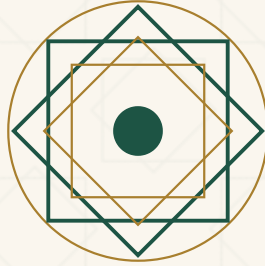


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



A WELCOME & GUIDE FOR THE NEW MUSLIM

Islam Onboarding

*What every Muslim believes, does, and strives for, explained
simply, from the very beginning.*

THE TESTIMONY OF FAITH · ASH-SHAHADA

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

*Ash-hadu an la ilaha illa-Llah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan
rasulu-Llah*

*"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is
the Messenger of Allah."*

أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا Welcome to Islam

You have made the most important decision of your life. Take a breath, you are exactly where you should be.

Congratulations, and welcome to the family of Islam. By testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad ﷺ is His Messenger, you have entered a new life. The Prophet ﷺ taught that accepting Islam wipes away everything that came before it. You begin now with a clean page, pure and forgiven.

This guide is here to introduce you to the essentials, gently and in order. You do not need to learn everything at once, and you are not expected to be perfect. Islam is built to be practiced step by step, a little at a time, for the rest of your life. The goal of these pages is simply to help you understand **what Islam is, where it comes from, and how to begin**, especially the prayer, which will quickly become the heartbeat of your day.

A note before you begin

Three words organize this whole guide, *Islam* (what we do), *Iman* (what we believe), and *Ihsan* (how we worship). They come from a single, beautiful teaching of the Prophet ﷺ, and once you hold them in mind, the rest of the religion falls into place.

WHAT'S INSIDE

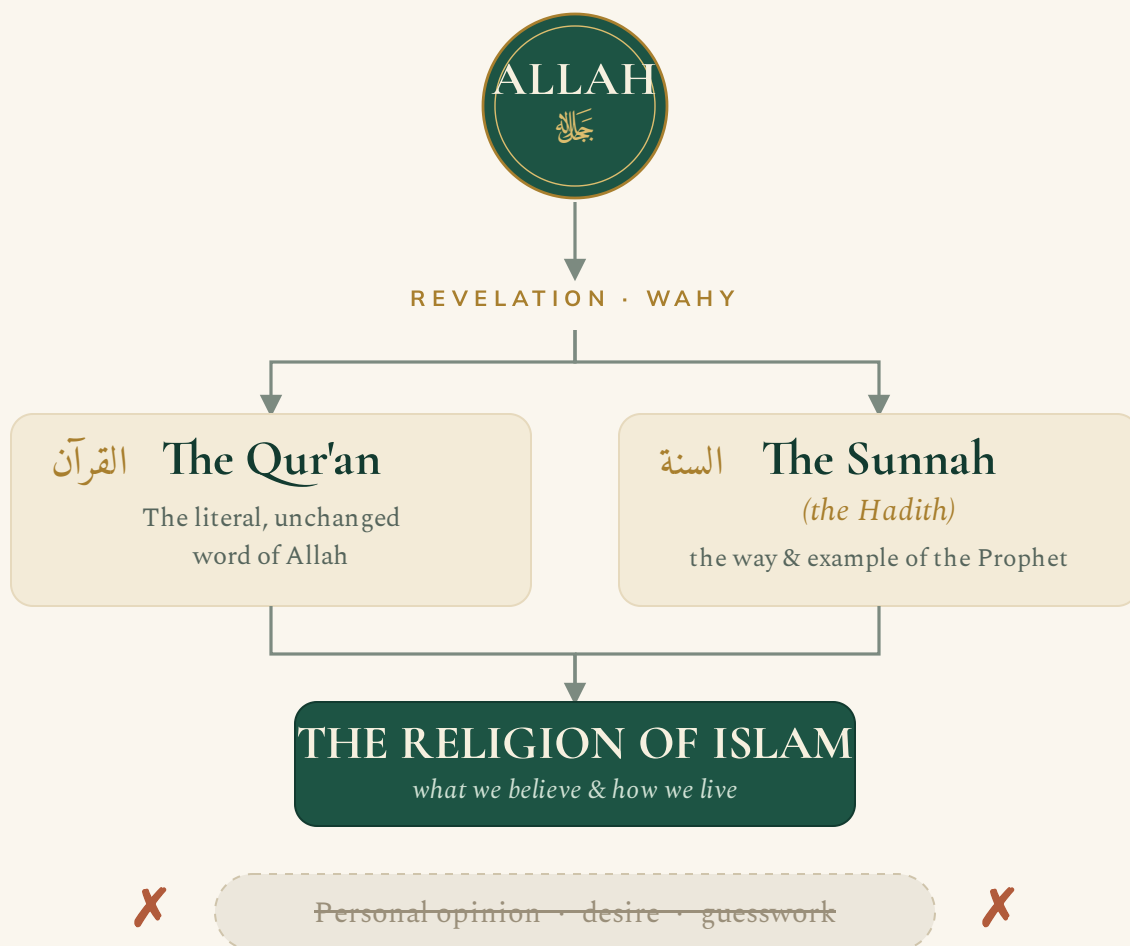
1	Where Islam Comes From	The Qur'an & the Sunnah
2	The Religion in Three Words	Islam · Iman · Ihsan
3	The Five Pillars of Islam	What every Muslim does
4	The Six Articles of Faith	What every Muslim believes
5	Ihsan: Excellence in Worship	How every Muslim strives
6	Wudu: Washing Before Prayer	Purifying for salah
7	The Prayer & Its Times	The five daily prayers
8	How We Pray	The rak'ah & what to say
9	Surah Al-Fatihah	The Opening, verse by verse
10	Your First Steps	Your masjid & your path

