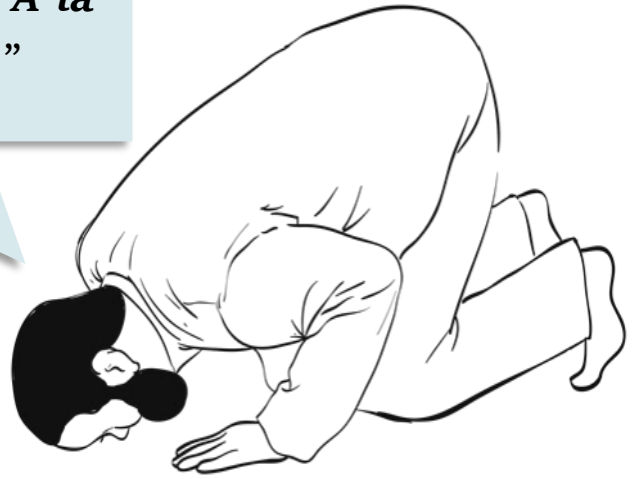


*Prostration Is
Performed Twice
in Each Rak`ah*

2. Ensure a correct prostrating posture by doing the following:

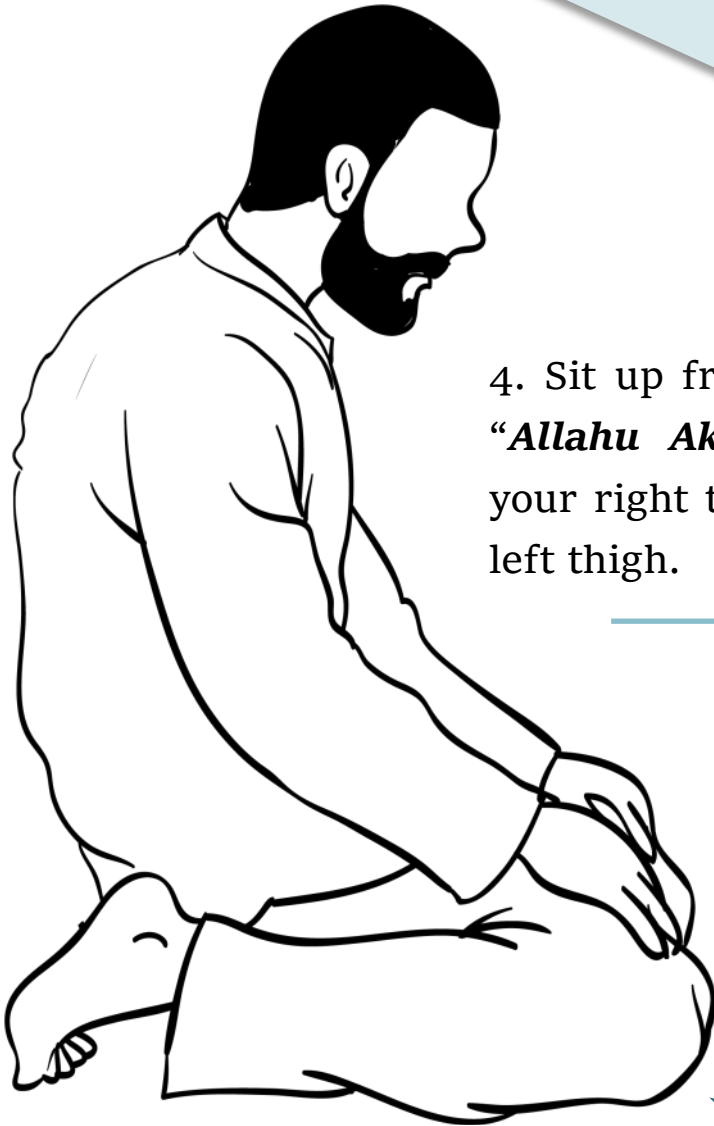
- ✓ During prostration, seven parts of your body should be firmly resting on the ground: the forehead along with the nose, both palms, both knees, and the bottom of the toes of both feet. These are known as the seven body parts of prostration.
- ✓ Your two palms should be placed flat on the ground in line with your shoulders, while keeping your fingers stretched forward, closed together, and pointing towards the *Qiblah*.
- ✓ Your forearms should stay raised above the ground and away from the sides of your body.
- ✓ Your feet should be held upright on the ground, with the bottom of your toes bent in the direction of the *Qiblah*.

3. While in the prostrating position, say three times, “***Subhana Rabbiyal A`la*** (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High).”

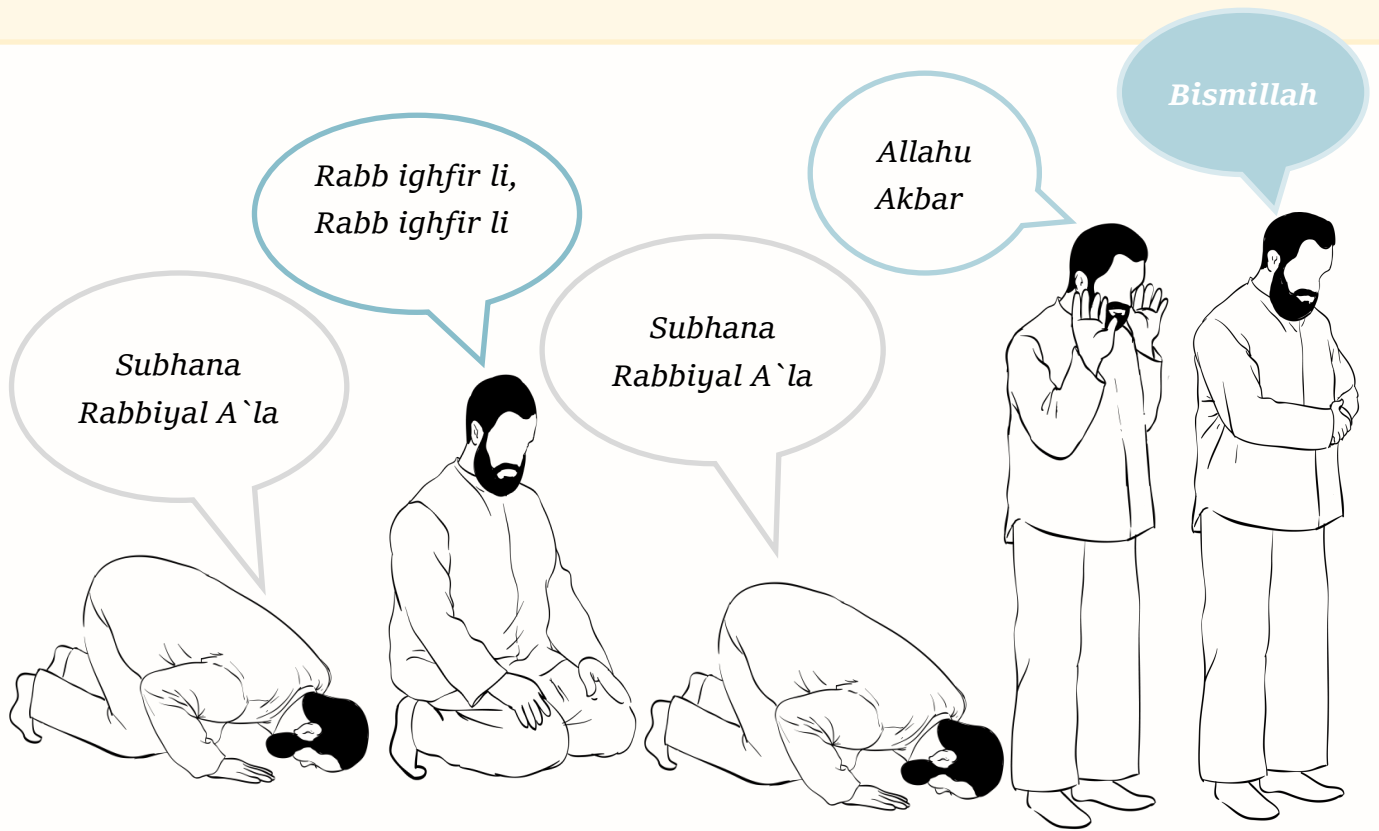


4. Sit up from the first prostration, saying, “***Allahu Akbar.***” Place your right hand on your right thigh and your left hand on your left thigh.

In this posture, it is a recommended act of **Sunnah** to sit on the left leg while keeping the right foot upright with the toes pointing towards the **Qiblah**. This sitting position is called **Iftirash**.



It is also a recommended act of **Sunnah** to say during the sitting pause between the two prostrations, “***Rabb ighfir li, Rabb ighfir li*** (O my Lord, forgive me. O my Lord, forgive me).” Or you may say, “***Allahumma ighfir li, warhamni, wa`aafini, wahdini, warzuqni*** (O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, grant me well-being, guide me, and grant me provision).”



5. Prostrate again, saying, “**Allahu Akbar.**” During the second prostration, repeat what you have done and said in the first prostration.

6. Once you complete the second prostration, you have completed one full *Rak`ah*. Rise up to proceed to the next *Ra`kah*, saying, “**Allahu Akbar.**”

The Closest You Can Get to Allah

“The closest a person can be to their Lord is when they are prostrating, so supplicate much in it,” said Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). [Narrated by Abu Dawud] Therefore, it is recommended that you supplicate to Allah a lot during prostration for whatever matters of this world or the Hereafter you need addressed.

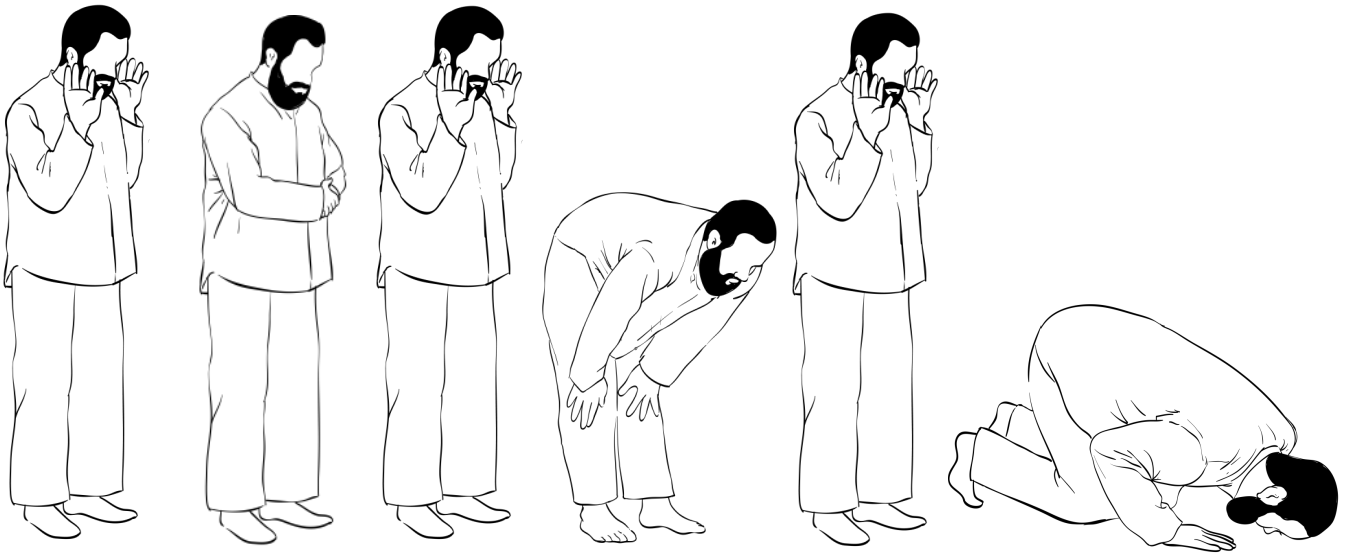
The Way to Perform the Second *Rak`ah* (in a two-*Rak`ah* prayer, three-*Rak`ah* prayer, and four-*Rak`ah* prayer)

4. *Sitting Posture*



- Reciting the *Tashahhud* (Testification).
- Offering the *Taslim* (Salutation Ending the Prayer).

