





How Do I Pray?

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of *Al-'Alamin* (all that exists) and peace be upon the Messenger Muhammad, his family and all his companions.

I would like to give my gratitude to all of the brothers and sisters who volunteered their time, effort, and funds to put together this booklet that so many will benefit from. I ask Allah, the Exalted, the Most Merciful to accept this booklet as an ongoing charity. May Allah give us sincerity in all of our sayings and actions and reward us all with the best in this world and the Hereafter. *Ameen*

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December 10, 2005

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Introduction

Salah is the second pillar of Islam. It refers to the compulsory daily prayers. *Salah* is offered five times a day individually or in congregation.

We offer *Salah* to remember *Allah* and bring us closer to Him. *Allah* says in the Noble *Qur'an*, what can be translated as, “**Establish *Salah* to remember Me (Allah).**” (*Qur'an*, 20:14)

{ وأقم الصلاة لذكري }

Salah is proof of our faith in *Allah* and Islam. It has been made compulsory at certain times of the day. *Allah* says in the Noble *Qur'an*, what can be translated as, “***Salah* at fixed times has been enjoined on the believers.**” (*Qur'an*, 4:103)

{ إن الصلاة كانت على المؤمنين كتابا موقوتا }

The five daily prayers are: *Fajr*, *Dhuhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib* and *Isha'*.

Preparation to Perform *Salah*

To perform your *Salah* you must be clean and pure. *Allah* says in the Noble *Qur'an*, what can be translated as, “**Surely Allah loves those who turn to Him and those who care for cleanliness.**” (2:222)

{ إن الله يحب التوابين ويحب المتطهرين }

Cleanliness of the body, clothing, and the places where the prayer is performed is called *Taharah* (purification).

Some impurities that must be removed before performing *Salah*:

1. Human urine.
2. Human Excrement.
3. *Wadi*: A thick white secretion that might be discharged after urination.
4. *Mathi*: A white sticky prostatic fluid, (other than sperm or semen).
5. Menstrual blood.
6. Defecation and urine of animals whose meat is not permissible to eat (carnivores, such as lions).
7. Dog saliva.
8. Water remaining after a carnivore has drunk from it.

HOW TO PURIFY THINGS

In general, water can purify anything that is impure.

One must remove all impurities from his/her private parts by using any pure matter (i.e. toilet tissue) three times, or by using water, or both.

1. Purifying the body and clothing:

This is performed by washing them with water until they are cleansed of impurities. This is especially important in the case where the impurity is visible, such as menstrual blood. If there are some difficult stains that remain after washing, they can be overlooked. If the impurity is not visible, such as urine, it is sufficient to wash it once, but preferable to wash it three times.

2. Purifying clothing from a male infant's urine:

This is performed by sprinkling water on the stained clothing. If it is stained by the urine of a female infant, then it must be washed.

3. Purifying the bottom of shoes:

This is performed by rubbing them against the ground until the remains of *Najassah* (impurity) are removed.

4. Purifying the ground:

- (a) Pour water over the impurity on the ground (soil or sand).
- (b) Allowing the ground (soil or sand) to dry from the impurity (such as urine) will make the area pure, only if there are no visible traces of the impurity left.

5. Purifying utensils if they were touched by dog saliva:

This is performed by washing the utensil seven times with water. The first cleansing should be mixed with soil. However, if the saliva has touched the body or clothing, then only one cleansing is needed.

The body must also be free of *Hadath* (ritual impurities).

There are two kinds of *Hadath*:

1. Minor *Hadath*:

This requires *Wudu* (ablution). It happens after one or more of the following occurs: natural discharges like urine, excrement, passing gas, falling asleep, or unconsciousness of any kind.

2. Major Hadath:

This requires washing the whole body. It could be caused by unconscious ejaculation (e.g. in one's sleep), intercourse, menstruation or post-childbirth bleeding. This type of washing requires bathing the whole body, including, the head with pure water.

***WUDU* (Ablution)**

Before we perform *Salah* we must first prepare ourselves. This preparation includes making sure that we are clean from any physical impurities and performing *Wudu*.

