



After all I have heard about *salāh* from the Qur’ān and Sunnah, my heart is now eager to proceed. Please could you show me the method of *salāh*?

Masha’Allāh, that is an excellent sentiment. May Allāh سبحانه وتعالى reward you and make it easy for you. I will teach you how to perform *salāh*, but before doing that, it is important that you know the conditions of *salāh*, certain factors that must be in place before it can even begin. Tell me, to get a driving license, you need to show that you can actually drive a car. However, what else do they test you on?



Well, there is a theory test. You need to know the Highway Code.

Yes. You may be a competent, sincere driver, but you are still required to know about the laws and codes that govern driving on the highway. *Salāh* also has its crucial prerequisites. The main ones are as follows:

1. You must have an acceptance in your heart of the Islāmic faith;
2. You must carry a firm *niyyah* (intention) in your heart about the *salāh* you are about to pray;
3. Your body must be free of both major and minor impurity;
4. Your clothes must be free from that which is *najas* (impure);
5. Your clothes must be covering the, so-called, *aurah*;
6. You must be in a place that is suitable for *salāh*;
7. You must be facing the *Qibla*;
8. You must be sure that the particular *salāh* being done, is being done within its prescribed time.

ONE

You must have an acceptance in your heart of Islam



So, you must be a Muslim then?

Yes. It’s a simple as that. You must be in complete acceptance of the *shahādah*, in your heart, on your tongue and in your actions.

TWO

You must carry a firm *niyyah* in your heart about the *salāh* you are about to pray

Extract of hadīth from Omar bin Al Khattāb, رضي الله عنه, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh, صلى الله عليه وسلم, saying 'Actions are only by intentions, and every man has only that which he intended.' "

Bukhāri and Muslim

It must be clear in your heart which *salāh* you are doing and why you are doing it?



‘Which’ and ‘why’? What do you mean ‘why’ you are doing *salāh*? Does it not go without saying that you do your *salāh* to obey Allāh?

Be careful. It is so easy for *Shaytān* (Satan) to distract us. When you stand for *salāh*, are you really doing so for the reason you mentioned, or is there some other motive? Are your thoughts purely focused on seeking the Face of Allāh, or are you doing this perfect *salāh* because aunty and uncle have just walked into the room and are bound to be impressed?



Yes, I understand. May Allāh keep our intentions pure. Okay, what do you mean when you say you must know 'which' *salāh* you are doing?

We will discuss the names of the five daily *salāh* shortly, Insha'Allāh, but suffice it to say, you should know, for example:

- Are you doing the sunset prayer or the night one?;
- Are you doing the compulsory [*fard*] prayer or any of the voluntary ones?;
- Are you going to perform two or four *rak'āh* [units of prayer].

These kinds of facts should be clear in your heart before you start.



You say 'in your heart.' Don't you have to say the *niyyah* on your lips?

No. You need not say any words of *niyyah* before you perform your *salāh*, either out loud, or under your breath. Neither do you have to think of any specific words of *niyyah* in your mind. As long as you are clear about the *salāh* you are about to perform, you may simply proceed.



But I have heard elders actually utter *niyyah* before starting, for example, "I am doing *fard salāh*, I am doing the four *rakāh* of the midday *salāh*..."

Yes, yes, yes.....and I am facing the Makkah, I am behind the imām, I am standing under the roof of the mosque, I am standing in Chingford and so on and so forth! All those kinds of words of intention are 'spoken' by many Muslims. However, they are without foundation. There is no evidence of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم uttering any words of intention before *salāh*. This is a *bid'ah*, an innovation into religion.