Where Does Islam Come From?

Everything in our religion traces back to one source: Allah. Nothing in it comes from human opinion.

Before learning *what* Islam teaches, it helps to understand *where* those teachings come from. This is the most important idea in this entire guide: a Muslim does not build their faith on personal opinions, feelings, or guesswork. We build it on what Allah has revealed.

Allah's guidance reaches us through **two preserved sources**. The first is **the Qur'an**, the literal, unchanged word of Allah, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and protected word-for-word ever since. The second is **the Sunnah**, the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet ﷺ, carefully recorded by his companions in what we call the *Hadith*. Allah Himself commanded us to follow him: "Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah" (Qur'an 4:80).

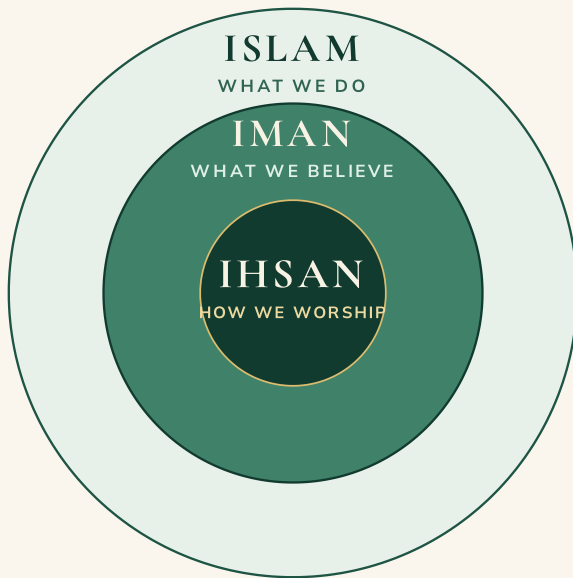


This is why, whenever you hear different claims about the religion, the real question is always the same: **what is the evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah?** To understand them correctly, we learn from qualified scholars who have devoted their lives to studying these sources, not from our own assumptions.

The Religion in Three Words

Islam, Iman, and Ihsan, the entire faith, summarized by the Prophet ﷺ in a single sitting.

One day, a man in pure white robes came and sat before the Prophet ﷺ and asked him to explain the religion. He asked about three things in turn, *Islam*, *Iman*, and *Ihsan*, and the Prophet ﷺ answered each. When the man left, the Prophet ﷺ revealed that he was the angel Jibril (Gabriel), who had come “to teach you your religion.” These three words frame everything that follows.



- ١ **Islam** الإسلام

Submission to Allah, shown through **actions**, the Five Pillars. The outward practice anyone can see.
- ٢ **Iman** الإيمان

Faith held firmly in the **heart**, the Six Articles of Belief. The inner conviction that gives the actions meaning.
- ٣ **Ihsan** الإحسان

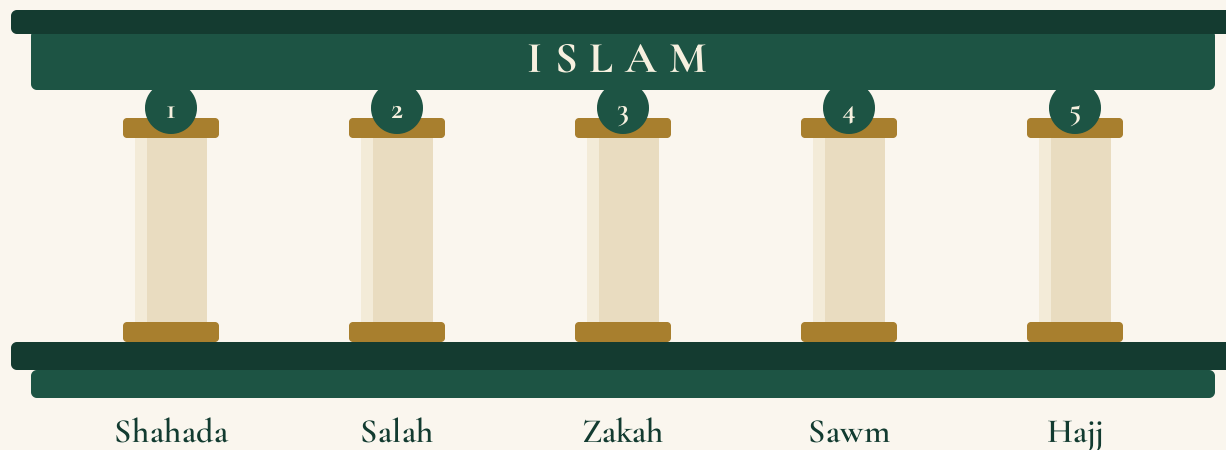
Excellence and sincerity in **worship**, doing it beautifully, as if you can see Allah. The highest level.

