

NEW MUSLIM GUIDELINE

By

Muhammad ibn al-Shībah al-Shahri

1441 H / 2020 AD

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, Whom we praise and from Whom we ask help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of ourselves and from our bad deeds.

He whom Allah guides no one can lead him astray, and he whom Allah leads astray no one can guide him.

I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and messenger.

To proceed,

Allah, the Exalted, has honored the children of Adam and favored them over most of His creation, as He says:

{And We have certainly honored the children of Adam}

[Ch. 17, Verse 70]

He honored this Ummah (the Muslim Community) even more by sending them the best of His Prophets, Muhammad (pbuh), and revealing to them the best of His Books, the Holy Qur'an. Allah, (SWT) says:

{You are the best nation produced for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.}

[Ch. 3, Verse 110]

It is Allah's great favor upon a person to guide him to Islam and to remain firm upon it and act upon its rulings and laws. Through this book, which is small in size yet rich in content, the new Muslim learns the fundamentals of Islam in a brief manner that clarifies to him the features of this great religion. Once he understands them and acts upon them, he would proceed to seek more knowledge about his God (SWT), his Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and his religion, Islam, so that he worships Allah based upon knowledge and insight. His heart would thus be reassured, and his faith would increase by drawing close to Allah through worship and through following the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

I ask Allah to bless every word in this book and to benefit Islam and Muslims with it, and to make it sincere for His sake alone and bestow its reward upon all Muslims, the living thereof and the deceased.

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon his household and Companions.

Muhammad ibn al-Shībah al-Shahri

2 Dhul-Qi'dah, 1441 H.

My Lord is Allah

Allah says:

{O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, so that you may become righteous}

[Ch. 2, Verse 21]

Allah also says:

{He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity}

[Ch. 59, Verse 22]

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

Allah is my Lord and the Lord of everything. He is the Sovereign, the Creator, the Provider, and the Disposer of all affairs. He alone deserves to be worshiped. There is no Lord but Him and there is no deity other than Him. To Him belongs the Most Beautiful Names and Attributes that He affirmed for Himself and His Prophet (pbuh) affirmed for Him. There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

Some of His Names are:

Ar-Razzāq: The Provider, Ar-Rahmān: The Most Merciful, Al-Qadeer: The All-Powerful, Al-Malik : The King, As-Samee': The All-Hearing, As-Salām: The Most Perfect, Al-Baseer: The All-Seeing, Al-Wakeel: The Trustee, The Disposer of Affairs, Al-'Azeez: The All-Mighty, Al-Lateef: The All-Subtle, Al-Kāfi: The Sufficient, Al-Ghafoor: The Forgiving.

Ar-Razzāq: The Provider, Who provides His creation with the sustenance necessary for their souls and bodies.

Ar-Rahmān: The Most Merciful, Whose mercy encompasses everything.

Al-Qadeer: The All-Powerful, Who experiences neither inability nor languish.

Al-Malik: The King and Sovereign, Who is described with all the attributes of greatness and dominance, Who owns and directs everything.

As-Samee': The All-Hearing, Who hears every heard thing, the secret thereof and the revealed.

As-Salām: The Perfect, Who is free of every deficiency and defect.

Al-Baseer: The All-Seeing, Whose sight encompasses everything, regardless of how minute it is, Who has thorough knowledge of everything, the visible and the hidden thereof.

Al-Wakeel: The Trustee, Who guarantees provision to His creation and manages their affairs in their best interests; the Ally of the believers, facilitating matters for them and protecting them.

Al-'Azeez: The All-Mighty, Who owns the perfect might and vanquishes any other than Him with His power, dominance, and invincibility.

Al-Lateef: The Subtle and Kind, Who honors His servants, shows mercy to them and responds to their supplications.

Al-Kāfi: The Sufficient, Who provides His servants with all their needs, and with Whose assistance there is no need for any help or anyone other than Him.

Al-Ghafoor: The All-Forgiving, Who protects His servants from the evil of their sins and spares them the punishment.

My Prophet is Muhammad (pbuh)

Allah says:

{There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and is kind and merciful towards the believers.}

[Ch. 9, Verse 128]

Allah also says:

{And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.}

[Ch. 21, Verse 107]

Muhammad (pbuh), the gifted mercy

He is Muhammad ibn Abdullah, the final Prophet and Messenger. Allah, the Exalted, sent him with the religion of Islam to all mankind, to guide

them to all that is good, and the greatest of good is Tawhid (monotheism; belief in the Oneness of Allah), and to warn them against all that is evil, and the worst of evil is Shirk (polytheism; associating partners with Allah).

