

Appendix 7

Muslim Prayer

The formal prayer (*namaz*) of Muslims is called *salat*. First there is the call to prayer, the *adhan*, then Muslims must do a ritual washing, *wudu*, as outlined in the Qur'an:

‘Believers, when you rise to pray, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbow, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankle’ (Surah 5:6).

The ritual involves (1) washing the hands up to the wrists three times; (2) rinsing out the mouth three times; (3) cleaning the nostrils by sniffing water three times; (4) washing the face from forehead to chin and from ear to ear; (5) washing the forearms up to the elbows three times; (6) passing a wet hand over the whole of the head; and finally (7) washing the feet up to the ankles three times, first the right foot, then the left.

Muslim prayer is an act of obedience. It is not petition as Christians think of it. The repetition of prayer is like a mantra. It invokes the power of Allah and his blessing, but does not request anything. There is, however, an opportunity for personal prayer, called *du'a*, at the end of ritual cycles. This is almost afterthought recognition that individual Muslims do have personal needs, yet there is no assurance that Allah hears personal prayer. Prayer for Muslims is an act of submission, demonstrated by their prostrations.

The purpose of prayer for Muslims is to reassure faith (*iman*), to remove evil and obtain rewards (see Surah 2:3-4; 11:114; 20:14-15).

Prayers are recited facing the *qibla*, the direction of Mecca. There are many *qibla* calculators to show the correct direction in which to pray in whatever country a Muslim may be.

The prayers consist of a cycle of positions and recitation. Surah 2:37 says that Allah gives the words by which contact is established with him: Surah 1 is often referred to as ‘the Key.’ It is said that the Arabic sounds of the ‘the Key’ represent a ‘numerical combination that opens the treasure.’ Thus prayer in this precise manner is the way to Allah and his blessing. We list the main points of the *adhan* (prayer times) and explain the basic *rak'ah* procedure. Prayers are translated into English, but the rule is that these must be said in Arabic!



Here follows a representation of the prayer cycle, first the call to prayer, secondly, what a Rak'ah is, and thirdly what is involved during the five prayer times, including the stance taken:

(1) The *adhan*, the call to prayer, is as follows:

Allahu akbar – Allah is the greatest (four times).

Ashadu an la ilaha illa llah – I testify that there is no other god but Allah (twice).

Ashadu anna Muhammada rasul u llah – I testify that Muhammad is Allah's messenger (twice).

Haya ala-a-salat – Come to prayer (twice).

Haya alal falah – Come to success (twice).

Allahu akbar – Allah is the greatest (twice).

La ilaha illa llah – There is no god but Allah (once).

One further sentence is added to the call to dawn prayer:

As-salat khair min in nawm – prayer is better than sleep.

(2) Each of the 5 prayer times

includes a different number of *rak'ah*:

There is a fixed sequence of prayers to be followed accompanied by various positions that must be rigidly followed that include compulsory rounds, and those that are optional but recommended. The *imam* leads the prayer sequence, and the Muslim adherents follow him meticulously.

A *fard rak'ah* is a compulsory prayer.

A *sunnah rak'ah* is optional, as extra prayers performed by prophet Mohammed, and therefore is recommended.

A *witr rak'ah* designates an odd number of *rak'ah*'s.

1. *Salat al Fajr* – at dawn, before sunrise:
 - 2 *rakat sunnah*
 - 2 *rakat fard*
2. *Salat al Zuhr* – after noon:
 - 4 *rakat sunnah*
 - 4 *rakat fard*
 - 2 *rakat sunnah*
3. *Salat al Asr* – in the late afternoon, 1½ hours before sunset:
 - 4 *rakat sunnah*
 - 4 *rakat fard*
4. *Salat al Maghrib* – immediately after sunset:
 - 2 *rakat sunnah*
 - 3 *rakat fard*
 - 2 *rakat sunnah*
5. *Salat al Isha* – after sunset but before midnight:
 - 2 (or 4) *rakat sunnah*
 - 4 *rakat fard*
 - 2 *rakat sunnah*
 - 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9 *rakat witr*

(3) A *rak'ah* is a prayer sequence

that follows 8 consecutive positions:

i. *Takbeerat*

Allahu Akbar: 'Allah is the greatest'



ii. *Qiyam*

Thana:

'Oh Allah, glorified, praiseworthy,
and blessed is your name
and exalted your majesty,
and there is no deity worthy of worship except you.'