1. Stand up for the second *Rak`ah*, with your hands raised to shoulder (or earlobe) level, while saying, “**Allahu Akbar.**”



2. Perform the second *Rak`ah* in the same manner as the first one, but without reciting the opening supplication.

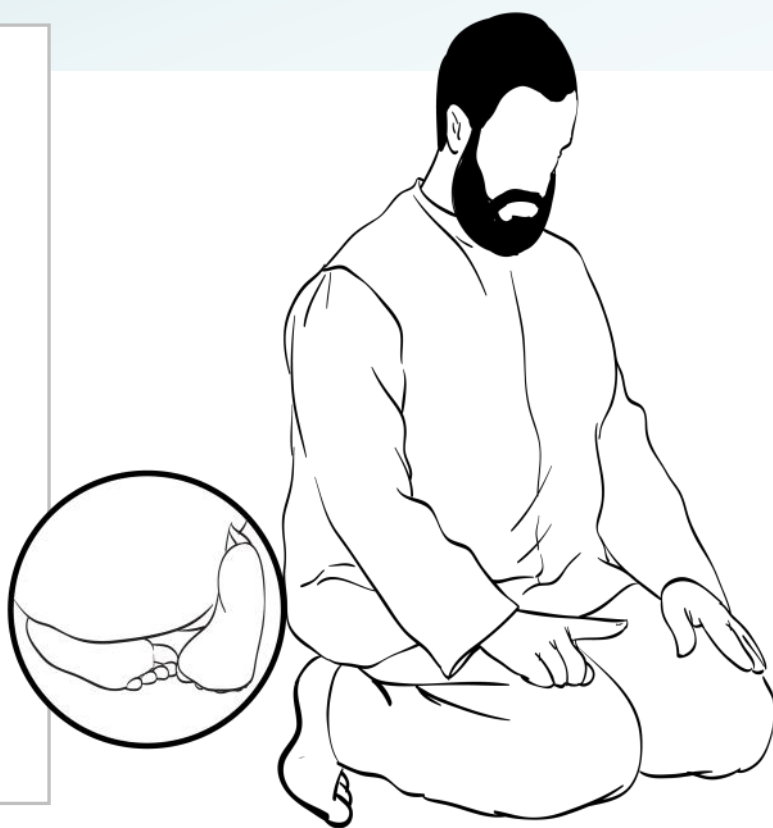


3. After completing the second prostration of the second *Rak`ah*, take a sitting position and recite the *Tashahhud*.

4. (i) How to Perform the Tashahhud in a Two-Rak`ah Prayer

A prayer that consists of two *Rak`ahs* – such as *Fajr*, *Jumu`ah (Friday)*, or *Two Eid Prayers* – has one *Tashahhud* only.

a. After raising your head from the second prostration, take a sitting posture similar to that taken between the two prostrations in the first *Rak`ah* (*Iftirash posture** – sitting on the left foot while keeping the right foot upright with the toes bent in the direction of the *Qiblah*).



b. Put your left hand on your left thigh with the fingers stretched out and directed toward the *Qiblah*. And put your right hand on your right thigh with all the fingers clenched into a fist, except for the index finger, which should be pointed in the direction of the *Qiblah* as a sign of monotheistic belief.



c. In this sitting posture, recite the *Tashahhud* followed by *Al-Salat-ul-Ibrahimiyyah*, and then ask Allah for whatever you want.



السلام عليكم ورحمة
الله

“As-salamu `alaykum
warahmatullah ”
(May Allah’s Peace and
Mercy be upon you)

d. Conclude the prayer by turning your face to the right and then to the left, each time saying:

السلام عليكم ورحمة
الله

“As-salamu `alaykum
warahmatullah ” (May
Allah’s Peace and Mercy
be upon you)



4. (ii) *How to Perform the Tashahhud in a Three-Rak`ah or Four-Rak`ah Prayer*

A prayer that consists of three *Rak`ahs* such as Maghrib Prayer, or four *Rak`ahs* such as *Zuhr*, *Asr*, and *Isha* Prayers, has two *Tashahhuds* – first and last.

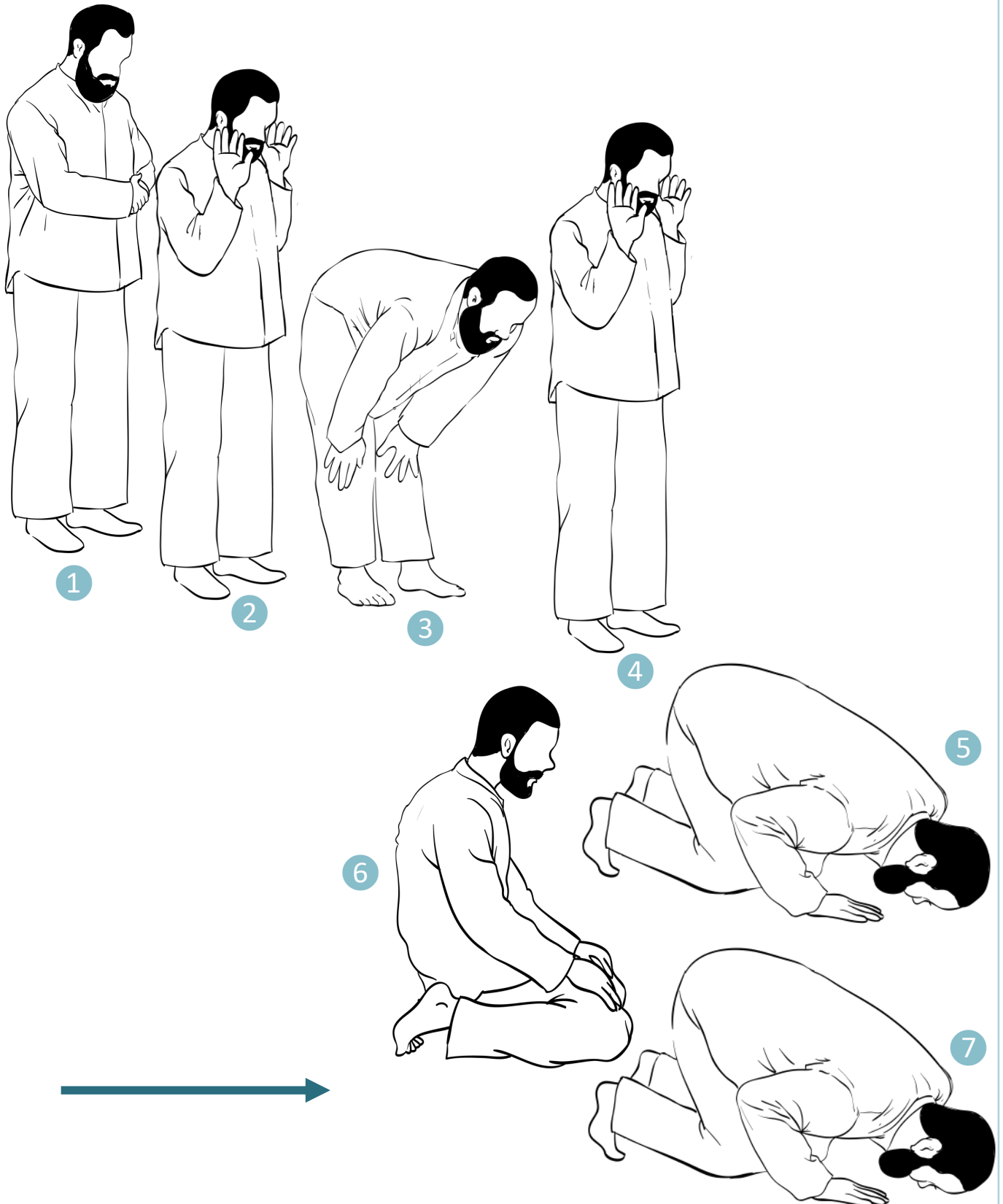
a. After raising your head from the second prostration of the second *Rak`ah*, sit and recite the **first *Tashahhud*** (testification without *Al-Salat-ul-Ibrahimiyyah*).



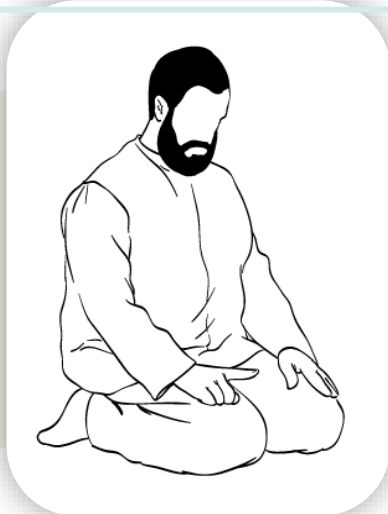
b. Then stand up for the third *Rak`ah*, with your hands raised to shoulder (or earlobe) level, while saying, “***Allahu Akbar.***”



5. Perform the third and fourth *Rak`ahs* in the same manner as the previous two *Rak`ahs*, but recite Al-Fatihah alone without additional chapters or verses.



6. After raising your head from the last prostration of the third *Rak`ah* in Maghrib Prayer or the fourth *Rak`ah* in *Zuhr*, *`Asr*, and *`Isha* Prayers, sit in the *Tawarruk* posture* (placing the left foot under the right leg and sitting on the posterior with the right foot held upright and the toes pointing towards the *Qiblah*) and recite the last *Tashahhud* (testification along with *Al-Salat-ul-Ibrahimiyyah*), and then ask Allah for whatever you want.



*If assuming the *Iftirash* or *Tawarruk* posture is difficult for you due to knee pain, or you cannot get accustomed to it, or for other reasons, sit in a posture that is comfortable for you. These postures are acts of *Sunnah* and are not an obligatory part of *Salah*.

7. Conclude the prayer by turning your face to the right and then to the left, each time saying:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله
“As-salamu `alaykum
warahmatullah” (May Allah’s
Peace and Mercy be upon you)

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله
“As-salamu `alaykum
warahmatullah”



Allahu Akbar

Brief Illustration of the Way to Perform a Two-*Rak`ah* Prayer

FIRST *RAK`AH*



①

Uttering the First *Takbir* to start *Salah*



②

Reciting *Al-Fatihah*



③

Saying *Takbir* while bending to bow



④

Performing bowing



⑤

Saying, "*Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah*" while straightening up



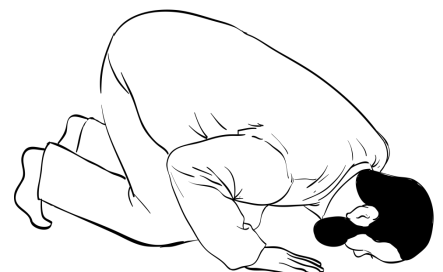
⑥

Kneeling to perform the first prostration while saying *Takbir*



⑦

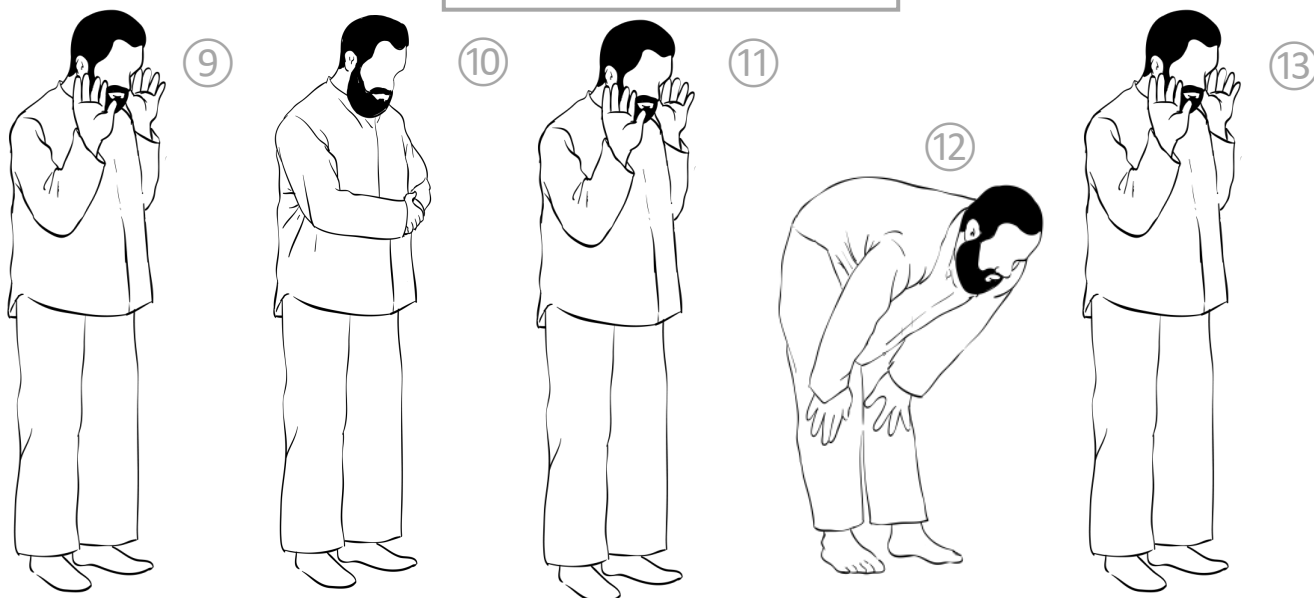
Sitting between the two prostrations



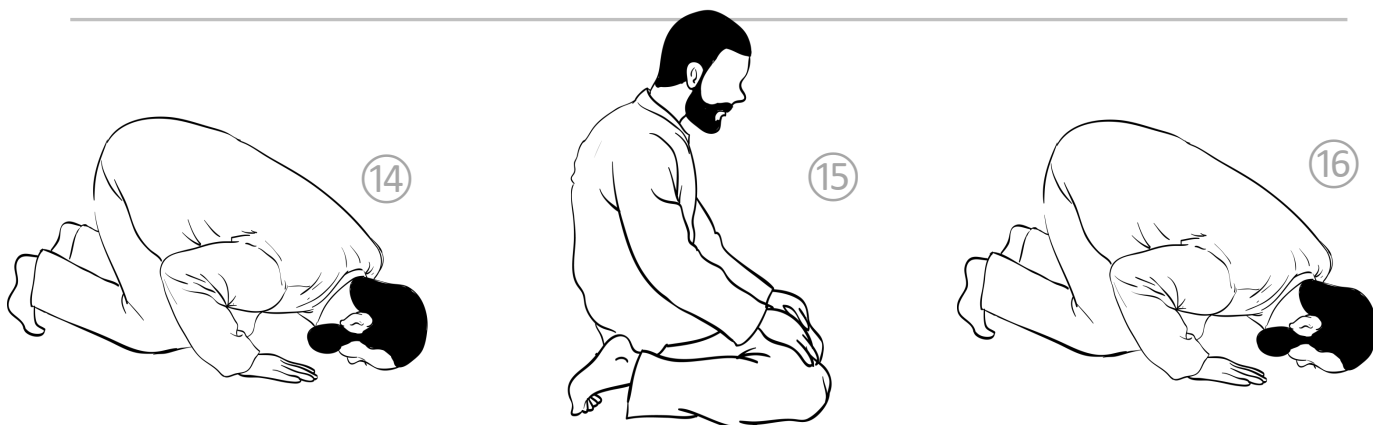
⑧

Performing the second prostration

SECOND RAK`AH



Standing up for the second *Rak`ah* while saying, "Allahu Akbar" and performing the second *Rak`ah* in the same manner as the first one



