

# The Muslim at Prayer

The prayer consists of 2, 3 or 4 **cycles** of a series of **body postures** performed with **praise to Allah, supplication** and **recitation from The Qur'an**.

In every prayer, the **shahaadah** is reaffirmed.

The prayer is a **holistic** form of worship where the body joins the soul, heart, mind and tongue in the **praise** and **humble submission to Allah**.

**The faithful Believer, in prayer, is speaking privately to his Creator. What does he say?**

He says the words Allah chose for him.

Below is a brief illustration of the main prayer postures and the meaning in English of the **Arabic** words uttered. Postures 1 - 6 make up 1 cycle.

## 1 | Start of Prayer

*Surrender to Allah*



"Allaahu Akbar"  
(Allah is the Greatest)

## 2 | Standing

*Always ready to obey Allah*



**Recitation of Surah Al-Faatihah (the first chapter of The Qur'an)**

- (1) In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate.
- (2) All praise and thanks are due to Allah, Lord of the worlds.
- (3) The All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate.
- (4) Master of the Day of Judgment.
- (5) Only You we worship and only from You we ask for help.
- (6) Guide us to the straight path -
- (7) The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have earned (Your) anger or of those who are astray.

# Connecting the Human Family

The prayer may be performed individually or as a family, or as a congregation, either privately or in public, preferably at a mosque.

Muslims pray **directly** to Allah, not through any intermediaries who include priests, saints and idols.



## Prayer in Congregation

**Worshippers follow behind a prayer leader (imaam), in rows, shoulder to shoulder, with no distinctions based on race, colour or status.**

Muslims all over the world perform the prayer in the **same** format, direction and Arabic language. This fosters **equality** and **unity in diversity**, and establishes a **universal bond of brotherhood**: **"One Human Family Worshipping One God."**

**Congregational Prayer affirms Islam's universal call:**



ISLAM IS TRUTH

# Why do Muslims pray?

Five times each day, they unplug from the world and connect with the Creator of all the worlds.

## 3 | Bowing

*Obey Allah's Commands*



"Glory and Praise be to my Lord, the Magnificent."

## 4 | Rising from Bowing

*Praise Allah always*



"Allah hears those who praise Him. O our Lord, to You is all Praise."

## 5 | Prostration (performed twice)

*Submit to Allah with deep humility*



"Glory and Praise be to my Lord, the Most High."

## 6 | Sitting between Prostrations

*Ask only from Allah*



"O my Lord, forgive me and help me ..."

## Friday Congregational Prayer

Allah has appointed Friday as the best day of the week. However, Friday is not the "Islamic Sabbath" (that is, a holy rest-day).

On Fridays, it is **obligatory** on Muslim men (while optional for women) to perform the mid-day prayer in congregation. A **sermon** is delivered, urging Muslims to lead a life of faith and good deeds in preparation for the Day of Judgment. Matters to improve the community are also addressed.

The Prophet (pbuh) stressed the importance of prayer: **"The first act the Believer will be accountable for on Judgment Day will be his prayer."** [Tirmidhi]

Allah knows best.  
by:  
Fatima Ebrahim Munshi



**"O Believers! Bow and prostrate, and worship your Lord, and do good, so that you may be successful."**

*The Qur'an, Chapter 22, Verse 77*

## 7 | Witnessing

*Reaffirm the Oneness of Allah & Prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh)*



"All greetings of humility, and all prayers and goodness are for Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet (Muhammad), and the Mercy of Allah and His Blessings. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous slaves of Allah. **I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the (Final) Messenger of Allah. \***

"O Allah, bestow Your Grace on Muhammad and on the family of Muhammad as You have bestowed Your Grace on Ibrahim (Abraham) and on the family of Ibrahim.

O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You have blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. Indeed, You are Most Praiseworthy, Most Glorious."

\* This statement is the Muslim's Testimony of Faith (Shahaadah)

## 8 | End of Prayer

*Attain Peace through submission to Allah*



"Assalaamu `Alaykum Warahmatullaah"  
(Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allah)

## After Prayer

*Supplication (may be said in own words and language)*



"O Allah, You are the God of Peace, and the Source of Peace. To You shall return all peacefulness. Give us a peaceful life. Enter us into Paradise, the House of Peace. Our Lord, grant us the good in this world and the good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of Hellfire." \*

\* Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) often made this supplication, and Muslims follow his example.

## Muslims pray to obey Allah's command in The Qur'an:

**"Worship Me, and establish the prayer for My remembrance."** [20:14]  
**"Truly, in the remembrance of Allah, do hearts find peace."** [13:28]

## Connect, Surrender, Succeed

The Islamic prayer is a gift from God (**Allah**) to the Believers who seek closeness to Him.

Prayer **connects** us directly with Allah, our Creator and Sustainer, Who alone is worthy of worship.

It reminds us of our **purpose in life**, and **accountability before Allah** on the Day of Judgment in the Hereafter.

Allah says: **"I have not created the *jinn* and mankind except to worship Me."** [51:56]

**Prayer is the essence of worship, and the second of the five pillars of Islam.**

Muslims pray in the manner Allah wants them. The prayer is **divinely revealed**: Allah taught Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), through Angel Gabriel, how to pray, and told us to follow his example.

Prayer is a **blessing** from Allah for our **own** spiritual, emotional, physical and health benefit.

Prayer is **holistic**, uniting 5 aspects of our being:

- the **body** stands, bows, prostrates in humility
- the **heart** fills with awe and love of Allah
- the **mind** is conscious of Allah's Greatness
- the **tongue** praises Him and recites verses from The Qur'an, Allah's Final Revelation, and
- the **soul** satisfies its longing for its Master.