It is an obligation to obey his orders, believe what he said, avoid what he forbade or warned against, and worship Allah only in the manner that he prescribed.

His message and the message of all the prophets before him was to call for the worship of Allah alone without a partner.

Some of his traits (pbuh):

Honesty, mercy, forbearance, patience, bravery, generosity, good manners, fairness, modesty, and forgiveness.

The Noble Qur'an is the Word of my Lord

Allah says:

{And We have sent down to you a clear light}

[Ch. 4, Verse 147]

The Noble Qur'an is the word of Allah (SWT) which He revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to bring mankind out of darknesses into the light and guide them to the straight path.

Whoever reads it earns a great reward, and whoever acts upon its guidance is on the true path.

I Recognize the Pillars of Islam

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

“Islam is built on five (pillars): the testimony that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing prayer, giving Zakat, fasting the month of Ramadan, and pilgrimage to the (Sacred) House.”

The pillars of Islam are the outward acts of worship that every Muslim must observe and believe in their obligation, otherwise, his belief is not valid, as Islam is built on them, and that is why they are called the pillars of Islam.

They are:

First Pillar: Shahādah (To bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).

Allah says:

{So know [O Muhammad], that there is no deity except Allah}

[Ch. 47, Verse 19]

He also says:

{There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and is kind and merciful towards the believers.}

[Ch. 9, Verse 128]

The Shahādah that “There is no god except Allah” means that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah.

The Shahādah that “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah” means that it is obligatory to obey his orders, believe what he related, avoid what he forbade and warned against, and worship Allah only in the manner he instructed.

Second Pillar: Establishing Prayer (Salāh)

Allah says:

{And establish prayer}

[Ch. 2, Verse 110]

Establishing prayer means performing prayer in the way prescribed by Allah and taught to us by His Messenger Muhammad (pbuh).

Third Pillar: Almsgiving (Zakat).

Allah says:

{and give Zakah}

[Ch. 2, Verse 110]

Allah (SWT) made the Zakah obligatory to test the Muslim’s faith, and as a way to express gratitude to his Lord for the wealth He has given him, and as a means to help the poor and needy.

The obligation of Zakah is fulfilled by giving it to the categories of people who are eligible to receive it.

Giving Zakah is obligatory if the money reached a certain amount. Its eligible recipients are eight categories of people that are mentioned in the Noble Qur’an, including the poor and needy.

Giving Zakah is an act of mercy and compassion; it purifies the Muslim's character and wealth, consoles the poor and needy, and strengthens the bonds of love and brotherhood in the Muslim community. Therefore, a good Muslim gives out Zakah wholeheartedly given the happiness he brings to other people by it.

The amount of Zakah is 2.5% of the saved wealth, whether it is gold, silver, cash money, or trade goods allocated for buying and selling for profit. Zakah is given only when the value of the saved wealth reaches the threshold amount and one full lunar year passed while it is in the person's possession.

Zakah is also obligatory on a certain amount of livestock such as camels, sheep and goats, if these animals graze naturally most of the year without their owner providing them with fodder.

Zakah is also obligatory on what the land produces of grains, fruits, minerals, and treasure if the certain amount is reached.

Fourth Pillar: Fasting the month of Ramadan

Allah says:

{O you who believe, enjoined upon you is fasting as it was enjoined upon those who came before you so that you may become righteous}

[Ch. 2, Verse 110]

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Hijri (Islamic) calendar. Muslims revere the month of Ramadan and give it a special place over all the other months of the year. Fasting the entire month of Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Fasting Ramadan means worshiping Allah by abstaining from eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset during all days of the blessed month of Ramadan.

Fifth Pillar: Pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah (Hajj)

Allah says:

{And it is due from Allah upon people the pilgrimage to the House, for those who can make their way to it.}

[Ch. 3, Verse 97]

Pilgrimage is an obligation on the person who is able to perform it only once in a lifetime.

Pilgrimage means heading to Al-Masjid al-Harām (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah) and the Holy Places there to perform certain rituals in a specified time of the year (in the Hijri month of Dhul-Hijjah).