17

Reciting the *Tashahhud*

18

Offering *Taslim* to the right

19

Offering *Taslim* to the left

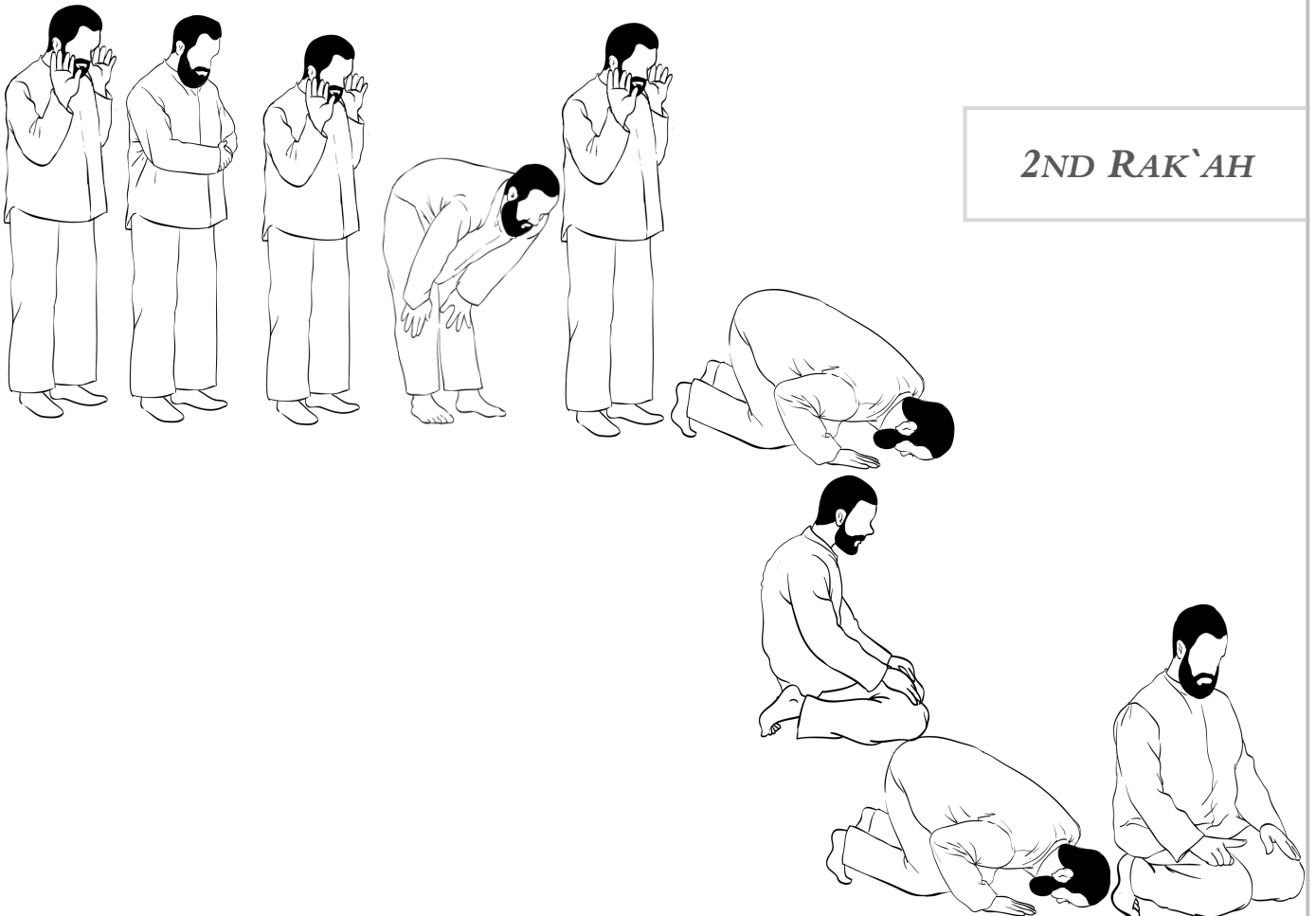
Allahu
Akbar

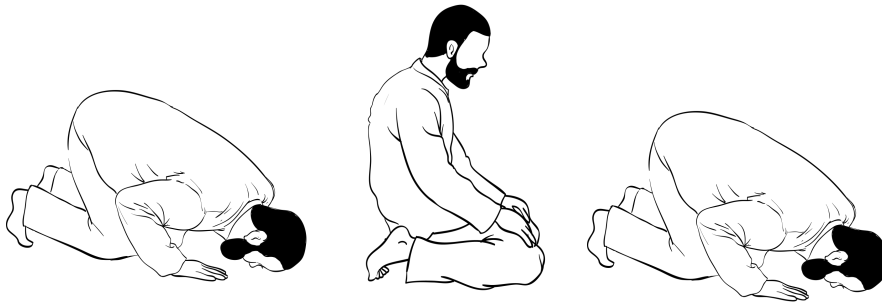
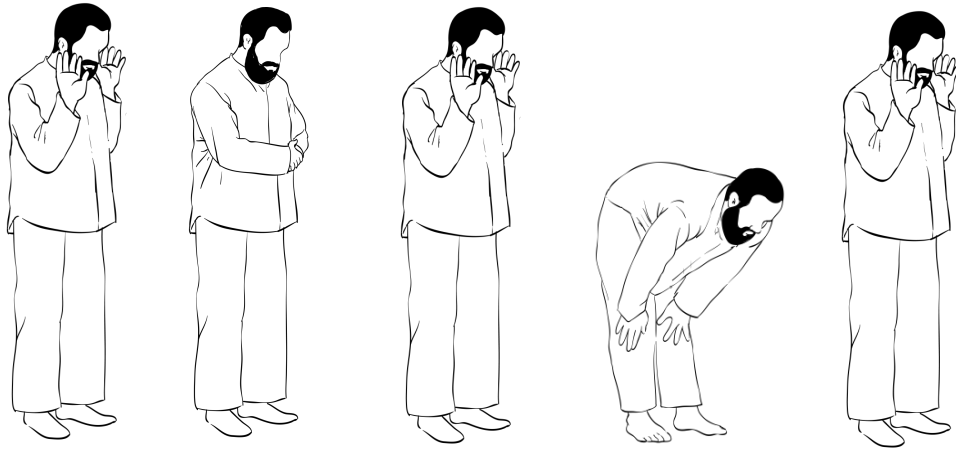
1ST RAK'AH