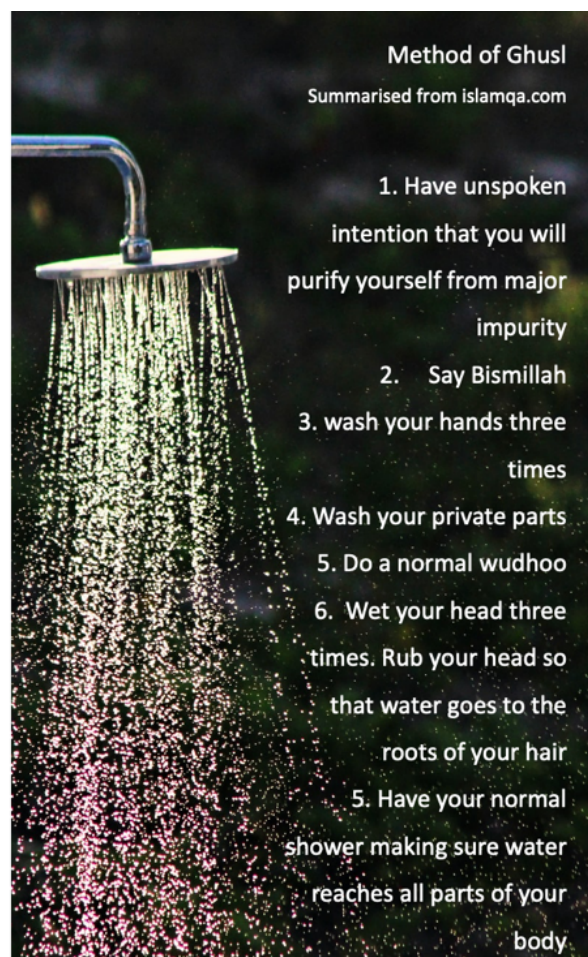
THREE

Your body must be free from both major and minor impurity



What is major impurity?

There are certain actions, events and conditions that make a person impure in a major way. Such events require the affected person to take a bath known as *ghusl* before he or she can do *salāh*.





What are those actions, events and conditions?¹

- The discharge of seminal fluid linked to erotic thoughts;
- Sexual relations;
- For women, the onset of their monthly period;
- For women, bleeding after childbirth;



What is minor impurity?

Even if a Muslim is not in need of *ghusl*, he is still required to maintain minor purity with a simple wash called *wudhu*. Again, this is in a prescribed manner and is necessary for *salāh*.



Narrated by Humrān the freed slave of 'Uthmān, who said that 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (may Allāh be pleased with him) called for water to do wudū'. He washed his hands three times, then he rinsed his mouth and nose, then he washed his face three times, then he washed his right arm up to the elbow three times, then he washed his left arm likewise. Then he wiped his head, then he washed his right foot up to the ankle three times, then he washed his left foot likewise. Then he said, "I saw the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم doing wudū' as I have done it, then the Messenger of Allāh said, 'Whoever does wudū' as I have done it, then prays two *rak'āhs* in which he focuses completely on his prayer, his previous sins will be forgiven.'" (Narrated by Muslim, al-Tahaarah, 331)

Ibn Omar رضي الله عنه said: Indeed, I heard the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم say: Allāh does not accept Prayer without purification, nor *sadaqah* (voluntary charity) from illegally attained wealth. Muslim and others



For how long does *wudhu* cover you against minor impurity?

It lasts until it is broken. The main things that break the *wudhu* are:

¹ There are other events mentioned by the scholars not listed here. Also, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم mentioned the need for the mere act of *ghusl*, even if you are pure, before attending *Salāt-al-Jumua* (Friday prayers), although the majority of the scholars state that this is not mandatory.

- Passing urine or excrement;
- Passing wind (without doubt)²
- Deep sleep
- Loss of senses for example by fainting or being sedated.
- For men, the seeping of *madhyi* or *wadyi*³



My friend told me that swearing can cancel *wudhu*. Is this true?

No, that is not true. Be careful. People can tell you about a thousand and one things that break *wudhu*. If they do tell you such things, they must provide evidence to support what they are saying. The events that nullify *wudhu* are well defined. Let us rely on what is clear and proven.



I play rugby at school and often get very muddy. Can I do *salāh* covered in sweat and mud?

It is better that you have a bath, but, yes, you can, so long as your *wudhu* is not broken.



Does that bath have to be a *ghusl*?

No. The rugby did not make you majorly impure, it just made you muddy. A regular bath to get the sweat and mud off is sufficient.



At school, the bathroom is busy and the basins are not too clean. It is difficult to wash my feet there when doing *wudhu*.

Actually, you can do something called *masah*. Do *wudhu* before you leave home, put on your socks and then, if *wudhu* is needed again at school, college or work, instead of washing your feet, you can simply pass your wet fingertips over the top of each foot.

FOUR

Your clothes must be free from that which is *najas* (impure)



Back to my favourite topic, MUD! Is mud *najas*?

No. By *najas* we mean specific impure items including urine, faeces, blood and vomit.

FIVE

Your clothes must be covering your *aurah*.



What is the *aurah*?

This is the part of the body that Muslim men and women are required to cover. This covering is mandatory not just for *salāh*, but for all times when out and about.

² Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said “Do not stop (praying) unless you hear a sound or notice a smell.” Bukhari

³ *Madhyi* is Prostatic fluid occurring on sexual arousal but before ejaculation. *Wadyi* is a seepage often with urine and not accompanied by sexual arousal.



Is the *aurah* different for men and women?

Yes. For men the *aurah* is at least from the bellybutton to the knees.



That's a lot! If you were going swimming, your swim gear would need to be pretty big. Wouldn't it look silly?

You may look ridiculous to others, but the eyes and opinions of such people are irrelevant in matters relating to obedience to Allāh.



So, football shorts, halfway down the thighs, can't be worn for *salāh*?