Wudu (ablution) is required for performing *Salah*. We cannot offer our *Salah* without first making *Wudu*. Here are the steps to take:

1. First, make the *Niyah* (intention) in your heart that this act of *Wudu* is for the purpose of preparing for *Salah*, and say: "***Bismillah***" (in the name of *Allah*).

2. Wash both hands up to the wrists (starting with the right hand) three times, making sure that water has reached between the fingers.



3. Take water with your right hand, put it into your mouth and rinse thoroughly three times.



4. Take water with your right hand, splash it into your nose and blow it out three times. (Use the left hand if necessary to help blow it out).



5. Wash your whole face three times repeatedly. (The whole face includes: the right ear to the left ear, and the forehead to the bottom of the chin).



6. Wash the right arm thoroughly from wrist to elbow three times, and make sure that no part of the arm has been left unwashed. Repeat with the left arm.



7. Move the palms of the wet hands lightly over the head, starting from the top of the forehead to the back of the head, and passing both hands over the back of the head to the neck, and then bringing them back to the forehead.



8. With the same water, rub the grooves and holes of both ears with the wet index fingers, while also passing the wet thumbs behind the ears from the bottom upward.



9. Finally, wash both feet to the ankles three times, starting with the right foot. Make sure that water has reached between the toes and covered the rest of the foot.



At the end of the above steps recite: "*Ashhadu alla ilaha illallahu, wa ash-hadu anna muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluhu.*"

"أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له،
و أشهد أن محمدا عبده و رسوله"

This means:

"I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger."

What Nullifies *Wudu*:

1. Natural discharges: urine, stool, gas, etc.
2. Falling asleep.
3. Unconsciousness of any kind.

Note: If you put on your socks, shoes, or sandals (only those that cover most of the foot) while you have a valid *Wudu*, it is not necessary to take them off every time you need to renew your *Wudu*. You can leave them on and wipe the top of each covered foot once with wet hands in place of washing the entire foot. You may do this up to twenty-four hours, or for three days if you are on travel.



OR



***Ghusl* (Bathing)**

Ghusl is bathing the whole body with water. You must clean your body from any impurities, if any.

Make the *Niyah* (intention) in your heart that this act of *Ghusl* is for the purpose of preparing for *Salah*. It is recommended to make *Ghusl* in the following order: make *Wudu*, wash the head including the hair, wash the right side of your body from the shoulder to the foot three times, and finally wash the left side of the body. *Ghusl* is required for performing *Salah* in the following cases:

1. *Janabah* (major ritual impurities): The discharge of seminal secretions or sexual intercourse.
2. At the end of a menstrual period.
3. At the end of postpartum bleeding.

***Tayammum* (Dry Ablution)**

You may perform your *Salah* by preceding it with *Tayammum* as a substitute for *Wudu* or *Ghusl* when:

1. A person cannot find water, or the amount available is insufficient.
2. A person has no access to water.
3. A person is saving the water for later use.
4. A person is sick and cannot use water.
5. The use of water is likely to do harm, cause or worsen an illness, or delay the cure.
6. The performance of *Wudu* will cause the person to miss a funeral or *Eid* prayer that cannot be made up.

In any of these instances it is permissible to make *Tayammum*, which is performed as follows:

1. First, make *Niyyah* (intention) in your heart that this act of *Tayammum* is for the purpose of preparing for *Salah*, and say: "***Bismillah.***"

2. Strike both hands slightly on pure earth, sand, stone, or concrete.



3. Shake off hands to remove debris and wipe the whole face.



4. Repeat step #2 and wipe the right arm down to the elbow (or only to the wrist) with the left hand and the left arm down to the elbow (or only to the wrist) with the right hand.



What *Tayammum* Makes Permissible:

After performing *Tayammum* a person is pure and may do any of the acts requiring ritual purification, such as prayer.

What Nullifies *Tayammum*:

Everything that nullifies an ablution nullifies *Tayammum*. If a person prays after performing *Tayammum* and then finds water, he does not need to repeat his prayer even if there is time left to do so. However, once there is no longer a valid excuse for *Tayammum*, the person must make *Wudu* before offering the next prayer.