Brief Illustration of the Way to perform a
Three-*Rak'ah* Prayer

2ND RAK'AH





3RD RAK'AH

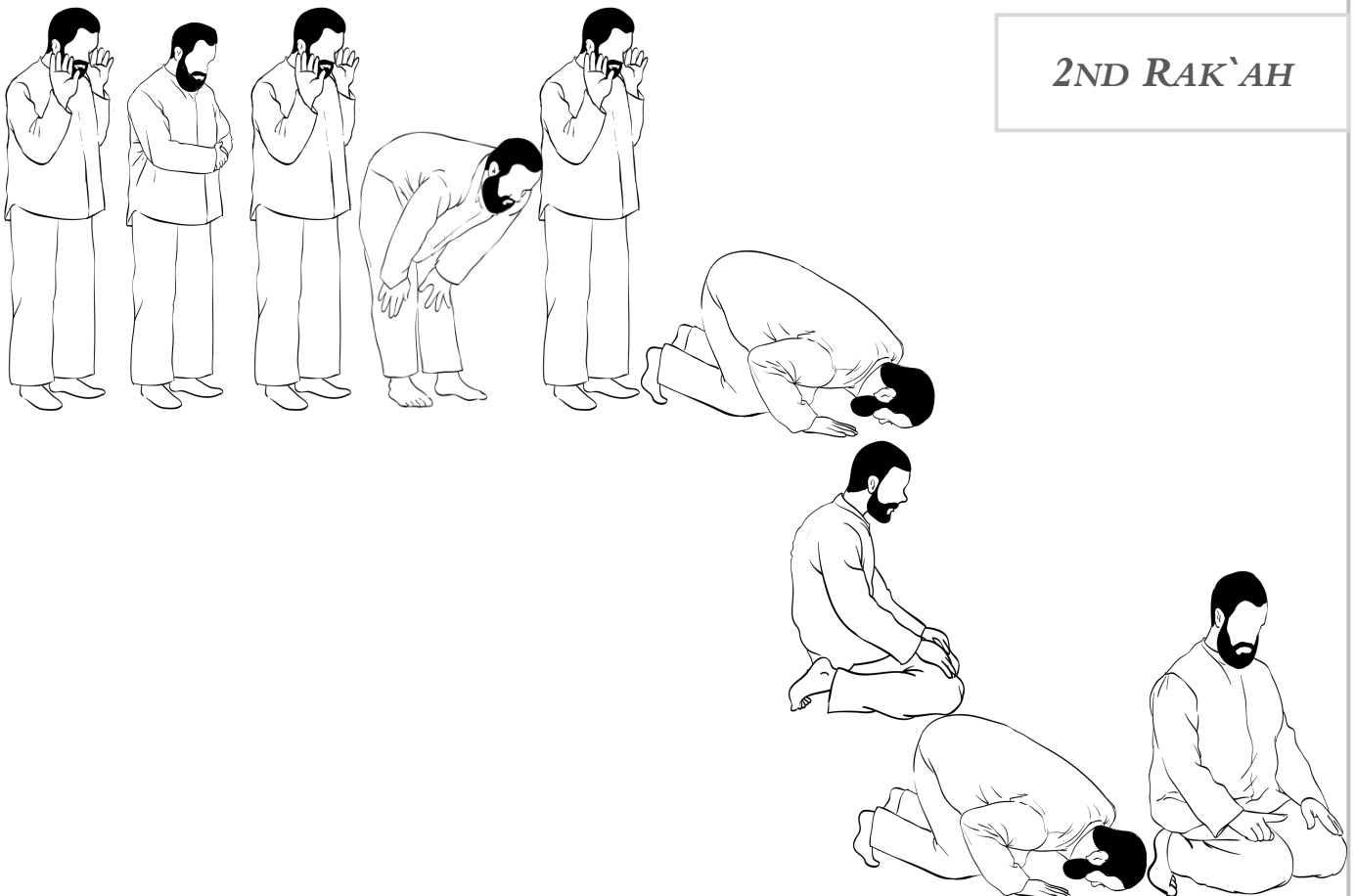
Allahu
Akbar

1ST RAK'AH

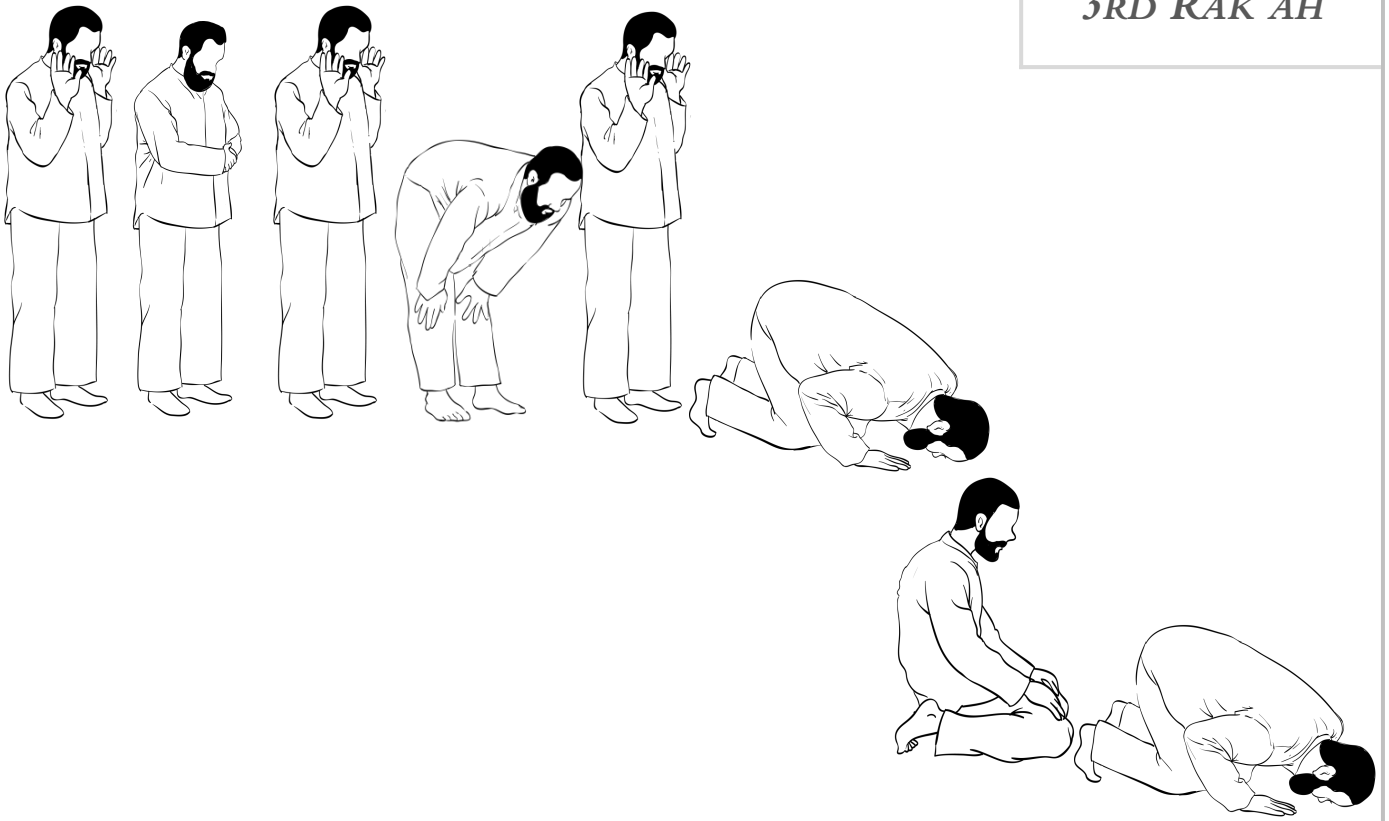


Brief Illustration of the Way to Perform a
Four-*Rak'ah* Prayer

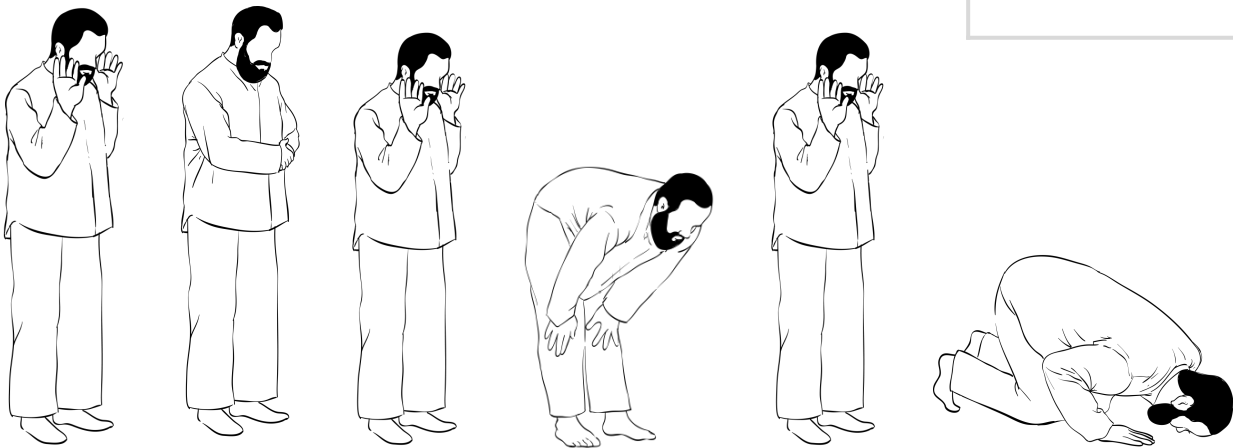
2ND RAK'AH



3RD RAK'AH



4TH RAK'AH



Wording of *Al-Tashahhud* (Testimony of Faith)

At-tahiyatu lillahi was-salawatu wat-tayyibat. As-salamu `alaika ai-yuhan-Nabiyu wa rahmatul-lahi wa barakatuh. As-salamu `alaina wa `ala `ibadil-lahis-salihin. Ash-hadu alla ilaha illa Allah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan `abduhu wa rasuluh.

“All salutations (reverence), all prayers, all good things are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His Blessings. Peace be upon us and all the righteous servants of Allah. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger.”



Wording of *Al-Salat-ul-Ibrahimiyyah* (Abrahamic Supplication)

Allahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala ali Muhammad kama salayta ‘ala Ibrahim wa ‘ala ali Ibrahim, Innaka Hamidun Majid. Allahumma barik ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala ali Muhammad kama barakta ‘ala Ibrahim wa ‘ala ali Ibrahim, Innaka Hamidun Majid.

“O Allah, exalt the mention of Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad as You have exalted Ibrahim (Abraham) and the Family of Ibrahim. You are indeed Worthy of Praise and Full of Glory. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad as You have blessed Ibrahim and the Family of Ibrahim. You are indeed Worthy of Praise and Full of Glory.”

Conclude Your *Salah* with Supplication and Glorification of Allah

Recommended as a Supererogatory Act of Worship



*As-salamu
'alaykum wa-
rahmatullah*

Upon finishing your *Salah*, supplicate to Allah and seek His Forgiveness. Following are some of the invocations and words of praise to be said after *Salah*, which have been authentically reported from our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him):

1. Beg Allah's Forgiveness three times and then say, "***Allahumma Antas-Salamu, wa minkas-Salamu, tabarakta ya Dhal-Jalali wal-Ikram*** (O Allah, You are *As-Salam* [the One Free of all imperfections] and from You comes *Salam* [peace, safety, and security]. Blessed are You, O Owner of Majesty and Honor)." (Narrated by Muslim)

2. **Allahumma a`inni `ala dhikrika, wa shukrika, wa husni `ibadatika** (O Allah, help me to remember You, give thanks to You, and worship You in the best way).” (Narrated by Abu Dawud)

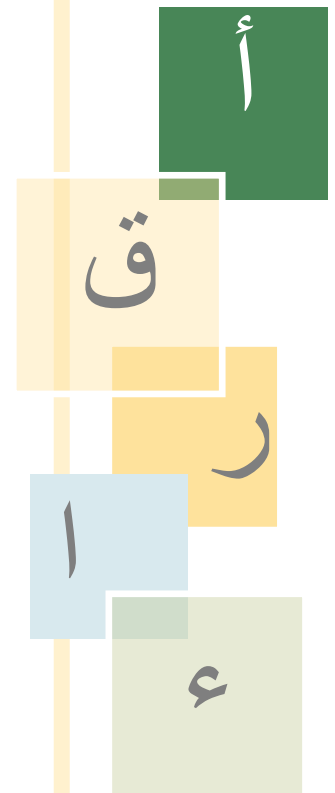
3. Glorify Allah by saying “**Subhan Allah**” (Glory be to Allah), praise Him by saying “**Al-hamdu lillah**” (all praise is due to Allah), and magnify Him by saying “**Allahu Akbar**” (Allah is Greater) each thirty-three times, then complete one hundred by saying “**La ilaha illa Allah wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu, wa huwa `ala kulli shay’in qadir**” (There is no god but Allah alone, with no partner or associate. His is the Sovereignty and to Him is due all praise, and He is Able to do all things). (Narrated by Muslim)



Why Should *Salah* Be in Arabic?

- As a rule, all acts of worship in Islam are *Tawqifi* (based on divine revelation) with no room for personal opinion or reasoning.
- Islamic worship is based solely on the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah (teachings of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him), allowing no addition or subtraction.

- *Salah*, therefore, must be performed in the same manner as Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) performed it; he said, **“Pray as you have seen me praying.”**
- A person capable of speaking or learning Arabic is not allowed to pray in a non-Arabic language. The essential utterances and recitations made during *Salah*, especially those from the Noble Qur'an, must be said in Arabic.
- The Qur'an is Allah's direct, literal Word, revealed to humankind in Arabic; not a single word or letter of it may be changed or substituted. Any translation of the Glorious Qur'an, into any language, is not considered Qur'an, but merely a translation of an interpretation of some of its meanings. It does not have the sanctity of the Qur'an and cannot be used for recitation in *Salah*.



Recitation of Al-Fatihah

In the Case of Recent Muslims Who Have Not Yet Learned Arabic and Those Who Cannot Learn It

1. If you are a recent Muslim, make your best effort to learn Al-Fatihah. It is an integral pillar of *Salah*, without which it is invalid. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “**There is no *Salah* for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book (Al-Fatihah).**”(Narrated by Al-Bukhari)
2. Try your hardest to also memorize the essential phrases that must be said during *Salah*. They are only valid in Arabic. These phrases are: ***Allahu Akbar*** (Allah is Greater), ***Subhana Rabbiyal `Azim*** (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great), ***Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah*** (Allah listens to those who praise Him), ***Rabbana wa lakal-hamd*** (our Lord, and to You is due all praise), ***Subhana Rabbiyal A`la*** (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High), and the formulas of ***Al-Tashahhud***, ***Al-Salat-ul-Ibrahimiyyah***, and ***Taslim***.
3. If the time of one of the five daily prayers becomes due before you have learned how to recite Al-Fatihah in Arabic, you may instead say: ***Subhan Allah*** (Glory be to Allah), ***Alhamdu lillah*** (all praise is due to Allah), ***La ilaha illa Allah*** (there is no god but Allah), ***Allahu Akbar*** (Allah is Greater), and ***La hawla wala quwwata illa billahil-`Aliyil-`Azim*** (there is neither might nor power except with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great).

4. This is based on the hadith narrated by `Abdullah ibn Awfa (may Allah be pleased with him) in which he said: “A man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, ‘I cannot learn anything of the Qur’an, so teach me something that I can say instead of reciting the Qur’an.’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, ‘Say: ***Subhan Allah, alhamdu lillah, la ilaha illa Allah, Allahu Akbar, wa la hawla wala quwwata illa billahil-`Aliyil-`Azim.***’” (Narrated by Abu Dawud)
5. Be keen during this initial phase to pray in congregation. This will help you improve and perfect your *Salah*. Also, the reward for praying in congregation may offset shortcomings or mistakes you may make while learning how to pray.



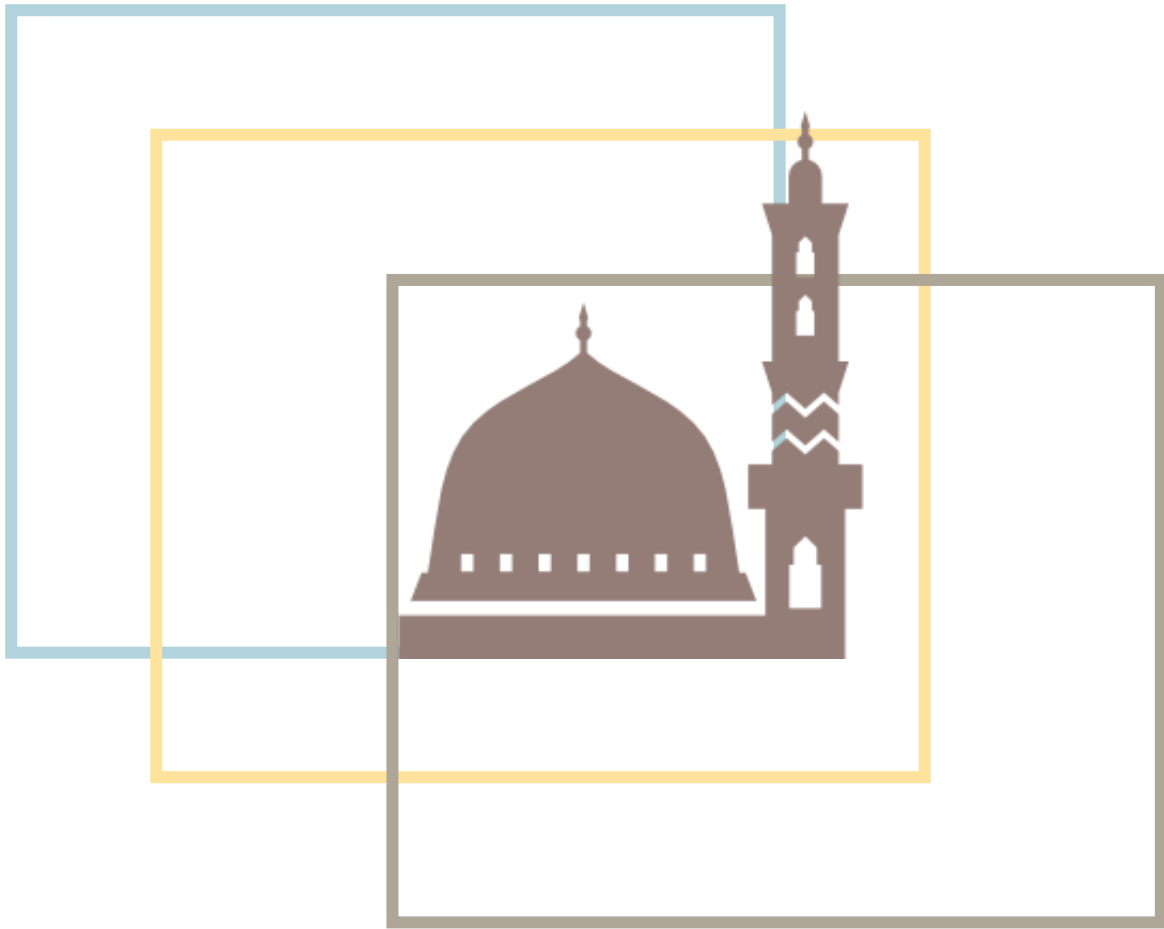
Only the original Arabic text of the Qur’an, Allah’s Final Word, is divine. Any translation of its meaning is but a human endeavor.

Muslims Who Have Difficulty *Or* Cannot Learn Arabic

Scholars have made a distinction between people capable and incapable of learning Arabic. As long as you are capable, do your best until you can recite Al-Fatihah and the essential utterances of *Salah*. If you have difficulty learning Arabic, you should at least learn Al-Fatihah, and you can recite the essential utterances of *Salah* in your own language.

If you have only learned part of Al-Fatihah, you should recite Al-Fatihah as best as you are able, and then glorify Allah, praise Him, magnify Him, and proclaim His Oneness as explained in the previous hadith, so that these words of remembrance make up for whatever parts are left out of Al-Fatihah.

However, if after much effort you still cannot learn Al-Fatihah at all or anything of the Qur'an, you are exempted from the obligation of reciting the Qur'an on account of your inability to learn it. This is based on Allah's Saying: "**Allah burdens not a soul beyond its capacity.**" (Qur'an 2:286) You should instead recite the five utterances of remembrance prescribed by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).



The Merit and Method of Congregational *Salah*

Hadith

“Praying in congregation is
twenty-seven times better
than praying alone.”