Prayer **shields** us against evil. **"Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds."** [29:45]

In prayer, we express our **gratitude** to Allah, and our **dependence** on Him, the Source of everything. **"Seek Allah's help in patience and prayer."** [2:153]

Prayer inculcates **noble** qualities, such as **God-awareness, patience and humility**, that help us lead a virtuous life, based on The Qur'an.

## Prayer Times & Place

Allah says: **"Prayer is obligatory on the Believers at prescribed times."** [4:103]

Although Muslims can pray at anytime, they are obligated to perform **five prayers** daily at specified times: dawn (before sunrise), mid-day, late afternoon, just after sunset and nightfall.

As these times mark transitions within the day, Muslims pray to remember the Creator Who regulates all affairs on earth and in the heavens.

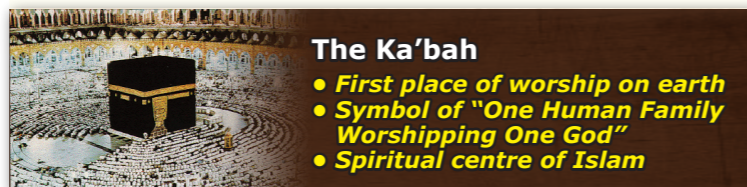
Devout Muslims also perform voluntary prayers before and after the obligatory prayers.

They organize their day around prayer times. The spacing of the five prayers from dawn till night leaves little room for mischievous deeds!

**In Islam, the whole earth is a mosque.**

Muslims may pray in mosques, homes, schools, workplaces, fields, airports, or any **clean** place.

Obeying Allah's command in The Qur'an, Muslims pray facing the **direction of the Ka'bah**, at Mecca (*Makkah*) in present-day Saudi Arabia.



## Never miss your prayers!

Allah, the All-Merciful, has placed **flexibility** and **ease** in the prayer to accommodate all situations.

*Cannot stand, bow or prostrate?*  
Pray seated on a chair, or lying down.

*Do not know the direction of the Ka'bah?*  
Make an intelligent guess. **"Wherever you turn, there is the presence of Allah."** [2:115]

*No water?* Perform dry ablution.  
*Travelling?* Shorten or combine prayers.  
*Overslept or forgot?* Make up the missed prayer.  
*Too busy?* Make prayer your top priority. Performing prayer is a **practical proof** of your Islam.

## "Cleanliness is half of faith" \*

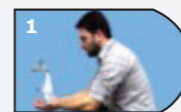
Ablution (*wudhu'*) refers to the **obligatory** cleansing performed by Muslims when they present themselves in prayer before Allah.

**Cleanliness of the body has a positive impact on the soul, heart, mind and tongue.**

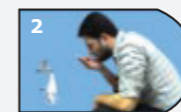
**The body, clothing and place** of prayer must be clean of impurities such as blood, feces and urine. Also, the **mind** should be clear of evil thoughts, while the **heart** ought to be free of spiritual ailments such as pride, envy, greed and anger.

Muslims follow the *wudhu'* method of the Prophet which is based on Allah's Revelation in The Qur'an. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was taught how to perform *wudhu'* by Allah through Angel Gabriel.

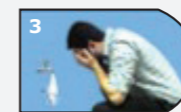
## Performing Ablution step by step



Wash hands



Clean mouth & nose



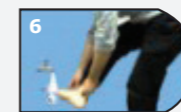
Wash face



Wash arms



Wipe head & ears



Wash feet

*Wudhu'* is begun saying **"In the Name of Allah."** On completion, they reaffirm the **testimony of faith (*shahaadah*)**, and supplicate: **"O Allah, make me of those who repent, and of the clean, and of Your righteous servants."**

*Wudhu'* is a form of **spiritual purification**. The Prophet said: **"Each drop of water that falls from the body in *wudhu'* erases a sin."** [Ahmad]

The Prophet forbade wasting water during *wudhu'*. Islam stresses the **conservation** of water (and other resources) even if available in abundance.

\*a saying of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The other half of faith is prayer.

## "Come to Prayer, Come to Success!"

The time of prayer is announced by a call (*azan*). The Islamic call to prayer is **unique** - it is an **oral** call with a message and was inspired by Allah in the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

In His Perfect Wisdom, Allah taught us to use the **most beautiful sound** He has created - the **human voice** - when inviting the Believers to a private audience with Him five times daily.

As the times of the five daily prayers vary from day to day, and from place to place, there is not a single moment on earth when the *azan* is not called. The **end** of *azan* in one place is the **beginning** of *azan* elsewhere.

**The *azan* is the world's only non-stop call.** It declares Allah's Greatness and the *shahaadah*, and directs mankind to hasten to worship Him. Thus, the *azan* is a constant reminder to lead an Allah-centred life as everything belongs to Him.

Traditionally, the *azan* is called from high minarets of mosques. Now it is usually made from a public address system in the prayer hall.

The words of the *azan* are in **Arabic**. The same call is made around the globe, making the *azan* easily recognizable anywhere.

## The Meaning of the Azan

**Allah is the Greatest** (4 times)  
**I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah** (twice)  
**I bear witness that Muhammad is the (Final) Messenger of Allah** (twice)  
**Come to Prayer** (twice)  
**Come to Success** (twice)  
**Prayer is better than sleep** (twice - dawn prayer only)  
**Allah is the Greatest** (twice)  
**There is none worthy of worship except Allah** (once)



The message of the *azan* is clear: **"If you want to succeed in this life and the Next - PRAY!"**

Indeed, **true success** is salvation from Hell-fire, and eternal happiness in Paradise, in the Hereafter.