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and other prophets before him performed pilgrimage,

and Allah, the Exalted, ordered Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) to call people to perform Hajj, as He informed us in the Noble Qur'an:

{And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel from every distant pass.}

[Ch. 22, Verse 27]

I Recognize the Pillars of Imān (faith/belief)

The Prophet (pbuh) was asked about Imān, so he said:

“It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in preordainment (destiny), the good and the bad thereof.”

The pillars of Imān are the acts of worship of the heart that are required from every Muslim. In the absence of those pillars, the belief of a person is invalid, and it is for this reason that they are called the pillars of faith.

The difference between the pillars of Imān and those of Islam is that the pillars of Islam are visible acts performed by the body parts, like Shahādah, prayer, and Zakah, while the pillars of Imān are acts of the heart, like belief in Allah, His Books, and His Messengers.

The concept of Imān and its meaning: It is the firm belief of the heart in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Day of Judgment, and fate, the good and the bad thereof. This is in addition to following everything that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) came with and applying it in the form of words spoken by the tongue, such as pronouncing the Shahādah, reading the Qur'an, and glorifying and praising Allah;

and in the form of deeds done by the visible body parts, like prayer, Hajj, and fasting; or done by the heart, like loving Allah, fearing Him, relying on Him, and being sincere to Him.

The scholars define Imān briefly as: belief of the heart, statement of the tongue, and action of the body parts; it increases by obedience to Allah and decreases by disobedience to Him.

First Pillar: Belief in Allah

Allah says:

{The believers are only those who believe in Allah}

[Ch. 24, Verse 62]

The belief in Allah requires the belief in His Oneness of Lordship, His Oneness of Worship, and the uniqueness of His Names and Attributes. This includes the following:

- The belief in the existence of Allah (SWT)
- The belief that Allah is the only Lord, and that He is the Owner, Creator, and Sustainer of everything, Who manages the affairs of everything.
- The belief that Allah is the only God, and that He alone deserves to be worshiped. Acts of worship must be dedicated to Him alone without any partners, such as prayer, supplication, making vows, sacrificial animals, imploring for help and protection, and all other acts of worship.
- The belief in His Names and Attributes that He affirmed for Himself or that His Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) affirmed for Him, and negating what He negated about Himself of Names and Attributes or what His Prophet negated about Him. This includes the belief that His Names and Attributes are the most superior in terms of perfection and beauty, and that {there is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearing the All-Seeing}.

Second Pillar: Belief in the Angels

Allah says:

{Praise be to Allah, the Creator of the heavens and earth, who made the angels as messengers having wings; two or three or four. He increases in creation what He wills. Indeed, Allah is Most Capable of all things.}

[Ch. 35, Verse 1]

We believe that the angels are part of the unseen realm, and that they are servants of Allah that He created from light, and made them obedient and submissive to Him.

They are a great creation whose numbers and abilities are known to Allah alone. Each of them has names, traits, and duties that Allah assigned to them. One of them is Jibreel (Archangel Gabriel) who is assigned with delivering the revelation from Allah, the Exalted, to His messengers.

Third Pillar: Belief in Divine Scriptures (Books)

Allah says:

{Say, "We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants, and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."}

[Ch. 2, Verse 136]

The firm belief that all the divine Scriptures are the word of Allah, and that they were revealed from Allah to His messengers bearing the clear truth.

We believe that Allah has sent His Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to all of mankind and abrogated by his Shariah (Islamic law) all the past laws.

The Qur'an supersedes all Divine Scriptures and abrogates them, and Allah guaranteed to protect it against any distortion or alteration; He says:

{Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and it is We Who will be its guardian.}

[Ch. 15, Verse 9]

This is because the Qur'an is the last revelation to mankind, and Muhammad (pubh) is the last messenger, and Islam is the religion that Allah has approved for mankind until the coming of the Hour. Allah says:

{Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam}

[Ch. 3, Verse 19]

The Divine Scriptures that Allah mentioned in the Qur'an are:

The Noble Qur'an: which Allah revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The Torah: which Allah revealed to His Prophet Moses (pbuh).

The Gospel: which Allah revealed to His Prophet Jesus (pbuh).

The Psalms: which Allah revealed to His Prophet David (pbuh).

The Scrolls of Abraham: which Allah revealed to His Prophet Abraham (pbuh).

Fourth Pillar: Belief in the Messengers

Allah says:

{And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], “Worship Allah and shun false gods.”}

[Ch. 16, Verse 36]

We firmly believe that Allah sent a messenger to every nation to call them to worshipping Allah alone without associating any partners with Him, and disbelieving in any deity that is worshiped other than Him.