Narrated by Al-Bukhari

A Believer to Another Believer Is Like the Bricks of a Wall



- What is special about worship in Islam is the social dimension that is unique to each act of worship.
- Most Islamic laws aim to establish and strengthen social ties, including even worship, which is preferable when offered in congregation, based on several authentic hadiths, such as the one saying: **“Praying in congregation is twenty-seven times better than praying alone.”** (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)
- The five obligatory prayers performed congregationally in mosques are daily local meetings. Through these prayers, five meetings occur each day among the inhabitants of each district, allowing them to get acquainted with each other and build relations of friendship, cooperation, support, and neighborliness. Then the circle of connections widens during the weekly Friday congregational prayers, which bring together members of different districts in one single place to pray in unison. Then twice yearly, at the level of each city, Muslims assemble in open spaces to offer the **Two Eid Prayers**. Then, at least once in a lifetime, Muslims travel to join a global gathering of millions of fellow Muslim pilgrims from all over the world to perform Hajj.

- This helps instill solidarity and coherence as a moral attitude within the various strata of society. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: **“A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts reinforce each other.”** Then he clasped his hands with his fingers interlaced to demonstrate. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari) He also said: **“The believers, in their mutual friendship, mercy, and compassion, are like one body; if any part of it complains, the rest of the body stays awake in fever.”** (Narrated by Muslim)
- People have various conditions where some are strong and others are weak. Some are rich and others are poor. Some are enlightened and others are ignorant. Some are healthy and others are sick. When people come together, they help one another. Those who know will teach those who are ignorant; those who have plenty will give to those who have little, and so on. In this way, life is balanced.

EQUAL ROWS

Breaking down the Barriers of

Language, Race, and Social Class

- The mosque is a place that establishes equality. In congregational prayers, Muslims stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder, and foot to foot in equal straight rows praying behind one **Imam**. There is no discrimination among them on any basis. Their faces are turned towards their Maker in humility and tranquility, in a situation in which they can gain a fuller sense of the Prophet's words: **“Verily, Allah does not look at your outward appearance or wealth, but rather He looks at your hearts and deeds.”** (Narrated by Muslim)
- Allah's profound Wisdom regarding congregational praying is manifest. With shoulder touching shoulder and worshippers of all categories and walks of life saying one supplication together, repeating one glorification together, bowing and prostrating themselves together, with all their hope placed in Allah alone, each of them comes to see themselves, and everyone else, as equal and no different before Allah, the Exalted.
- All worshippers stand in a line, without discrimination of one against the other or superiority of one over the other. They are all seeking Allah's Pardon and Good Pleasure. And no matter how diversified their lot in this life may be, this is only meant as a test and is not given through favor or preference.

- Everyone becomes filled with a sense of contentment, satisfaction, and psychological and social equilibrium. Allah, the Exalted and the Glorious, says in His Noble Book: **“O humankind, We* (Allah) have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, in Allah’s Sight, the most honorable of you is the most righteous of you. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”** (Qur’an 49:13)

* Royal We used by Allah in the Qur’an to denote majesty and power.

“In Allah’s Sight, the most honorable of you is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. ”

(QUR’AN 49:13)

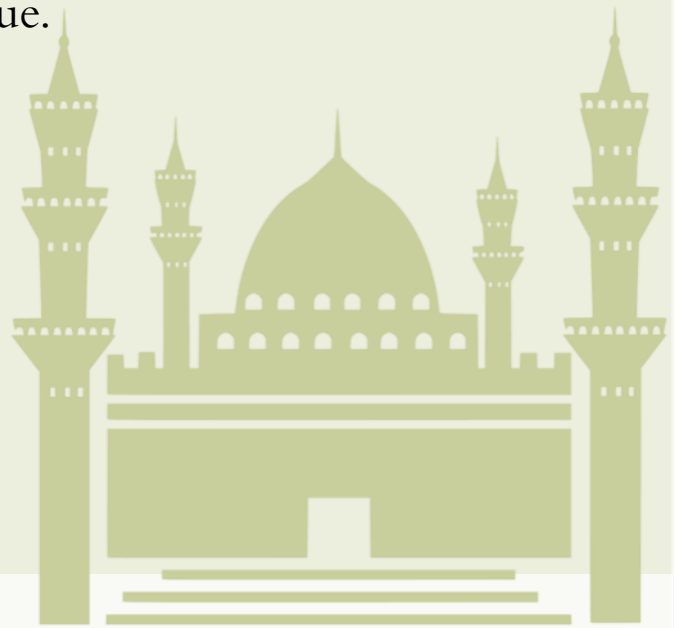
THE TIME FOR
PRAYER
HAS COME

*Every Two Steps You Walk to the
Mosque,
One Erases a Sin and the Other
Raises You a Degree*

Hadith Narrated by Muslim



Your footsteps to the mosque are precious in Allah's Sight, since you are walking these steps to bring His Remembrance into your life, answer His Call, and obey His Command. Your effort, therefore, is to be repaid in kind. Just as you are taking one step after another to reach the mosque, hoping for Allah's Grace and generous gifts, in return, with every step you take, Allah will wipe out one of your misdeeds and raise your status by one degree until you enter the mosque.



- Honorable Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: **“Whoever purifies themselves in their home and then walks to one of the Houses of Allah to perform one of the obligatory prayers enjoined by Allah, for every two steps they take, one will erase a sin and the other will raise them one degree in status.”** (Narrated by Muslim)
- He (peace and blessings be upon him) also said about the merit of going to the mosque as a means of drawing near to Allah: **“Whoever comes and goes to the mosque, Allah will prepare for them a hospitable abode in Paradise for each time they come and go.”** (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)



The Way to Perform Congregational *Salah*

- The minimum number required to form a congregational prayer, in a mosque or elsewhere, is two persons: an **Imam** and one follower.
- The Imam should stand one or more steps ahead of the followers, who should line up behind him in straight, compact, parallel rows, all facing the direction of the **Ka`bah**. When the congregation is all-female, the female Imam should stand in the middle of the first row, and not ahead of the followers.
- A **Ma`mum** (follower; person being led in prayer) should follow the Imam in all the actions of prayer until the Imam concludes the prayer with **Taslim** (salutation of peace ending the Prayer). The followers should take care not to precede the Imam, or move with him, or lag behind him; rather, their movements should come immediately after his. So they should not bow until the Imam bows or prostrate until he prostrates.

- This is based on the saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him): **“The Imam is only appointed to be followed, so when he says *Takbir* then say *Takbir*, and do not say *Takbir* until after he has said *Takbir*; and when he bows then bow, and do not bow until after he has bowed; and when he says ‘*Sami’a Allahu liman hamidah*,’ then say ‘*Allahumma rabbana lakal-hamd*’; and when he prostrates then prostrate, and do not prostrate until he has prostrated.”** (Narrated by Abu Dawud)
- Reciting **Al-Fatihah** is obligatory for the one who is praying behind the Imam, whether the congregational *Salah* is **Sirri** (prayer in which the Imam recites the Qur’an inaudibly), such as Zuhr and `Asr Prayers, the third *Rak`ah* of Maghrib Prayer, and the third and fourth *Rak`ahs* of `Isha' Prayer; or it is **Jahri** (prayer in which the Imam recites the Qur’an audibly), such as Fajr Prayer, the first two *Rak`ahs* of Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers, *Jumu`ah* (Friday) Prayer, and the Two Eid Prayers.
- Latecomers, who join the congregational prayer late and miss one *Rak`ah* or more, should **make up** the missed parts of their prayer alone, after the Imam says *Taslim*. They should stand up to make up what they have missed of the prayer without saying *Taslim* with the Imam. According to majority scholarly opinion, a *Rak`ah* is counted as long as the latecomer catches up with the Imam in the bowing position and is able to bow with the Imam before he raises his head from the bowing. This *Rak`ah* is counted in this case, and the follower does not have to make it up.



“And they who carefully maintain their prayers –
they are the inheritors who will inherit Paradise.

They will abide therein eternally.”

(QUR’AN 23:9-11)

UNDERSTANDING *SALAH*

“Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their prayers with *Khushu`*.”

(QUR'AN 23:1-2)



The State of Heart and Mind Required During *Salah*

Salah is not merely the words pronounced by the tongue and the movements carried out by the body. It must be performed with *Khushu`* (the heart being gently humble and the mind being focused and attuned to the act of worship).



- *Salah* has a body and a soul. Its body is made up of the series of motions and postures that include standing, bowing, prostrating, and reciting, while its soul is made up of the presence of the heart in prayer and *Khushu`*. Allah, the Majestic, praises those who keep their hearts humbly focused on Him during prayer, saying: **“Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their prayers with *Khushu`*.”** (Qur’an 23:1-2)
- *Khushu`* can be defined as the careful attentiveness of the mind to what is being said and done during prayer, with due consciousness of the Exalted Status of the Lord before Whom you stand and speak. This puts the heart into a state of gentleness, modesty, awe, submission, and humility before Allah’s Greatness. This inner state is manifested in the body, producing stillness of senses and calmness in movements, with total mental and emotional focus on the prayer without the mind wandering away or getting distracted.

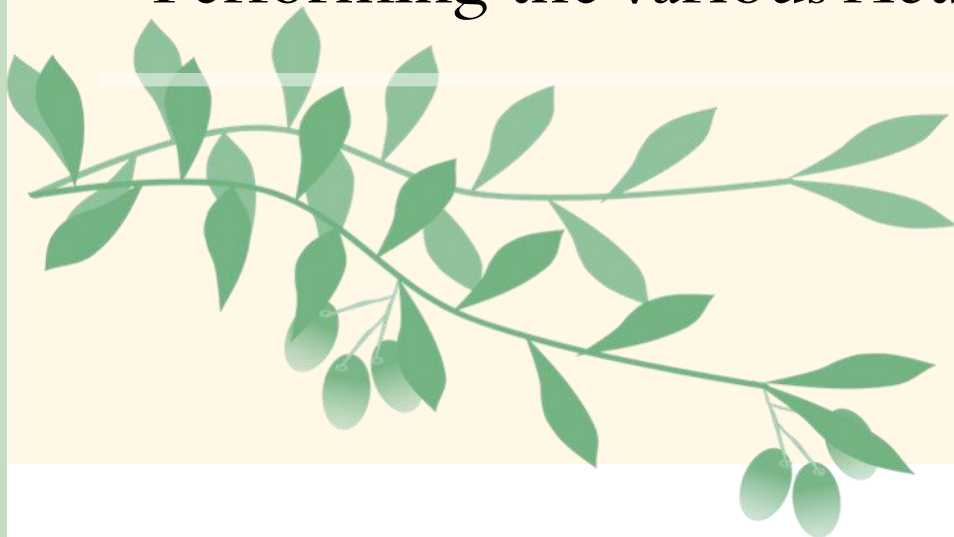
Khushu` is the essence of *Salah*. Some scholars have said,
“*Salah without Khushu` is like a dead corpse.*”

KHUSHU` IS OF TWO KINDS:

1. *Khushu` of the heart*, which consists of bringing the full intention and attention of the heart to prayer, with constant contemplation of what is being recited.

2. *Khushu` of the body*, which consists of peaceful stillness of the body and avoidance of unnecessary actions (such as yawning, fidgeting, adjusting clothes, or looking at a watch) or allowing the eye or mind to be drawn to anything outside the prayer.

Necessary Composure While Performing the Various Acts of *Salah*



One day, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) entered the mosque and saw a man hastily bowing and prostrating while praying, so he said to him, **“Go back and pray, for you have not prayed.”**

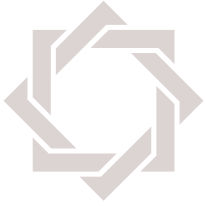
The man said, “By the One Who has sent you with the Truth, I cannot do any better than this. Please, teach me.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“When you stand up for *Salah*, say *Takbir* (“*Allahu Akbar*”), and then recite whatever you can of the Qur’an (what you know by heart). Then bow until you become peacefully still in your bowing, then rise until you are standing up straight. Then prostrate until you are peacefully still in your prostration, then sit up until you are peacefully still in your sitting; and do that throughout your entire *Salah*.”** (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

- Maintaining composure and stillness throughout *Salah* is an integral part of it, without which it becomes invalid. For this reason, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) invalidated this man's prayer.
- The amount of composure and stillness required during each integral act of prayer (standing, bowing, prostrating, or sitting) is that which extends for a length sufficient to say the prescribed recitation or essential utterance of prayer in that act. Some scholars have said, "It is staying still in every integral part of prayer for a length of time sufficient to allow every bone to return to its proper place."
- What negates composure while praying is hasty movements, so the person praying does not straighten their spine in the bowing, prostrating, or sitting position. Such a hurried manner of praying renders the *Salah* null and void.

Perform your prayer slowly and tranquilly, giving each part its due attention. Do not move quickly to the next step; instead, keep your body steady and calm, allowing each joint and bone to return to its normal place before proceeding to the next action.

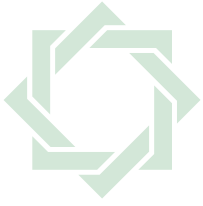
Helpful Ways to Acquire Humility and Focus during *Salah*



1. Remind Yourself in Your *Salah*

1. Remind yourself that you are worshipping the Great and High and Exalted and Majestic Lord Who sees you, hears you, knows you, understands you, and watches over you.
2. Remind yourself of your Lord's Glory, Grandeur, Power, Majesty, and Splendor.
3. Remind yourself of your standing before Him (Exalted be He).
4. Remind yourself of Allah putting His Face to yours during *Salah*; it is authentically reported that Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: **“Allah commands you to offer *Salah*. When you are offering *Salah*, do not turn away; for Allah directs His Face towards the face of His praying servant, as long as they do not turn away.”** (Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi)

The great scholar Ibn Al-Qayyim clarified that the act of turning away that is prohibited during *Salah* falls into two categories: **The first** is the heart turning away from Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, to something else. **The second** is the eyes turning away from Allah to something else.