The Time of the Five Daily Prayers:

<i>Fajr</i>	From dawn until just before sunrise.
<i>Dhuhr</i>	After the sun's zenith until late afternoon.
<i>Asr</i>	From late afternoon until just before sunset.
<i>Maghrib</i>	From sunset until just before twilight (when the sky turns completely dark).
<i>Isha'</i>	From twilight until dawn.

All these prayers must be prayed at the times mentioned above. However, there are exceptions for when it is permissible to combine prayers. For example, (*Dhuhr* and *Asr*) or (*Maghrib* and *Isha'*) may be prayed right after each other. You can combine these two prayers when you are traveling, if you are sick, very sleepy, very tired, or if you cannot control your schedule (classes or work). These are the exceptions and should not become the norm.

If you are praying at the *Masjid* (mosque) in a congregation, and there are bad weather conditions, like rain, snow, ice, etc., then it is permissible to combine these pairs of prayers. You can pray the earlier prayer at the time of the later prayer or vice versa.

***Adhan:* (The Call to Prayer)**

The *Adhan* is an announcement of the prayer times and it is used to call Muslims to the prayers. The person who gives the *Adhan* is called the *Mu'adhin* (Caller). It is preferred that the *Mu'adhin* has a beautiful voice. While calling for prayer, he stands facing the *Qiblah* and raises his hands to his ears, and calls out:

"*Allahu Akbar* This means: (*Allah* is the Greatest) الله أكبر"
***Allahu Akbar* This means: (*Allah* is the Greatest) الله أكبر**
***Allahu Akbar* This means: (*Allah* is the Greatest) الله أكبر**
***Allahu Akbar* This means: (*Allah* is the Greatest) الله أكبر**

Ashhadu alla ilaha illallah أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله

This means: (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah)

Ashhadu alla ilaha illallah أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله

This means: (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah)

Ashhadu anna muhammadar rasulullah أشهد أن محمدا رسول الله

This means: (I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's messenger)

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This means: (I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's messenger)

Hayya alas Salah This means: (Rush to prayer) حي على الصلاة

Hayya alas Salah This means: (Rush to prayer) حي على الصلاة

Hayya alal Falah This means: (Rush to success) حي على الفلاح

Hayya alal Falah This means: (Rush to success) حي على الفلاح

Allahu Akbar This means: (Allah is the Greatest) الله أكبر

Allahu Akbar This means: (Allah is the Greatest) الله أكبر

La ilaha illallah" (There is no god but Allah) لا إله إلا الله"

The first *Adhan* for *Fajr Salah* should be shortly before *Fajr* time to help awaken the people. The following is added after "*Hayya alal Falah*":

"Assalatu khayrum minan naum" الصلاة خير من النوم

This means: (*Salah* is better than sleep)

"Assalatu khayrum minan naum" الصلاة خير من النوم

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However, there is no need for this addition in the second *Adhan*, which should be made at the beginning of *Fajr* time.

It is strongly recommended that whenever possible, Muslim males should offer their *Fard* (compulsory) prayers in congregation at the *Masjid* (mosque).

Iqamah:

Iqamah is another call to prayer that is said just before the actual start of *Salah*. *Iqamah* is exactly like the *Adhan*, except that after "*Hayya alal Falah*" the following is added:

"Qad qamatis Salah This means: **قد قامت الصلاة**
(The prayer has begun)

Qad qamatis Salah" This means: **قد قامت الصلاة**
(The prayer has begun)

Iqamah is said in a lower voice and much faster than the *Adhan*. It is also directed to the group that is already present for the prayer.

Fard (compulsory) Salah:

A Muslim must pray five times a day. The compulsory prayers are called *Fard* in Arabic. Each unit of a prayer is called a *Rak'ah*. The *Fard* prayers are:

Fajr 2 *Rak'ahs*

Dhuhr 4 *Rak'ahs*

Asr 4 *Rak'ahs*

Maghrib 3 *Rak'ahs*

Isha' 4 *Rak'ahs*

**Jumu'ah*.....2 *Rak'ahs* (in place of *Dhuhr* on Fridays)

Shortening Prayers:

If you are traveling, then you should shorten the 4 *Rak'ah* prayer to a 2 *Rak'ah* prayer (*Dhuhr*, *Asr*, and *Isha'*). Also *Dhuhr* and *Asr* can be prayed right after each other, as well as, *Maghrib* and *Isha'*.