We believe that all the messengers were humans, men, servants of Allah, honest and trusted, pious, guides and guided, and that Allah supported them with miracles that prove their truthfulness. We believe that they conveyed all that Allah sent them with, and that they were all upon the evident truth and guidance.

Their messages from the first to the last of them shared the same principle of religion, which is to worship Allah alone without associating any partners with Him.

Fifth Pillar: Belief in the Day of Judgment.

Allah says:

{Allah - there is no deity except Him. He will surely gather you all for [account on] the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt. Who is more truthful than Allah in speech?}

[Ch. 4, Verse 87]

The firm belief in all the details related to the Day of Judgment that our Lord mentioned in the Qur’an or that our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) informed us of, like the death of mankind, resurrection, intercession, the Scale (the weighing of deeds), reckoning, Jannah (Paradise), Hell, and all other matters related to the Last Day.

Sixth Pillar: Belief in predestination, the good and the bad thereof (Qadar).

Allah says:

{Indeed, We created everything with predestination.}

[Ch. 54, Verse 49]

We believe that every worldly event or situation experienced by any creature occurs by the knowledge and predestination of Allah alone without any partner, and that those predestinations were written before the creation of mankind. We also believe that man has free will and he is

the real doer of his actions, but all of that is not beyond the knowledge and will of Allah.

Belief in Preordainment is of four levels:

First: Belief in Allah's Knowledge that encompasses everything.

Second: Belief that Allah wrote all that will exist until the Day of Judgment.

Third: Belief in Allah's executive Will and His Omnipotence. Whatever He wills occurs, and whatever He does not will never occurs.

Fourth: Belief that Allah is the Creator of everything and that He has no partner in His creation.

I learn Wudu' (Minor Ablution)

Allah says:

{Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.}

[Ch. 2, Verse 222]

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Perform ablution similar to my ablution."

Because of the immense status of Salah (prayer), Allah prescribed purification before it and made purification a condition for the validity of the prayer. It is the key to prayer (the first step towards performing it). Consciousness of its merit makes the heart long to perform prayer.

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Purification is half of Iman ... and prayer is a light."

He also said:

"He who performs the Wudu' perfectly, his sins come out from his body."

So a Muslim stands before his Lord in a state of physical purification through ablution and spiritual purification through performing this act of worship sincerely to Allah (SWT) and in compliance with the guidance of the Prophet (pbuh).

What are the acts of worship for which ablution is obligatory?

- 1- The prayer whether mandatory or supererogatory.
- 2- Circumambulating the Ka'bah (Tawāf).

3- Touching the Mus-haf (bound copy of the Qur'an).

I perform ablution (Wudu') and ritual bath (Ghusl) with purifying water.

Purifying water is any water that falls from the sky or springs from the earth and remains in its original state without a change to any of its three characteristics: color, taste, and smell; by one of them the state of purity of water is interrupted.

Steps of Wudu' (Ablution)

Step 1: Making Niyah (intention) in the heart. Niyah refers to the resolve in the heart to perform the worship in order to get close to Allah.

Step 2: Washing the two hands up to the wrists.

Step 3: Rinsing the mouth (Madmadah)

Rinsing the mouth: means to let water into the mouth and swirl it inside then spit it out.

Step 4: Sniffing water into the nostrils (Istinshāq)

Sniffing water means drawing water deep into the nostrils with breathing in then letting out what is inside the nostrils of mucus and otherwise with exhaling.

Step 5: Washing the face.

Face boundaries:

The face: the part of the body with which "facing" is achieved.

Facial boundary widthwise: from one ear to the other ear.

Facial boundary lengthwise: from the usual hairline on the forehead down to the end of the chin.

Washing the face includes all the light hair on it and the sideburns and the hair on the tragus. Bayād: is the area between the earlobe and the tragus.

Tragus ('adhār): the cartilaginous flap that partially covers the ear opening.

Washing the face also includes all the visible heavy hair of the beard and what extends from it.

Step 6: Washing the hands starting from the fingertips up to the elbows.

Washing the elbows is included in the obligatory washing of the hands.

Step 7: Passing the wet hands over the head and the ears once.

One starts at the hairline and moves his hands back to the nape and then all the way back.

He then inserts his index fingers inside his ears

while passing his thumbs over the back of his ears, thus wiping the front and back of the ear.

Step 8: Washing the feet from the toes up to the ankles, given that washing the ankles is included in the obligatory washing of the feet.