2. Try Felling This Way during *Salah*

1. Try to feel every movement and statement you make during *Salah* and resolutely focus on performing every part of it slowly and deliberately. Avoid performing it mechanically and unconsciously as a passionless routine, without attention and awareness, or just praying with the tongue without engaging the heart.
2. Be keen to perfect your prayer so you do not miss out on its reward. Remember that a person praying will only be rewarded for the portion they performed with proper presence of mind and humility. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: **“A person may offer *Salah* and nothing of it is recorded for them except one tenth of it, one ninth of it, one eighth of it, one seventh of it, one sixth of it, one fifth of it, one quarter of it, one third of it, or half of it.”** (Narrated by Imam Ahmad)
3. Prepare yourself before entering into *Salah* and meet any basic human needs that may distract you from focusing on it, as the hadith says: **“You should not pray when food is served or when resisting the urge to urinate or defecate.”** (Narrated by Muslim)
4. Choose a quiet place to pray, free from noise, motion, and distractions (like people walking or chatting around you, or telephones ringing, or the TV playing in the background), so you can focus on your *Salah*.



Beauty of Salah

Say Allahu Akbar and Throw the World Behind You

Did you ever think: why do we start our prayer with “*Allahu Akbar*” not with “*Subhan Allah*”? Realize that when you say “*Allahu Akbar*” you affirm that the one before whom you are about to stand is greater than anything occupying you at that moment – greater than your sleep, your families, your bills, and your worries. Just imagine that when you say “*Allahu Akbar*” while raising your hands you are throwing all of that behind you!

Muslimah

Never Ending Support

We are truly in great need of continuous good and the removal of hardships through a strong relationship with our Creator that makes life flow easily, peacefully, and blessedly.

Salah guarantees all this to a believer.

Along each day’s route, Islam designated five gracious pauses for Allah, distributed at specific times throughout the day, during which humankind is directed to meet their Lord, open their hearts, and speak their minds to Him, starting by praising Him and acknowledging His Grandeur, followed by requesting His Blessings and the averting of evils, asking for His Help and seeking His Contentment, and shoring up their deficient knowledge with His Perfect Knowledge and their inadequate power with His Supreme Power.

In a Hadith Qudsi (Sacred Saying in which Almighty Allah Himself is speaking), Allah says: **“I have divided *Salah* between Myself and My servant into two halves, and My servant shall have what he asks for.**

When the servant says, (Praise be to Allah, the Lord of existence) [Al-Fatihah 1:2], Allah says, **‘My servant has praised Me.’**

When he says, (The All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful) [Al-Fatihah 1:3], Allah says, **‘My servant has extolled Me.’**

When he says, (The Owner (Master) of the Day of Judgment) [Al-Fatihah 1:4], Allah says, **‘My servant has glorified Me.’**

When he says, (You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help (for each and everything) [Al-Fatihah 1:5], Allah says, **‘This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for.’**

When he says, (Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not the path of those who have incurred Your Anger, nor of those who have gone astray) [Al-Fatihah 1:6-7], Allah says, **‘This is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for.’** (Narrated by Muslim)

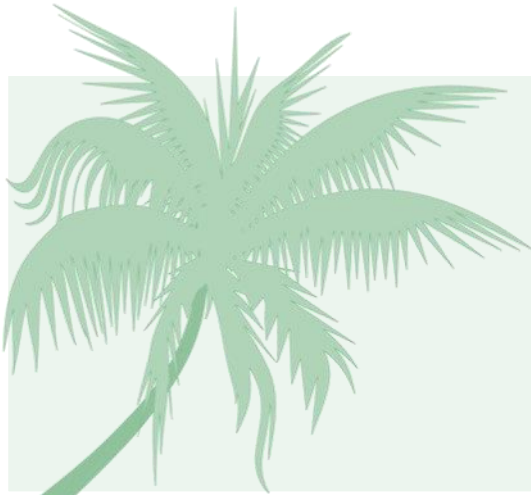
Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali

Think for a Minute

When we pray, think for a minute how small we are in this immense universe which Allah (the Exalted) created, like a drop of water in a big ocean. We are really nothing in size and in time, so when we say “*Allahu Akbar*” to start *Salah*, indeed He is Al-Kabir (the Great, the Supreme), and when we say “*Subhana Rabbiyal `Azim,*” indeed He is Al-Azim (the Great, the Magnificent, the Glorious).

To remember these meanings can help us focus more in our prayer and benefit more from our *Salah* such that when we end with *Taslim*, we find tranquillity and peace in our hearts has grown, and the reminder that this world is only a transition – not the final destination – helps us refocus on the Hereafter, which is the eternal abode of peace for believers whom Allah will reward.

Tarek Ezzat



Tranquility, Something Only Known to People Committed to *Salah*

- A human, by nature, worries and becomes impatient when faced with adversity, and stingy and reluctant to give when prosperity comes their way. Allah (Blessed and Exalted be He) says in His Noble Book: **“Indeed, humankind was created impatient; distressed when touched with evil, and withholding when touched with good—except the observers of *Salah*.”** (Qur’an 70:19-22)
- Any human on the face of the earth, in any place and at any time, has these two qualities; extreme anxiety and grief during hard times, and extreme miserliness and close-fistedness during easy or prosperous times.
- Allah, the Magnificent and Exalted, excludes those who pray from this moral weakness. Tranquility is known only to people who are regular in *Salah*.

Fear and
Withholding
Are Inherent in
Human nature

-
- Belief in Allah, the Glorious and Exalted, and constant communication with Him, transforms and elevates the nature of the human soul, and dispels its disquietude and fears. It makes the humans trusting, peaceful, generous and serene; exhibiting steadfastness during hard times, without complaining, impatience, or panic. They see Allah's Hand managing this universe, bringing nothing but wisdom, goodness, and prosperity. And so their hearts are at peace, regardless of whatever good or evil may happen to them.
 - A good relationship with Allah, continuous mindfulness of Him, and maintenance of *Salah* in a proper manner that fulfills its intended purpose and meets its intellectual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical conditions make the people who pray immune to these two negative behaviors; namely, to become very anxious and distressed when something bad happens, and very niggardly when something good happens. In fact, these two behaviors are the triggers for most troubles and illnesses of the soul.

(Adapted from Dr. Ratib Al-Nabulsi)

Salah - The Purpose of Life



In the Prophet's mission on earth, every instruction, every commandment was sent down through Angel Jibril (Gabriel). But, there was one commandment that was not. There was one commandment so important, that rather than sending angel Jibril down with it, Allah brought the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) up to Himself.

That commandment was *Salah* (prayer). When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was first given the command to pray, it was to be fifty times in a day. After asking Allah to make it easier, the commandment was eventually reduced to five times a day, with the reward of the fifty.

Reflecting upon this incident scholars have explained that the process of going from fifty to five was a deliberate one, intended to teach us the true place *Salah* should hold in our lives. Imagine for a moment actually praying fifty times a day. Would we be able to do anything else but pray? No. And that's the point. What greater way than that to illustrate our life's true purpose? As if to say, *Salah* is our real life; all the rest that we fill our day with... just motions.

- ◆ Source: Excerpted from the article "Life's Forgotten Purpose" by Sister Yasmin Mogahed

The First Thing You Will Be Asked About on Judgment Day



Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: **“The first deed that the servant will be called to account for on Resurrection Day is their *Salah*. If it is good, they will have prospered and succeeded; if it is bad, they will have failed and lost.”** (Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi)

Salah is the first deed that a human will be brought to account for on Judgment Day. If the prayers are good and proper, the rest of the deeds become good and proper. But if the prayers are bad and improper, the rest of the deeds become bad and improper, even if they include good actions as high as the mountains.

Rule: The Two Standings – Scholar Ibn Al-Qayyim

A servant has two standings in front of Allah.

A standing in front of Him during *Salah* (in this life) and a standing in front of Him on the Day of meeting with Him (in the Hereafter).

Whoever fulfills the rights of the first standing, giving it its due right, will have the other standing made easy for them. And whoever takes this standing lightly, failing to give it its due importance, will have the other standing made hard for them.

Salah Concessions for People with Valid Excuses

Islam is a religion of ease and mercy. Allah, the Exalted, says: *“Allah wants ease for you, not hardship.”* (Qur’an 2:185)

Salah remains an obligation on every Muslim in any situation. It should not be abandoned under any circumstances, including illness, travel, or fear. *Salah* establishes the connection between a person and their Creator and must never be interrupted or severed, but instead performed in a lightened form when there is an Islamically acceptable excuse.

1-Travelers



- The Islamic Law permits those traveling for approximately eighty kilometers or more to **shorten the four-Rak`ah prayers to two (called *Qasr*)** and to **combine two prayers (called *Jam`*)** at the due time of either of them in order to eliminate hardship and facilitate matters for the travelers.
- **Concession of shortening prayers during travels:** It grants permission for travelers to offer the four-Rak`ah prayers as two Rak`ahs only (namely, the *Zuhr*, the *`Asr*, and the *`Isha`*). There is no shortening of the *Fajr* or the *Maghrib* Prayers.

- **Concession of combining two prayers:** It grants permission for travelers to offer two consecutive prayers, namely, the *Zuhr* Prayer with the *`Asr* Prayer, and the *Maghrib* Prayer with the *`Isha* Prayer during the time of the earlier or later one, as appropriate for the circumstances of the individual involved. In clearer words, to bring the *`Asr* forward and pray it with the *Zuhr* (**called early combination**) or delay the *Zuhr* and pray it with the *`Asr* (**called late combination**). The same procedure applies to combining the *Maghrib* and the *`Isha*. The *Fajr* Prayer cannot be combined with any other prayer. It must be prayed on time.

- To avail themselves of the concessions of traveling, travelers must leave the built-up area of their city or village. Most scholars also stipulate that the journey must be for a lawful purpose.



- Traveling is the only legitimate reason for shortening prayers; it is not allowed in situations other than traveling. As for combining prayers, the reasons permitting it include necessity and valid excuses. This makes it possible when needed. Accordingly, combining prayers is permissible for travelers, and also for resident people (non-travelers) when it is too difficult for them to offer each *Salah* on time. For example, someone who is sick, someone who is feeling threatened or afraid (with regards to personal safety, property, or honor), or someone who is busy with a task that cannot be interrupted, such as a student taking an exam or a doctor carrying out a surgery. This is on the condition that combining prayers must not become a habit, regularly performed, and is limited to the difficult or inconvenient situation that faces the person.



2-Sick People

Conscious, sane patients should pray as their condition allows and should never abandon *Salah*. No sane Muslim who has attained puberty shall be exempt from offering *Salah*, except in the particular case of a menstruating or postpartum woman. During that period, a woman is excused from the obligation of *Salah* until the bleeding stops and she becomes purified. Because of Allah's Mercy and Kindness towards women, she does not have to make up the prayers she misses during that time.

- The tolerant Islamic Law has eased the duty of *Salah* for sick people by allowing them to pray according to their condition and physical state. Allah, the Majestic and Glorious, says: *“Allah burdens not a soul beyond its capacity.”* (Qur'an 2:286)

- Al-Bukhari narrated in his Sahih Book of Hadith that Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said to `Imran ibn Husayn: **“Pray standing; if you cannot, then sitting; and if you cannot, then lying on your side.”** Al-Nasa’i added in his reported version of the hadith: **“If you cannot, then lying on your back. Allah does not burden any soul beyond its scope.”**
- Sick people should pray as their condition allows. If they cannot stand, they can pray while sitting. If they cannot sit, they can pray while lying on their side, preferably the right side, and facing towards the *Qiblah*. They should bow and prostrate using gestures. If lying on their side is difficult for them, they may pray while lying on their back with their feet facing towards the *Qiblah*.
- A sick person who can stand, but cannot bow or prostrate, is not excused from the obligation of standing. They should pray in a standing position and make a head gesture for bowing (by lowering their head or bending their back a little), then take a sitting position and make a head gesture for prostration.
- A sick person who cannot bow and prostrate should perform these prayer postures with gestures of the head only, making the gesture for prostration more inclined or lower than that for bowing.
- A sick person who can only prostrate should bow and make a gesture for prostration.
- If it is too difficult for the sick person to offer each prayer at its due time, they can combine the *Zuhr* Prayer with the *`Asr* Prayer, and the *Maghrib* Prayer with *`Isha'* Prayer at the time of the earlier or later one, according to what best fits their circumstances and ability.



Supererogatory Worship that Allah Loves

The merit of offering supererogatory *Salah* is highlighted by the words of Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him): **“Any Muslim servant of Allah who each day prays twelve voluntary *Rak`ahs* for Exalted Allah, apart from the obligatory prayers, Allah will build for them a house in Paradise.”** (Narrated by Muslim)

Supererogatory prayers are distributed into twelve *Rak`ahs*, some before and some after the obligatory prayers. They are as follows:

- Two *Rak`ahs* before *Fajr* (Dawn) Prayer.
- Four *Rak`ahs* before *Zuhr* (Noon) Prayer and two after it.
- Two after *Maghrib* (Sunset) Prayer.
- Two after *`Isha'* (Night) Prayer.