***Sunnah* (optional) *Salah*:**

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) performed extra prayers voluntarily in addition to *Fard* prayers. These prayers are called *Sunnah* prayers. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) always prayed two *Rak'ahs* before the *Fard* of *Fajr* and three *Rak'ahs* after the *Fard* of *Isha* even when on a journey. The one, three, five, seven, or nine *Rak'ahs* after *Isha* are called *Witr* (odd number).

The *Sunnah* prayers are as follows:

Fajr 2 *Rak'ahs* before *Fard*.
Dhuhr 4 *Rak'ahs* before *Fard* and 2 *Rak'ahs* after.
Asr 4 *Rak'ahs* (less recommended) before *Fard*.
Maghrib 2 *Rak'ahs* after *Fard*.
Isha' 4 *Rak'ahs* (less recommended) before *Fard*
 2 *Rak'ahs* after *Fard*.
 1, 3,5,7, or 9 *Rak'ahs* of *Witr*.

The *Sunnah* prayers are normally offered individually and no *Adhan* or *Iqamah* is needed for those extra prayers.

HOW TO PERFORM *SALAH*

Having cleansed yourself by *Wudu*, you may proceed to perform *Salah*. *Wudu* is a ritual cleansing. Before you begin your *Salah*, however, you must make sure that you have a clean body, a clean place to pray, and that you are wearing clothing free of impurities. The minimum clothing required during *Salah* is:

A. For males: Any clothing that covers from the naval to the knees. It is preferable to cover the shoulders.

B. For females: Any clothing that covers all of the body (including the head) except the face, hands, and according to Imam Abu-Hanifah the toes and a portion of the front of the feet.

The way to offer *Salah* is:

1. Stand upright facing the direction of *Al-Ka'bah*. This position is called *Qiyaam* and the direction is called *Qiblah* in Arabic. The *Qiblah* in North America is towards the east with a slight angle towards the north.

2. Make *Niyyah* (intention) in your heart for the prayer you want to pray.



3. Raise your hands to your ears and say: "***Allahu Akbar.***" This means: (*Allah* is the Greatest). This is called *Takbiratul Ihram*.



4. Now place your right hand on top of your left hand on the chest and look downward to the place where your forehead will touch the ground in the *Sujood* (prostration) and recite silently:

"Subhanaka allahumma wa bi hamdika wa tabara kasmuka wa ta'ala jadduka wa la ilaha ghairuka."

سبحانك اللهم وبحمدك، وتبارك اسمك، وتعالى جدك، ولا إله غيرك

This means: "O Allah, how perfect You are and praise be to You. Blessed is Your name, and exalted is Your majesty. There is no god but You." [Only recite this supplication, *Subhanaka*, at the beginning of the first *Rak'ah*]

Then recite silently: **"A'udhu billahi minash shaitanir rajim."**

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

This is called *Ta'awwudh*, and it means: **"I seek shelter in Allah from the rejected Satan."**

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Then recite: **"Bismillahir rahmanir rahim."**

This is called *Tasmiyah*, and it means: **"In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful."**

5. After this, recite *Suratul Fatihah* (the opening chapter) of the Noble *Qur'an*:

"Al hamdu lil lahi rabbil 'alamin. Arrahmanir rahim. Maliki yawmiddin. Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in. Ihdinas siratal mustaqim. Siratal ladhina an'amta'alahim, ghairil maghdubi'alahim wa lad dhallin. (Amin)"

>> الحمد لله رب العالمين، الرحمن الرحيم، مالك يوم الدين، إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين، اهدنا الصراط المستقيم، صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين <<

This means:

"All praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the most Gracious, the most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. You alone we worship, from You alone we seek help. Guide us along the straight path - the path of those whom You favored, not of those who earned Your anger or went astray."

You must recite *Surat Al-Fatihah* in each unit (*Rak'ah*) of the prayer, if you pray alone. However, if praying behind an Imam and he recites loudly, then it is not necessary for you to recite it.

6. Now recite any other passage from the Noble *Qur'an*.

For example: "*Bismillahir rahmanir rahim*

Qul hu wal lahu ahad, allahus samad, lam yalid wa lam yulad, wa lam ya kul lahu kufuwan ahad."