The ankles are the protruding bones at the bottom of the leg.

Nullifiers of Ablution:

- 1- Excretions of the front and anal passages such as urine, feces, wind, semen, and pre-ejaculatory fluid.
- 2- The absence of the mind due to deep sleep, fainting, drunkenness, or insanity.
- 3- Touching the private parts with the hand without a barrier.
- 4- Everything that requires Ghusl (ritual bath), like Janābah (ritual impurity due to sexual acts), menstruation, and postpartum.

Ghusl (Ritual Bath)

If a man or a woman had sexual intercourse or ejaculated semen with lust while being awake or asleep, they must make Ghusl (take a ritual bath) in order to perform prayer or any worship that requires purification. Also, the woman must make Ghusl at the end of her menstrual period or postpartum period before she can perform prayer or any worship that requires purification.

The manner of performing Ghusl is as follows:

That the Muslim washes his whole body with water in any way, including rinsing the mouth and sniffing water into the nostrils. If the water reached his whole body, he becomes free of major impurity and his purification is complete.

The person in a state of Janābah (major ritual impurity) is not allowed to do the following until he makes Ghusl:

- 1- Praying.
- 2- Circumambulating the Ka'bah (Tawāf).

3- Staying in the Masjid (mosque), but he may only pass without staying therein.

4- Touching the Mus-haf (bound copy of the Qur'an).

5- Reciting the Qur'an.

Tayammum (Dry Purification)

If the Muslim cannot find water to use for purification, or if he is unable to use water because of an illness or the like, and he fears that he might miss performing the prayer on time, then he may make Tayammum with sand or dust.

Tayammum is achieved by striking the soil with the hands once then wiping his face and hands up to the wrist, provided that the dust or the soil is pure.

Tayammum is nullified by:

1- Whatever nullifies ablution also nullifies Tayammum.

2- If water is found before starting the worship for which the Tayammum was made.

I learn how to pray

Allah ordained upon the Muslim five prayers in the day and night; they are: Fajr (dawn) prayer, Dhuhr (noon) prayer, 'Asr (afternoon) prayer, Maghrib (sunset) prayer and 'Isha' (night) prayer.

I prepare myself for Prayer

When the time of prayer starts, the Muslim purifies himself from the state of minor impurity, and from major impurity if he is in a state of major impurity.

Major impurity is what requires Ghusl (ritual bath).

Minor impurity is what requires Wudu' (ablution).

The Muslim prays in a clean place free of impurities, wearing clean clothes that conceal his 'Awra (a must covered body parts).

The Muslim wears proper clothing which covers his body in prayer. The man is not allowed to pray with the area between his navel and knees uncovered.

The woman must cover her whole body in prayer except for her face and hands.

While performing Salah, the Muslim only says the words relevant to Salah, he listens to the Imam (the person leading the congregational prayer), and he does not turn left or right in Salah. If he is unable to memorize the words of Salah, he should mention Allah and glorify Him (by saying 'Subhān Allah') until the prayer ends. He is required to hasten to learn Salah and its words.

Step 1: I make the intention in my heart for the prayer I intend to perform.

After I perform ablution, I stand in the direction of the Qiblah (direction of the prayer towards Makkah), and I pray while standing if I am able to.

Step 2: I raise my hands to the level of my shoulders and say “Allahu Akbar” (Allah is the Most Great) with the intention of beginning the prayer.

Step 3: I say an opening Du‘ā’ (supplication) as reported from the Prophet (pbuh). One of the opening supplications is the following:

“Subhānak Allahumma wa bihamdika wa tabārak-asmuka wa ta‘āla jadduka, wa la ilaha ghayrak” (Glory and praise be to You O Allah. Blessed is Your Name and Exalted is Your Majesty, and there is none worthy of worship but You).

Step 4: I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan by saying: “A‘udhu billahi min ash-shaytān ar-rajeem”.

Step 5: I read Surat al-Fātihah (Ch. 1 of the Qur’an) in every Rak‘ah (unit of the prayer):

{Bismillah ar-Rahmān ar-Rahīm [In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful] (1)

Al-hamdulillahi rabbil-‘ālameen [Praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds] (2)

Ar-Rahmān Ar-Raheem [The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful] (3)

Māliki yawm ad-deen [Sovereign of the Day of Recompense] (4)

Iyyaka na‘budu wa iyyaka nasta‘een [It is You Who we worship, and it is You Who we ask for help] (5)

Ihdina as-sirāt al-mustaqeem [Guide us to the straight path] (6)

Sirāt-al-ladheena an‘amta ‘alayhim ghayril-maghdubi ‘alayhim walla ad-dālleen [The path of those upon whom You have blessed, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray] (7)}

After al-Fātihah, I recite verses from the Qur'an (other than al-Fātihah) only in the first and second Rak'ah. This recitation is not obligatory but doing it yields a great reward.