The performance of voluntary prayers is a sign of great virtue and brings a great reward. Two most important are:

1. Being a way of earning Allah's Love

Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

Verily, Allah (Exalted be He) says: “My servant approaches Me with nothing more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon them, and My servant keeps drawing nearer to Me with voluntary works until I love them. And when I love them, I am their hearing with which they hear, their sight with which they see, their hand with which they seize, and their foot with which they walk (i.e., they act with the help and guidance of Allah and for His Sake). If they ask Me, I will surely give to them, and if they seek refuge in Me, I will surely protect them.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari)

2. Making up for any shortcomings in the obligatory five daily prayers

Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

Verily, the first of their deeds for which the people will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be *Salah*. Our Lord will say to His angels, although He knows best, “Look into My servant’s *Salah*; is it complete or lacking?” If it is complete, it will be recorded as complete. But if it is lacking, He (Allah) will say, “Look and see whether my servant offered any voluntary *Salah*.” If they have offered voluntary *Salah*, He (Allah) will say, “Complete the obligatory *Salah* of My servant from their voluntary *Salah*.” Then the rest of their deeds will be examined in a similar manner. (Narrated by Abu Dawud)

Important Vocabulary of *Salah*

- ***Al-Fatihah or Fatihat-ul-Kitab:***

The Opening or Opener of the Book; the first chapter in the Noble Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) declared it to be the greatest in the entire Book of Allah, saying: “[**The chapter commencing with] *Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil `Alamin* (Praise be to Allah, the Lord of existence...) is the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses and it is the Glorious Qur'an that I have been given.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari) Despite its brevity, it encompasses the basic meaning of the Glorious Qur'an and outlines its primary aims. The Glorious Qur'an calls on humanity to believe in Allah Almighty and to worship only Him (have no other gods) and then guides humans to the correct way of living; these are the same elements of the seven-verse opening chapter of the Qur'an. Al-Fatihah is so named because it is the chapter with which the Qur'an begins. It is also named *Al-Sab`-ul-Mathany* (Seven Oft-recited Verses) because it is recited in each *Rak`ah* (unit) of every *Salah*; no *Salah* is valid without its recitation.**

- ***Al-Salat-ul-Ibrahimiyyah:***

The Abrahamic Supplication; the best and most authentic formula for sending peace and blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). It is recited in the sitting position in the last ***Tashahhud*** (testification of faith) of every prayer that contains two ***Tashahhuds***. Its formula reads: “O Allah, exalt the mention of Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad as You have exalted Ibrahim (Abraham) and the Family of Ibrahim. You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad as You have blessed Ibrahim and the Family of Ibrahim. You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory.”

- ***Al-Salawat Al-Khams:***

The Five Obligatory Daily Prayers. *Salah* is the second pillar of Islam and the fundamental cornerstone of a person's religion. It is the first deed that a servant of Allah shall be asked about on Judgment Day. The pillar of *Salah* consists of five prayers per day and night (each 24-hour period), which a Muslim should pray at their prescribed times.

These Five Obligatory Daily Prayers are:

1-Fajr or Subh Prayer: Dawn or Morning Prayer; the first of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of two *Rak`ahs* (units). The time for this prayer starts at the break of true dawn and ends at sunrise. It is a **Jahri Salah** (prayer with audible recitation).

2-Zuhr Prayer: Noon Prayer; the second of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of four *Rak`ahs*. The time for this prayer starts when the sun passes its zenith (midday) and ends when the shadow of an object is equal to its length. It is a **Sirri Salah** (prayer with inaudible recitation).

3-`Asr Prayer: Afternoon Prayer; the third of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of four *Rak`ahs*. The time for this prayer starts when the shadow of an object is equal to its length and ends at sunset. It is a **Sirri Salah** (prayer with inaudible recitation).

4-Maghrib Prayer: Sunset Prayer; the fourth of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of three *Rak`ahs*. The time for this prayer starts at sunset and ends with the disappearance of red twilight. It is a **Jahri Salah** (prayer with audible recitation).

5-`Isha' Prayer: Night Prayer; the fifth and the last of the five obligatory daily prayers. It consists of four *Rak`ahs*. The time for this prayer starts when the red twilight disappears and ends at midnight. It is a **Jahri Salah** (prayer with audible recitation).

- **Azan:**

Call to alert Muslims of prayer start time, prompting them to disengage from their preoccupations and prepare to meet Allah, the Exalted. This call occurs five times a day before each of the prescribed daily prayers. The person who makes the call to prayer is called a **Muezzin**. As for **Iqamah**, it is the call uttered immediately before the beginning of the obligatory prayer offered in congregation, signaling to the assembled worshipers that it is time to start performing the prayer. The words of *Iqamah* are the same as those of *Azan* except for the words “*Qad qamat-al-Salah*” (Prayer has begun), which are added in *Iqamah* after “*Haiya`alal-falah*” (Come to Success). The first Muezzin in Islam was the honorable Companion **Bilal ibn Rabah** (may Allah be pleased with him), chosen by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) himself.

- **Basmalah:**

Mentioning Allah’s Name; saying, “*Bismillahi r-Rahmani r-Rahim*” [In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful].

- **Bulugh:**

Maturity, attainment of puberty; end of the childhood stage and entry into the stage of obligation to adhere to the Islamic rulings (such as *Salah*, *Sawm* [fasting], and *Zakah* [obligatory charity]) and the beginning of individual accountability for one's actions and behavior. The principal sign of physical maturity is experiencing nocturnal seminal emission in males and discharge of menstrual blood in females; or it is marked by reaching fifteen years of age for both sexes.

- **Du`a' Al-Istiftah:**

Opening supplication in prayer; the invocation with which an obligatory or supererogatory prayer is commenced. It is recited only in the first *Rak`ah*, after the first utterance of **Takbir** (i.e., *Takbirat-ul-Ihram*) and before reciting Al-Fatihah. It is not an obligatory part of prayer; rather, it is **Sunnah** (supererogatory act of worship following the manner of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him). It has several formulas, one of which reads: “**O Allah, separate my sins and me as You have separated the east and the west. O Allah, purify me from my sins as a white garment is purified from dirt. O Allah, wash away my sins with water, snow, and hail.**”

- **Iftirash:**

Sitting posture during prayer; sitting on the left thigh with the right foot kept upright and its toes pointed towards the **Qiblah**. It is recommended as an act of **Sunnah** (supererogatory act of worship following the manner of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) to sit in this posture in three positions during prayer: 1-Between the two prostrations. 2-During the **Tashahhud** recited in two-*Rak`ah* prayers. 3-During the **first Tashahhud** recited in four-*Rak`ah* and three-*Rak`ah* prayers. *Iftirash* sitting is one of the **Sunnah** acts of prayer and not an obligatory part of it.

- **Imam:**

The person who leads a group of worshipers in a congregational prayer. **Ma'mum(s)**: Followers of the Imam in prayer; the people who range themselves behind the Imam and follow him in the actions of prayer, such as standing, reciting, bowing, and prostrating.

- **Isti`adhah:**

Seeking protection and fortification with Almighty Allah from the whisperings of Satan by saying: “*A`udhu-Billahi mina Al-Shaytan-ir-Rajim*” [I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan].

- **Jahri Salah:**

Prayers in which the Qur'an is recited audibly. These prayers are **Fajr**, **Maghrib**, **`Isha'**, **Jumu`ah**, and the **Two Eid Prayers**. **Sirri Salah:** Prayers in which the Qur'an is recited inaudibly. These prayers are **Zuhr** and **`Asr** Prayers, and the third **Rak`ah** of **Maghrib** Prayer, and the third and fourth **Rak`ahs** of **`Isha'** Prayer.

- **Jam`:**

Combining two obligatory prayers; this can be done either during the time of the earlier or the later of the two prayers with a legal Islamic excuse, such as traveling, sickness, feeling threatened, or rainfall. There are two types of prayer combining. The first is called **Jam`u Taqdim** (early combination), which means to offer **`Asr** at the time of **Zuhr** and **`Isha** at the time of **Maghrib**, in which case the later prayer is moved forward to the time of the earlier prayer. The second is called **Jam`u Ta`khir** (late combination), which means to offer **Zuhr** at the time of **`Asr** and **Maghrib** at the time of **`Isha**, in which case the earlier prayer is delayed to the time of the later prayer.

- **Jumu`ah Prayer:**

Friday Prayer; this is a weekly congregational prayer that is held in mosques at noon each Friday. It suffices in place of **Zuhr** Prayer for those who attend it. It consists of two **Rak`ahs** preceded by a sermon delivered by a Muslim scholar, in which he exhorts the people to goodness and enlightens them about Islam. It is an obligatory duty for every sane, mature, resident (non-traveling), male Muslim.

- **Masjid:**

Mosque; linguistically, this means the place of prostration. Islamically, it means any place built or prepared for Muslims to offer the five prayers in congregation. A Muslim place of worship is also called **Jami`** (gathering place), especially if it is a large mosque where Friday Prayers are held. In other words, every **Jami`** is definitely a **Masjid**, but not every **Masjid** is a **Jami`**. The word **Musalla** refers to any place dedicated for prayer and worship. The five daily prayers are announced in the mosques by the **Azan**.

- **Niyyah:**

Intention and will; Islamically, this means the intention to carry out an act of obedience or worship for the sake of drawing close to Allah, the Glorious and Exalted. The place of the intention is the heart, not the tongue. There is no need to articulate the intention.

- **Qada':**

Making up prayers; this is to compensate for a missed obligatory prayer, regardless of whether it has been left out due to a legal excuse, such as sleep or forgetfulness, or without an excuse. In all situations, if a prayer is missed, the Muslim must make up for it as soon as it is remembered. This is based on the saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him): **“Whoever forgets a prayer or sleeps and misses it, its expiation is to make it up as soon as they remember it.”** (Narrated by Muslim) It is essential to make up missed prayers in the proper order; that is, the missed prayer first then the current prayer, on condition that there is enough time left to perform the prayer that is currently due. If time is limited and following the correct sequence would lead to delaying the currently due prayer, then the due prayer should be offered first and then the missed prayer.

- **Qasr:**

Shortening four-*Rak`ah* prayers (namely, **Zuhr**, **`Asr**, and **`Isha'** Prayers) to two *Rak`ahs* when undertaking a journey of approximately 80 kilometers or longer. Shortening prayers is a special license for travelers and is not allowed for residents.

- **Qiblah:**

Ka`bah-direction faced in prayer; this is the direction towards which Muslims all over the world face when they offer *Salah* and some other acts of worship. The Honorable Ka`bah lies at the center of the Sacred Mosque in Mecca. In the early stage of Islam, **Al-Aqsa Mosque** (literally, the Farthest Mosque) located in Jerusalem, was the first *Qiblah* that Muslims faced before it was changed to Mecca. The change of *Qiblah* from Jerusalem to Mecca occurred in the second year after Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) emigration to Medina, on the Command of Almighty Allah to pray facing the direction of the Ka`bah – the First House built for the worship of Allah on earth.

- **Qiyam:**

Standing position in prayer; standing up is an integral act of obligatory prayers for those who are able to pray standing up. A worshiper is required to perform prescribed prayers, from beginning to end, in a standing position if they have the ability to stand up. As for supererogatory prayers, they can be performed while seated.

- **Ruku`:**

Bowing; lowering the head along with inclining the back in reverence and glorification of Almighty Allah during prayer. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“As for bowing, glorify the Lord in it.”** (Narrated by Muslim) Bowing is a posture that indicates veneration and honor from the one bowing to the one being bowed to. While bowing, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) taught that the person praying should say three times: **“Subhana Rabbiyal `Azim”** (Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great). Thus, the one praying expresses exaltation of the Lord in both words and action; the act of bowing itself represents the physical exaltation of Allah, and saying **“Subhana Rabbiyal `Azim”** represents the verbal exaltation. There remains the emotional exaltation, which can be realized only by the heart being humbly focused on prayer.

- **Sujud:**

Prostrating; placing the forehead on the ground in humility and servitude to Allah, the Sovereign, during prayer. This is the most honorable part of prayer, because it is the humblest posture for showing submission and reverence to Allah. It involves having the forehead, the nose, both palms, both knees, and all toes touching the ground together. Prostration puts the humans and their highest and noblest part (i.e., the face) down with the earth and dust in obedience and resignation to Allah, the Majestic. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) taught that while prostrating, the person praying should say three times: **“Subhana Rabbiyal A`la”** (Glory be to my Lord, the Most High). In prostration, worshipers are the lowest they can be, so it is most suitable in this position to extol Allah’s Sublimity and Transcendence and to remind the soul of the One Who is Higher than it and everything else. For nothing is comparable to Allah. Indeed, He is the Most High in all meanings of the word. Prostration brings the person praying the closest they can be to Allah and His Mercy, as Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: **“The closest a person can be to their Lord is when they are prostrating, so supplicate much in it.”** (Narrated by Muslim) Prostration is also the most opportune place during prayer for making requests of Allah and having them granted; therefore, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) exhorted his followers to supplicate to Allah a lot, saying, **“...and as for prostration, exert yourself in making supplication, because then it is more deserving of response.”** (Narrated by Muslim)

- **Takbir:**

Declaration of Allah's Greatness or magnification of Allah; saying "**Allahu Akbar**" (Allah is Greater) as a way of expressing awe at Allah's Grandeur, Sublimity, and Powerful Majesty. *Takbir* means there is nothing that transcends Almighty Allah. It is said that, in Arabic, there is no higher expression of exaltation and glorification of Allah than the phrase "*Allahu Akbar.*"

- **Takbirat-ul-Ihram:**

Initial **Takbir** for commencing prayer; saying aloud "*Allahu Akbar*" to declare entry into prayer. *Takbir* at the beginning of the prayer forms an integral part of it, without which the prayer is invalid. It is requisite for entering the state of prayer.