Ta'awaz:

'I seek Allah's shelter from Satan, the condemned'

Tasmia:

'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.'

Al-Fatiha (surah 1):

'Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Creation,
The Compassionate, the Merciful,
The King of Judgement Day!
You alone we worship,



and to you alone we pray for help.
 Guide us to the straight path
 The path of those whom you have favoured,
 Not of those who have incurred your wrath,
 Nor of those who have gone astray.'

On the second rak'ah another surah of choice is recited:
 'Say he is Allah: the one and the only.
 Allah, the Eternal, the Absolute
 He begets none, nor is he begotten
 and there is none like unto him.'

Moving to next position:

iii. *Ruku*

'Allah is the greatest'

'Glory be to my Lord, the Greatest.'
 (3 times)



Moving to next position:

iv. *Qiyam*

'Allah is the greatest'

'Allah listens to him who praises him.
 Our Lord, praise be to you only.'



Moving to next position:

v. *Sajda*

'Allah is the greatest'

'Glory to my Lord,
 the Most High (Exalted).'
 (3 times)



Moving to next position:

vi. *Tashahud*

'Allah is the greatest'

'O my Lord forgive me
 and have mercy on me.'



Moving to next position:

vii. *Sajda*

'Allah is the greatest'

'Glory to my Lord,
 the Most High (Exalted).'
 (3 times)



This completes one rak'ah.

*For two rak'ah return to position i. Qiyam
 repeating through to vii. Sajda.*

Then, to finish:

viii. *Quood* (1) *Tashahud:*

'All prayers and worship through words,
 action and sanctity are for Allah only
 Peace be on you, O Prophet,
 and mercy of Allah and his blessings
 Peace be on us and on those who are
 righteous servants of Allah.'



I bear witness to the fact that there is no deity but Allah.
I bear witness that Mohammed is his slave and messenger.'

*Here the third/fourth rak'ah
would begin by returning to ii. Qiyam.*

*The following are said at the close
of a two or three or four rak'ah cycle,
this time omitting Quood (1):*

(2) *Salat Alan-nabi:*

'O Allah, bless Mohammed and his followers
as you blessed
Ibrahim (Abraham) and his followers.
You are the Praised, the Glorious.'
'O Lord! Make me one who establishes regular prayer,
and also (raise such) among my offspring.
O our Lord! Accept my prayer.
O Lord! Cover (us) with your forgiveness
– me, my parents and all believers –
on the Day that the reckoning
will be established.'

ix. *Salam*

in this position but looking first to the right,

'peace and mercy of Allah be on you',

then looking to the left

'peace and mercy of Allah be on you.'

*After the performance of the requisite rak'ah,
now is the time for personal prayer (du'a).*



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The Muslim Rosary

The rosary is commonly used in Islam, as an act of piety while reciting the 99 names of Allah. The word for 'rosary' in the Arabic language is *subha* or *mas'baha*, which is derived from *subhan Allah* (God be praised). The number of beads in the Muslim rosary varies: there is a 33 bead rosary which requires three turns around the circle of beads. Each bead represents one of the names of God mentioned in the Qur'an, the total being 99. Another variant is divided into three parts, each made up of 33 beads. These may be used at the end of each of the five daily prayers. Other variants include 100 bead rosary used



in accordance with *sunnah*, and there is even a 1,000 bead rosary used for funerals. There are differing opinions as to the origin of the Muslim rosary. One view is that "the idea of praising God using a string of beads originated with *Al Sahabah* (companions of Prophet Mohamed). For instance, Abu Horaiyra used to practice this religious exercise using a knotted thread daily before sleeping. Wives of the Prophet, such as Fatemah Bint Al-Hussein Bin Ali and Safiya Bint Hoyayi, used to praise God using a group of stones. Hence, praising God using a string of beads or rosary is a *sunnah* from the early days

of Islam. Using a rosary helps people to remember to praise God most of the time.”ⁱ

Another opinion is that using a rosary to praise Allah was not part of the rituals of early Islam. At the time it was said that all living creatures on earth praise God and hence there was no need for the use of the small beads. However, the claim is made that the practice was borrowed from various ‘faiths’ that preceded Islam. The use of the rosary is, for some, an indication of their devoutness.

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ⁱ Al-Ahram Weekly Online. [Article](#): *Beads of Praise*, para 6.