Step 6: I say "Allahu Akbar" then I make Ruku' by bowing until my back is level, and my hands are on my knees with the fingers spread out, then I say while in Ruku' "Subhana rabbiy-al-azeem" (Glory is to my Lord, the Great).

Step 7: I rise from Ruku' while saying: "Sami' Allahu liman hamidah" (Allah hears the one who praises him) and raising my hands to the level of my shoulders. When I stand straight, I say: "Rabbanā wa lak al-hamd" (Our Lord, and to You is all praise).

Step 8: I say "Allahu Akbar" and prostrate on my hands, knees, feet, forehead and nose, then I say while prostrating: "Subhāna rabbiy-al-a'la" (Glory is to my Lord, the Most High).

Step 9: I say "Allahu Akbar" and rise from the Sujūd (prostration) to sit with my back straight, sitting on my left foot and keeping my right foot erect and say: "Rabbi ighfir lī" (My Lord, forgive my sins).

Step 10: I say "Allahu Akbar" and prostrate again like the first time.

Step 11: I rise from the Sujūd to stand up straight while saying "Allahu Akbar", and I repeat the same steps in the remaining units of the prayer.

After the second prostration in the second Rak'ah of Dhuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib and 'Isha' prayers, I sit to say the first Tashahhud (testimony of faith) whose wording is as follows:

"At-tahiyyātu lillah was-salawātu wat-tayyibāt, as-salāmu 'alayka ayyuha an-nabi wa rahmatullah wa barakātuh, as-salāmu 'alayna wa 'ala 'ibādillah as-sāliheen, ashhadu alla ilaha illa Allah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluh" (All compliments, prayers, and pure words are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous slaves of Allah. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger).

Then I stand up for the third Rak'ah.

After the second prostration in the last Rak'ah of every prayer, I sit to say the last Tashahhud whose wording is as follows (the first Tashahhud plus sending peace and prayers upon the Prophet):

“At-tahiyyātu lillah was-salawātu wat-tayyibāt, as-salāmu ‘alayka ayyuha an-nabi wa rahmatullah wa baraāatuh, as-salāmu ‘alayna wa ‘ala ‘ibādillah as-sāliheen, ashhadu alla ilaha illa Allah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhu wa rasuluh. Allahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala āli Muhammad kama sallayta ‘ala Ibrāheem wa ‘ala āli Ibrāheem, innaka hameedun majeed. Allahumma bārik ‘ala Muhammad wa ‘ala āli Muhammad kama bārakta ‘ala Ibrāheem wa ‘ala āli Ibrāheem, innaka hameedun majeed” (All compliments, prayers and pure words are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be upon us and upon the righteous slaves of Allah. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger. O Allah, send prayers upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad as You sent prayers upon Abraham and upon the family of Abraham; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory. O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad as You sent blessings upon Abraham and upon the family of Abraham; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory).

Final Step: I intend to conclude the prayer and turn my head to the right saying: “As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullah” (Peace and blessings of Allah be unto you) then I turn my head to the left saying: “As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatullah”. By doing that, I have performed my prayer.

Some Characteristics of the Muslim

Allah says:

{The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely.}

[Ch. 8, Verse 2]

Hijāb of the Muslim Woman

Allah says:

{O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not abused. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.}

[Ch. 33, Verse 59]

Allah has commanded the Muslim woman to wear the Hijāb and conceal her 'Awrah and her body by the traditional outfits available in her country in the presence of the men who are not directly related to her. She is not allowed to take off her Hijāb except before her husband and her Mahram males, who are the men she is permanently forbidden to marry. The Mahram males are the following:

The father up to all levels (i.e. grandfather, great grandfather, etc.), the son down to all levels, paternal uncles, maternal uncles, brother, nephew, stepfather, father-in-law up to all levels, stepson down to all levels, milk-brother and husband of nursing mother, given that whoever becomes non-marriageable through lineage also becomes non-marriageable through breast-feeding.