- **Tashahhud:**

Testimony of Faith, also known as **Attahiyat** (Salutations); it is recited in the sitting position in the second/last unit of prayer. *Tashahhud* forms an integral part of the prayer, without which the prayer is invalid. Its formula can be translated as follows: "All salutations (reverence), all prayers, all good things are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the Mercy of Allah and His Blessings. Peace be upon us and all the righteous servants of Allah. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger."

- **Taslim:**

Salutation of peace ending the prayer; concluding the prayer by saying: "*As-salamu `alaykum warahmatullah wabarakatuh*" (May Allah's Peace, Mercy, and Blessings be upon you) twice, once while turning the face to the right side, and once while turning it to the left side.

- **Tawarruk:**

Sitting posture during prayer; placing the left foot under the right leg with the right foot held upright, while resting the buttocks on the ground. The *Tawarruk* posture is taken in the last **Tashahhud** of the four-*Rak`ah* and three-*Rak`ah* prayers. It is an act of **Sunnah** (supererogatory act of worship following the manner of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him) and not an obligatory part of prayer.

- **Two Eid Prayers:**

The Prayer of **Eid-ul-Fitr** (the Festival of Breaking the Fast) held after completing the Fast of Ramadan, and the Prayer of **Eid-ul-Adha** (the Festival of the Sacrifice) held after the annual holy pilgrimage to Mecca, on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah. The Two Eid Prayers consist of two *Rak`ahs*. Muslims offer them to express gratitude to Allah (Blessed be He) upon the completion of these two major acts of worship – fasting during Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca, the two festival occasions of Islam. Part of the etiquette of attending Eid Prayers is taking a bath, putting on perfume (for males), wearing the best clothes, eating some dates before going out to pray, performing the prayer in the open rather than inside mosques, and saying a lot of **Dhikr** (remembrance of Allah in the form of glorification, exaltation, praise, and thanksgiving) and *Takbir*.

- **Wudu’:**

Ablution; it derives from the word **Wada’ah** (cleanliness, brightness, and beauty). Islamically, it means the process of using water in a specific manner and in ordered steps to wash certain parts of the body with the intention of becoming purified and prepared for prayer.



The Six Pillars of Belief

Muslims hold the following six major beliefs, known as the Six Articles of Belief, which represent the inward application of Islamic faith or the deeds of the heart. In order, they are:

1-Belief in God

Definition of God: Muslims believe in One Sovereign, Eternal, All-Knowing, and Almighty God Who has no wife, son, partner, or equal. He is entirely Self-Sufficient, Independent, and Perfect; He needs nothing to exist, to give Him power, or to make Him complete. He is the Creator and Sustainer of everything. He has no mediators; He hears and responds to everyone (in His own way and time). He is infinitely Great and Gracious, and is incomparable to any of His creations. He does not incarnate and must never be drawn or depicted. He sends messengers and prophets with His Divine Message.

The worship of God alone: The belief in the Oneness of God and the worship of God alone is the foundation of Islamic religion. Islam teaches that God alone gives life, causes death, brings good, removes distress, answers supplications, and forgives sins; therefore, no one has the right to be worshipped except Him.

Allah: Allah is the Superior Name of the One True Universal God and can never be used to designate any other being. It is absolutely unique to the Creator of the heavens and earth, the Lord of humankind, and the God Who was worshipped by Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

Meaning of the Name Allah: In Arabic, it means ‘the One exclusively worthy of deification and worship.’ It is inclusive of all God’s other Divine Names and Attributes of absolute perfection and has primacy over all His other Titles (e.g., the Maker, the Almighty, and the All-Merciful).

Singularity of the Name: Allah has no plural or gender, as opposed to the word ‘god’, which has a plural form (gods) and a feminine form (goddess). This gives it absolute accuracy in conveying the true nature of the Creator than the term (God), even if a capital G is used. Arab Christians and Jews use the word Allah for God.

Allah according to the Qur’an: The Qur’anic Chapter of Ikhlas (112: 1-4) concisely yet adequately defines God as follows: *“Say: He is Allah, the One God, the Self-Sufficient (independent of all, while all are dependent on Him). He does not beget nor is He begotten, and nothing is equal or comparable to Him.”*

2-Belief in Angels

Belief in the Unseen: Muslims believe in the existence of the unseen world and the invisible realm of heaven, of which angels are a part. Angels, according to the main sources of Islam, the Qur'an and Sunnah (teachings of Prophet Muhammad), are genderless creatures made of light.

The nature of angels: In contrast to human beings, angels do not have needs, desires, or free will. They are honorable servants of Allah, dedicated to perpetual worship of Him. They obey every Command of Allah and do not have the ability to disobey Him. Each angel is charged with a specific duty.

3- Belief in all Divine Books

Permanence of the message of Islam: Muslims believe in the oneness and continuity of divine guidance throughout human history; therefore, they believe in all the revelations that Allah sent down to humanity. These revelations include the Scrolls given to Abraham, the Torah given to Moses, the Psalms given to David, the Gospels given to Jesus, and, finally, the Qur'an given to Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon them all).

Basic content of the Divine Books: Islam instructs that all the divine books come from the same source (Allah), contain the same message (worship of Allah alone), and essentially enjoin the same duties, orders, and prohibitions.

The Qur'an versus previous scriptures: Islam states that although scriptures prior to the Qur'an were once authentic, over time they have been lost, altered, concealed, or corrupted. Only Allah's Final Revelation, the Qur'an, has been preserved in its original form and provides authentic knowledge about God. It confirms any truths that remained and corrects any distortions that were made in previous scriptures.

4-Belief in Messengers

Messengers: Muslims believe that from the beginning of humanity, Allah sent a long line of prophets and messengers to convey His Message of Islam to humankind. Belief in them all, equally and without distinction, is an integral component of Islamic faith.

The nature of the Messengers: All messengers were mortal human beings supported by miracles from Allah that proved their prophethood. They were not gods, or sons, or partners of Allah; they were the best human beings ever—spiritually, morally, intellectually, and physically.

Mission: Messengers were sent in succession and worked as one unified whole throughout time; each preached the Oneness of Allah and the worship of Him alone, advocated the obedience of His Laws of right and wrong, confirmed previous prophets and scriptures, and spoke of a coming Prophet.

Muhammad: The final and complete revelation of Islamic faith was made through Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). He is declared in the Holy Book of Islam, the Qur'an, as humanity's most perfect man and the last and universal Prophet whose life, teachings, and spirituality, along with the Qur'an, provide the final and eternal guidance to all humanity – Arabs and non-Arabs alike.

5-Belief in the Last Day

This life and the life to come: Muslims believe that one's life does not end on earth; rather, it is followed by the eternal life of the Hereafter, which is the true life. According to Islam, the present life of this world is temporal. It was designed as a test of belief in and obedience to Allah, the outcome of which shall determine the location of a person's next life (Paradise or Hell).

Accountability and the Day of Judgement: Islam instructs that all humans who have lived on the earth are accountable for their beliefs and willful actions. Everything one does, says, or intends in this world is accurately recorded by angels. These records of deeds shall be presented on the Day of Judgment, when the whole universe shall be destroyed and the dead shall be resurrected in both body and soul to be judged by Allah.

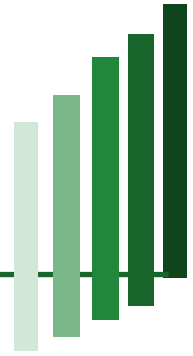
Requital is definite: For Muslims, the certainty of this day gives substance and meaning to their lives. It also fills them with peace, as nothing good shall pass without reward and nothing evil shall pass unpunished.

6-Belief in Predestination

Nothing is haphazard: Muslims believe that everything happens in this universe by the Will and Decree of Allah. Whatever befalls a person, be it good or bad, could not have bypassed them, and that which bypasses them could not have befallen them. This is inclusive of every aspect of life beyond free will choices, i.e., circumstances which a person does nothing to acquire or cause.

Satisfaction with one's portion: It is by means of belief in and acceptance of destiny that Muslims are able to find peace of mind and contentment in this life – provided they have done all that can possibly be done in a given situation. This concept is based on several hadiths, one of which says: *“From the happiness of the son of Adam is his acceptance of what Allah has decreed for him, and from the misery of the son of Adam is his discontent with what Allah has decreed for him.”*

The Five Pillars of Practicing Islam



Just as pillars uphold a building, Islam requires its followers to uphold their religion by practicing five basic acts of worship known as the Five Pillars of Islam, which represent the outward application of Islamic faith or the deeds of the senses. In order, they are:



First Pillar: Shahada (Testimony of Faith)

The Testimony of Faith is saying with conviction: “***I testify that there is no god except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.***” One becomes a Muslim simply by making this Declaration of Faith.

The first part of the Declaration of Faith negates all false gods and affirms that there is only one true God worthy of worship – Allah. All acts of worship, such as prayer, supplication, sacrifice, fasting, charity, vows, reliance, hope, and fear must be directed to Allah alone without intermediators. Any act of worship directed to Allah along with or through something else is counted as *Shirk* (joining others as gods with Allah), which contradicts and nullifies *Tawhid* (belief in the Oneness of Allah).

The second part establishes the way in which Muslims must follow the path to Allah. By accepting that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger, Muslims are pledging themselves to believe in what he said, obey what he commanded, avoid what he prohibited, and worship Allah according to his teachings.



Second Pillar: Salah (Prayer)

Salah is the daily obligation of offering five prayers in the direction of the Ka`bah (Allah’s first House of worship) in Mecca.

Salah establishes and constantly renews the connection with Allah and keep Muslims focused on the real purpose of life according to Islam, which is the relationship with one’s Creator. The five prayers are spaced throughout the day at set times: dawn, midday, afternoon, sunset, and evening, which makes life and its activities revolve around seeking and remembering Allah.

Each prayer takes five to ten minutes to perform and consists of a repeated series of humble postures of standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting accompanied by glorifications, recitations from the Qur'an, and supplications.

Ablution is required before prayer, as well as cleanliness of clothes and location. A Muslim may pray individually or congregationally, at home, at work, or in any clean place, but congregationally in a mosque is preferred.

Each prayer is announced from the mosques by a call to prayer, known as the Azan, which consists of the following words: “*Allahu Akbar, Allau Akbar*. I testify that there is no god but Allah. I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Come to prayer. Come to success. *Allahu Akbar, Allau Akbar*. There is no god but Allah.”



Third Pillar: Zakah (Obligatory Charity)

Zakah is the annual obligation of financially able Muslims to give a specific portion of their surplus wealth (2.5% of one year's total cumulative wealth) to certain classes of needy people.

Zakah literally means purification and growth. It signifies to Muslims the growth of their wealth through giving part of it away, and the subsequent elevation and purification of their souls from possessiveness, greed, and selfishness.

In order to be liable to pay *Zakah*, a Muslim must (1) possess an amount of wealth that is equal to or exceeds the *Nisab* (minimum amount on which *Zakah* is due) (2) possess it for one lunar year without needing it. With these two conditions met, 2.5 percent of the total wealth should be paid for the upkeep of the poor and needy.

Zakah is designed so that, when paid in due time and amount to its deserving recipients in a given community, it will eliminate poverty and promote solidarity.



Fourth Pillar: Sawm (Fasting Ramadan)

Sawm is the annual obligation of every physically able adult Muslim to abstain from eating, drinking, and having sexual relations with one's spouse from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan (the nine month of the Islamic lunar calendar). This abstention also requires forbearance from any verbal or physical misbehavior and encourages more acts of goodness and charity.

Exempted from *Sawm* are people who are sick, elderly, or on a journey, and women who are pregnant, nursing, or menstruating.

During Ramadan Muslims are encouraged to show greater generosity and increase their good deeds. Every day, special supererogatory night prayers are held congregationally in mosques after *Iftar* (breaking the Fast), during which a portion of the Qur'an is read on successive evenings so that by the end of the month the entire Qur'an has been completely recited.

When practiced sincerely, *Sawm* uplifts the spirituality and morality of Muslims and strengthens their willpower and perseverance. Muslims also gain sympathy for hungry and needy people and a better appreciation of Allah's Blessings.



Fifth Pillar: Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca)

Hajj is the once-in-a-lifetime obligation of every physically and financially able Muslim to go on a journey solely for Allah and to visit His Sacred House in Mecca. The journey involves the sacrifice of time, money, and comforts all for Allah's Sake.

Hajj takes place during the first days of the lunar month of Dhul-Hijjah. The rituals of Hajj center on complete submission and devotion to Allah. As the pilgrims approach Mecca, they enter into a state of consecration known as *Ihram*, during which they divest themselves temporarily of all marks of status and worldly distinction to assume the humble dress and condition of a pilgrim wholly devoted to Allah.

Of all the rituals of Islam, Hajj is the most representative of the concept of unity and equality of humankind. Hajj brings together people of different nationalities, cultures, and social backgrounds from all over the world to worship Allah as one massive unit. Hajj is considered the largest annual religious gathering in the world.

THE SECOND PILLAR LEARNING MY SALAH

“**O Bilal, make the call for starting prayer. Give us comfort by it.**”

This was how Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) viewed prayer.

It was the source of his relief.

Other worldly concerns were toil for him. Prayer connected him with his Creator, which gave him peace.

He would stand praying and reciting the Qur'an, preparing for the road ahead.

And he said: “Pray as you have seen me praying.” This includes all the details of the prayer; what to do, what to say, and how to feel during prayer.

“Learning My Salah” teaches you how to pray as Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) did.

Indeed, his guidance is the most perfect. By following him, your prayers will be in the manner most pleasing to Allah, the Gracious.

AHLAN
TIME TO EXPLORE