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

<< قل هو الله أحد، الله الصمد، لم يلد و لم يولد، و لم يكن له كفوا أحد >>

This means:

"In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. Say, He is Allah, the One. Allah is Eternal and Absolute. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal unto Him."

7. Now bow down saying: "*Allahu Akbar*" and place your hands on your knees and say silently: "*Subhana Rabbiyal Adhim.*" This means: (How Perfect is my Lord, the Supreme) three times. This position is called *Rukoo'*. Keep your head in line with your back, and look downward to the place of *Sujood*. (See step 9)



8. Stand up from the bowing position saying: "***Sami'Allahu liman hamidah***" (*Allah* hears those who praise Him) "***Rabbana lakal hamd.***" This means: (Our Lord, praise be to You).



9. Prostrate on the floor saying: "***Allahu Akbar***" with your forehead, nose, palms of both hands, your knees, and toes all touching the floor. Then recite silently:



"Subhana Rabbiyal A'la."

(How Perfect is my Lord, the Highest) three times. This position is called *Sujood*. Keep your arms away from the sides of the body and the ground.

10. Sit up from the floor saying ***Allahu Akbar***. Sit upright with your knees bent and palms placed on them and say: "***Rabbighfir li.***"

رب اغفر لي

This means:

"O my Lord! Forgive me."



Say "*Allahu Akbar*" and again prostrate in the *Sujood* position. Recite "*Subhana Rabbiyal A'la*" three times. Sit up from this position saying "*Allahu Akbar*"

This completes the first *Rak'ah* or unit of *Salah*. Now stand up for the second *Rak'ah* and perform it in the same way, except that you do not recite *Subhanaka* at the beginning, and after the second *Sujood* (prostration) you sit on the left leg while keeping the right foot upright and put your right hand on the right thigh, with all fingers together in a fist except the index finger. Stick the index finger straight out. Put your left hand on the left thigh. Now recite *Tashahhud* silently:



"التحيات لله والصلوات والطيبات، السلام عليك أيها النبي ورحمة الله وبركاته، السلام علينا و على عباد الله الصالحين، أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله، وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله."

*"At-Tahiyyatu lillahi
was- Salawatu wat-Tayyibatu.
As-Salamu ' alaika
ayyuhannabiyyu
wa rahmatullahi
wa barakatuhu.
Assalamu 'alaina wa'ala
ibadil-Lahis -Salihin
ash hadu al-La ilaha
il-Lal lahu
wa ash hadu anna
Muhammadan abduhu
wa rasuluhu."*

This means: "Greetings, prayers and goodness belong to Allah. Peace be on you, O Prophet and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be on us and on the righteous servants of Allah I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger."

In a three-*Rak'ah Salah* (as in *Maghrib*) or a four-*Rak'ah Salah* (*Dhuhr*, *Asr*, and *Isha*) you stand up for the remaining *Rak'ah(s)* after you have done *Tashahhud*. For a two-*Rak'ah Salah* you remain seated after *Tashahhud* and then recite silently *Assalatul-Ibrahimiyyah*:

"اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد، كما صليت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم، وبارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد، كما باركت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم، في العالمين إنك حميد مجيد."

"Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammadin "O Allah, let Your mercy
come upon Muhammad
Wa 'ala ali Muhammadin and the family of Muhammad
Kama sallaita 'ala Ibrahima as You let it come upon Ibrahim
wa 'ala ali Ibrahima and the family of Ibrahim
wa barik 'ala Muhammadin O Allah, bless Muhammad
wa 'ala ali Muhammadin and the family of Muhammad
Kama barakta 'ala Ibrahima as You blessed Ibrahim
Wa 'ala ali Ibrahima and the family of Ibrahim.
Fil a'lamina Innaka Truly You are
hamidun Majid." Praiseworthy and Glorious."

After this say silently: **"Allahumma inni a'udhu bika min adhabi jahanam wamin adhabil qabri wamin sharri fitnatil mahya wal mamat wamin sharri fitnatil masihid dajjal. Rabbi-ghfir li waliwalidayya, rabbi-rhamhuma kama rabbayani saghira."**

"اللهم إني أعوذ بك من عذاب جهنم، و من عذاب القبر، و من فتنة المحيا و الممات، و من فتنة المسيح الدجال، رب اغفر لي و لوالدي رب ارحمهما كما ربياني صغيرا."