Rules of Wearing Hijab:

First: It must cover the whole body.

Second: It must not be a garment destined for adornment.

Third: It must not be transparent, showing her body.

Fourth: It must be loose and not tight that reveals her contours.

Fifth: It must not be perfumed.

Sixth: It must not resemble what men wear.

Seventh: It must not resemble what non-Muslim women wear in their worship or festivals.

Some Characteristics of the Believer

- Honest in speech and does not lie.
- Honors his vows and promises.
- Does not use foul language when quarrels.
- Fulfills trusts to whom they are due.
- Loves for his fellow Muslim what he loves for himself.
- Generous.
- Treats people kindly.
- Upholds kinship ties.
- Content with what Allah decrees for him, grateful to Allah in times of prosperity and is patient in times of adversity.

- Modest.
- Shows mercy to all creation.
- His heart is free of grudges and he does not harm others in any way.
- Forgives people.
- Avoids usury.
- Does not commit adultery.
- Does not drink alcohol.
- Treats his neighbors well.
- Does not oppress or betray.
- Does not steal or defraud.
- Dutiful to his parents, even if they are not Muslims, and obeys in doing good.
- Brings up his children and teaches them virtues and good characters, and commands them to do their religious duties and forbids them from vice and all prohibitions.
- Does not imitate non-Muslims in what is peculiar to their religions or the habits that have become distinctive signs of them.

My happiness lies in my religion, Islam

Allah says:

{Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.}

[Ch. 16, Verse 97]

One of the most important things that brings joy and comfort to the Muslim's heart is his direct connection to his Lord without a mediator from the living or the dead or the idols. Allah (SWT) said in the Qur'an that He is always near to us to hear and answer our Duā (supplication). Allah says:

{And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me, and believe in Me so that they may be rightly guided.]

[Ch. 2, Verse 186]

Allah commands us to call upon Him, and He made supplication one of the great acts of worship whereby a Muslim draws close to Him. Allah says:

{And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you."}

[Ch. 40, Verse 60]

A true Muslim is permanently in need of his Lord and always seeks to supplicate Him and get close to Him through good deeds.

Allah Almighty created us in this universe for a great wisdom and not in vain; He created us to worship Him alone without any partner unto Him. He set for us a comprehensive divine religion that organizes all the affairs of our lives, public and private, thereby preserving the five necessities of life: our religion, life, honor, mind, and property. Whoever follows the Sharia commandments and avoids its prohibitions, without doubt, will preserve these necessities and enjoy a happy peaceful life.

The bond between the Muslim and his Lord is profound, bringing reassurance, spiritual comfort, tranquility, safety, and delight. It makes him feel that Allah is "with" him, taking care of Him and protecting Him. Allah says:

{Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light}

[Ch. 2, Verse 257]

This great relationship is a spiritual state that makes the Muslim feel bliss in worshipping Allah, the Most-Merciful, and yearn to meet Him. It makes the heart filled with happiness when it savors the sweetness of faith.

It's a sweetness whose delight cannot be described except by one who tasted it by obeying His Lord and shunning what He forbade. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

"He who is content with Allah as his Lord, has truly found the taste of faith, with Islam as his religion, and Muhammad as his Prophet."

Verily, if a person is mindful that he is ever in the presence of His Creator, and he knows His Creator by knowing His Beautiful Names and Attributes, and He worships Him as if he sees Him, dedicating his worship sincerely to Allah and seeking by it none other than Him, he would live a happy and blissful life in this world and enjoy the best outcome in the Hereafter.

Even the calamities that befall a believer in the life of this world, their intensity is alleviated by the comfort of certitude and perfect contentment with Allah's predestination and praising Him for all that He decrees.

Among the deeds that the Muslim should maintain in order to add to his happiness and reassurance is to remember Allah often and to read the Noble Qur'an. Allah says:

{Those who believe and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured.}

[Ch. 13, Verse 28]

The more the Muslim remembers Allah and reads the Qur'an, the stronger his bond with Allah becomes; his heart becomes purified and his faith becomes stronger.

The Muslim should also be keen on learning his religion from the correct reliable sources in order to worship Allah based on sure knowledge;

the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim."

The Muslim should be submissive and yielding to the commands of Allah who created him, whether he knows the wisdom behind them or not; Allah (SWT) says:

{It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair; whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger is clearly misguided.}

[Ch. 33, Verse 36]

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his household and Companions.