They can't be worn for *salāh* or at any time in public. Any clothes worn should at the very least cover the *aurah*. For *salāh* there is the additional requirement that the garment must also cover the shoulders.



What is the *aurah* for women?

A woman must cover all parts of her body except face, hands and feet.⁴

As well as the above discussion of the *aurah*, clothes for men and women:

- should not be for the purposes of attractive display or fame;
- should not be transparent, thereby revealing the *aurah*;
- should be loose and not tight fitting, revealing the figure;
- (in the case of women) should not be perfumed.

SIX

You must be in a place suitable for *salāh*

Alhamdulillah, we are permitted to prayer anywhere! However, the place of *salāh* must be clean and be one that is acceptable according to the statements of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, for example, not facing a grave, or likely to obstruct others or break your concentration. He said, 'All the earth is a mosque except for graveyards and bathrooms.' (Tirmidhi)

SEVEN

You must be facing the *Qibla*

Muslims all around the world face the Kā'ba, five times a day, in prayer. The Kā'ba is the the cube-shaped structure in Makkah acting as a directional marker of prayer and built by the Prophet Ibrahim, عليه السلام. That is the direction set by Allāh and known in Arabic as al Qibla. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى tells us,

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۖ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا ۗ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ

⁴ There is also a valid view from respected *ulema* that the hands and the face should also be covered. This becomes particularly necessary where the woman is notably beautiful, and the surrounding society predominates with corrupt individuals who do not lower their gaze. All brothers and sisters are urged to Fear Allah and take Islamic dress code very seriously. Our rules regarding dress and general interaction between the sexes, are there for our protection and security. Insha.Allah, we will discuss this vital issue in a later book in this series.

So turn your face towards Masjid Al Haram⁵. And wherever you (believers) are, turn your faces toward it (in prayer)
Sūrāh al Baqarah; The Qur'ān, 2:144



What if we are away from home and do not know which way Makkah is?

Do whatever you can to ascertain the *Qibla*. Ask people around you if they know, or look at the shadows made by the sun. Whatever you do, try your very best. If you still can't work it out at all, you may pray in any direction.



I was walking on the White Cliffs of Dover with my cousin. At prayer time we were unsure of the *Qibla*. It was cloudy and we didn't have a compass.

So what did you do?



I knew that the ferries arriving from Calais in France, were doing so in the same south-easterly line as Makkah. So, we watched them and determined our *Qibla*.

Well done. You tried your best.

EIGHT

You must be sure that the particular *salāh* being done is being done within its prescribed time

You must know the permissible time periods for praying the five daily prayers and make sure you catch them within those 'windows.' The five daily compulsory prayers are:

1. *Fajr* (dawn)
2. *Dhuhr* (midday)
3. *Asr* (mid-afternoon)
4. *Magrib* (dusk)
5. *Isha* (night)

The following graphic depicts those 'windows.'

⁵ The Holy Mosque in Makkah

West ←

← East

5. Isha (Night) When the redness and yellowness disappear, Isha starts. It continues until muntasfil layl (the middle of the night)

4. Magrib (Dusk) As soon as the sun sets, *Magrib* commences. When the sun sets, the horizon turns red, yellow, purplish and white.

Salāh during the actual setting of the sun is forbidden.

3. Asr (mid-afternoon) starts when an object is its own shadow's length.

2. Dhuhr (Midday) starts as the sun begins its descent and a shadow appears. It continues until *Asr*.

Zawāi starts When the sun is at its zenith i.e. the highest point in the sky directly above us. *Salāh* is forbidden during this time

Nafil (voluntary *salāh*) can be offered. Indeed it was the practice of the Prophet ﷺ to perform 12 rakāh of *salāh* called *salāhtul Doha*

The time of *fajr* ends once the sun begins to rise. *Salāh* of any kind, during actual sunrise is forbidden

1. Fajr (dawn) Starts at *fajrus sādiq*, the true dawn, when the whiteness of dawn can be distinguished from the darkness of the night

Any *salah* can be read up to the time of *fajr* including *Isha*, if you are late.



The five daily prayers? (salāh) (part b)

Questions

1. What do we mean by the words, *wudhu* and *ghusl*?
2. Name five actions, events and conditions that require a person to do *ghusl*.
4. What does the word *najas* mean?
5. Name the five daily compulsory prayers.
6. When does Magrib begin and end?
7. What is the *aurah* for men?
8. What is the *aurah* for women?
9. Name eight conditions of *salāh*.
10. What did Omar Bin Al Khattāb say about intentions?
11. Describe as accurately as you can, the method of *ghusl*.
12. Describe as accurately as you can, the method of *wudhu*.
13. Finish this hadīth: “All the earth is a mosque.....”
14. What is al *Qibla*?



Salah on Lofoten Island Norway