This means: "O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the torment of the Hellfire, from the torment of the grave, from the trials and afflictions of life and death, and from the deception of the False-

Christ. O my Lord! Grant me and my parents forgiveness, and bestow Your mercy upon them, just as they brought me up when I was small.”

11. Now turn your face to the right saying: "***Assalamu alaikum wa rahmatullah***" (peace and the mercy of *Allah* be on you) and then to the left repeating the same words.



This completes the two-*Rak'ah Salah*.

In the three or four-*Rak'ah* prayers (*Dhuhr*, *Asr*, *Maghrib*, and *Isha*) the whole procedure is repeated in the remaining *Rak'ah(s)*, except after *Tashahhud*, you say "*Allahu Akbar*" and stand up and only recite *Surat Al-Fatiha* in *Fard* prayers and no other *Surah*, then continue doing the rest of the actions as you have done before (*Rukoo'*, rising, *Sujood*). Then stand again for the fourth *Rak'ah*.

Also, in the last *Rak'ah* of any prayer, after you have made your *Sujood*, sit up and silently recite both *Tashahhud* and *Salatul Ibrahimiyah*. At the end of any prayer, you must finish by making *Tasleem*.

When to Recite Aloud or Silently:

During obligatory *Fajr* prayers, you recite the *Qur'an* aloud in both *Rak'ahs*. You also recite the first two *Rak'ahs* of the obligatory prayers of *Maghrib* and *'Isha* aloud as well.

However, the third and fourth *Rak'ahs* are always recited silently during obligatory prayers. Also, in the *Dhuhr* and *Asr* prayers, the recitation is always silent for all four *Rak'ahs*.

Furthermore, the one who leads *Jumu'ah* prayers (Friday prayer in place of *Dhuhr*) will recite the *Qur'an* aloud.

Salatul Witr:

The *Witr* (odd number) prayer is extra prayers that the Prophet practiced and highly encouraged Muslims to practice as well. He (pbuh) never left it even when traveling. You can offer *Witr* prayers anytime after '*Isha*' until the time for *Fajr* prayer. You may choose to pray one, three, five, seven, or nine *Rak'ahs*.

In *Witr* prayers, recite *Suratul Fatihah* and some other verses from the *Qur'an*. Before or after *Rukoo'* of the last *Rak'ah* raise your hands high up to the level of the shoulders and supplicate the following *Du'a* (supplication) with your hands raised towards the



sky. This *Du'a* is called *Du'a al-Qumut*:

"Allahumma Ihdeni Fiman Hadayt, Wa A'feni Fiman A'fayt, Watawallani Fiman Tawallayt, Wabarek li Fima A'atayt, Waqeni Sharra Ma Qadayt, Fainaka Taqdi WalaYuqda 'Alayk, Wainnahu La Yadhilu Man Walayt, Tabarakta Rabbana Wat'alayt."

**"اللهم اهدني فيمن هديت، وعافني فيمن عافيت، و تولني فيمن توليت،
وبارك لي فيما أعطيت، وقني شر ما قضيت، فإنك تقضي ولا يقضى
عليك، وإنه لا يذل من واليت، تباركت ربنا وتعاليت."**

This means: "O Allah, guide me among those whom You have guided. Grant me safety among those whom You have granted safety. Take me into Your charge among those whom You have taken into Your charge. Bless me in what You have given me. Protect me from the evil that You have decreed, for You decree and nothing is decreed for You. And there is no humiliation for whom You take as a ward. Blessed and exalted are You, our Lord."

After this, say: "**Allahu Akbar**" and bow down and complete the rest of prayer like other prayers.

It is good to ask for forgiveness and mercy from *Allah* at the end of your *Salah*. You can say this in your own words and in your own language. But it is better for you to memorize some *Du'as* (supplications prayers) from the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in Arabic.

What Invalidates *Salah*:

1. Willful negligence of any essential posture of *Salah* like *Rukoo'*, *Sujood*, etc.
2. Talking.
3. Laughing.
4. Eating or drinking.
5. Uncovering parts of the body that should be covered.
6. Diverging from the direction of the *Qiblah*.
7. Excessive movement, which is not part of *Salah*.
8. Anything that nullifies *Wudu*.

What is permissible to do during *Salah*:

- To carry a baby during prayer, if the need arises
- To pray with shoes on, if the shoes are free from any impurities
- To take a few steps while keeping shoulders facing the *Qiblah*, if needed
- To move your palm slightly to return a greeting
- To say *SubhanAllah* for males, and to clap for females, to indicate to the Imam that a mistake occurred and needs to be corrected
- To correct and help the Imam if he has made a mistake in his recitation
- To make necessary movements when needed such as: wiping the nose, scratching, etc.

If any emergency arises during prayer and you must leave prayer you should make one *Tasleem* to the right side only, take care of the matter quickly, and complete the prayer from where you ended. If the matter takes a long time, then redo the prayer from the start.

What to do when you miss *Salah*:

If you miss a prayer you have to make it up as soon as you wake up or remember. Prayers must be made up in chronological order. For example, if you missed *Asr* prayer, and it is now *Maghrib* time, then you must pray *Asr* first, then *Maghrib*.

What to do when praying in a congregation:

When you pray in a congregation you will get rewarded more than if you pray alone.

If you are praying with another person, you should stand next to that person on the right, but never ahead. If there are two or more people praying with the Imam, then they should line up behind him.

We should also line up behind the Imam in straight rows. Men should pray in front, with men only. Women should pray behind the men, with women only. If a man and a woman are praying together, the woman should stand directly behind the man, not to his right.

We should follow the Imam's actions and statements, and make sure never to get ahead of him.

All gaps should be filled by connecting shoulders to shoulders and feet to feet. Your legs should be spread the same width as your shoulders.

We should not cross in front of a person who is praying.

Pray closer to a wall if possible. If not, place a barrier (chair, books, etc.) in front of you. If you are praying behind the Imam, then he must place a barrier in front of him, which would suffice for everyone praying behind him.

If you have come late to prayer and you catch the Imam before he has risen from the position of *Rukoo'*, then you may count that *Rak'ah* as if you have prayed it.

However, if you have caught the Imam after he has risen from *Rukoo'*, then you must follow the Imam until *Tasleem*. Do not make *Tasleem*; instead, get up and make-up the *Rak'ah(s)* that you missed.

If you are in doubt about how many *Rak'ahs* you prayed, then just take the lower number. For example, if you are in doubt about whether you prayed two or three *Rak'ahs*, then just count that you prayed only two *Rak'ahs* and make *Sujood As-Sahu* in the end of the prayer.

***Sujood As-Sahu* (The prostration of forgetfulness):**

These are two extra *Sujoods* that are made at the end of prayer when you have forgotten an essential act. *Sujood As-Sahu* is done by making two extra *Sujoods* just before or after *Tasleem*. If you do it after *Tasleem*, then make the *Sujoods* and then make *Tasleem* again. These *Sujoods* are just like the ones done in any prayer. Performing these *Sujoods* will make up for your mistake. You make these extra *Sujoods* if you have done one or more of the following:

- If you forgot to do the first *Tashahhud*
- If you added an extra *Rak'ah*
- If you doubted how many *Rak'ahs* you prayed
- If you made *Tasleem* before completing your prayer, complete your prayer and then make *Sujood As-Sahu* in the end, and then make *Tasleem* again.

The Excellence of *Salat*

Allah the Exalted says what can be translated as,
"Verily, *As-Salat* (prayer) prevents from *Al-Fahsha* (great sins) and *Al-Munkar* (evil and wicked deeds)." (*Qur'an*, 29:45)

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, once asked his companions, "*Tell me, if there were a stream at the door of one of you in which he takes a bath five times a day, would any filth remain upon his body?*" They replied, "No dirt would remain." He (pbuh) said, "*Similar is the case of the five (obligatory) Salats (prayers). Allah obliterates all sins as a result of offering them.*" [Reported by Imam Bukhari and Muslim]

We ask Allah the Exalted to make us among the people who perform their prayers on time, accept it from us, and grant us a great reward in this life and the Hereafter. *Ameen.*

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