Think of them as growing layers of one faith. A believer begins by **doing** what Islam asks, learns to **believe** it deeply in the heart, and matures into **worshipping** Allah with full presence and devotion. The chapters ahead take each in turn.

The Five Pillars of Islam أركان الإسلام

"Islam is built upon five." These are the actions required of every Muslim.

The Prophet ﷺ described Islam as a structure resting on five supports. Just as a building needs its pillars, a Muslim's practice rests on these five, with the testimony of faith as the foundation, and prayer as the central pillar you return to five times every day.



- 1** **Shahada** الشَّاهِدَة , the Testimony

To declare and believe that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad ﷺ is His Messenger. The door into Islam, and you have already walked through it.
- 2** **Salah** الصَّلَاة , the Prayer

The five daily prayers, your direct connection with Allah. The first deed you'll be asked about on the Day of Judgment. **Begin learning this first** (Chapters 6–9).
- 3** **Zakah** الزَّكَاة , Purifying Charity

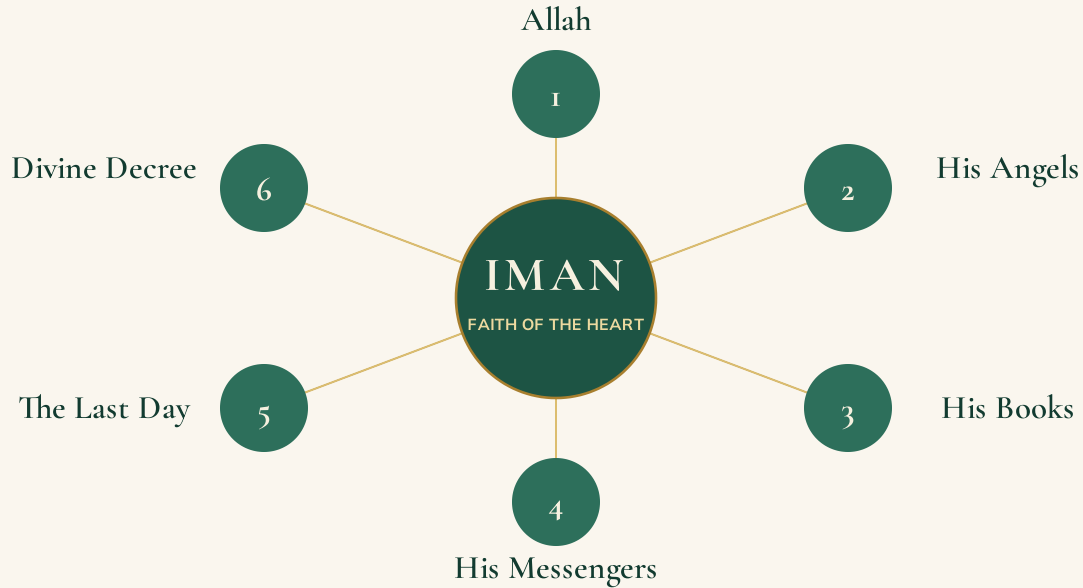
Once your savings reach a set minimum (the *nisab*) and remain for a full lunar year, you give 2.5% to those in need. It purifies wealth and the heart.
- 4** **Sawm** الصَّوْم , Fasting Ramadan

During the month of Ramadan, healthy adults abstain from food, drink, and intimacy from dawn until sunset, training patience, gratitude, and God-consciousness.
- 5** **Hajj** الْحَج , the Pilgrimage

The journey to the Sacred House (the Ka'bah) in Makkah, performed once in a lifetime by every Muslim who is physically and financially able.

The Six Articles of Faith أركان الإيمان

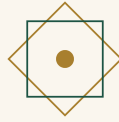
When Jibril asked about Iman, the Prophet ﷺ named six beliefs every Muslim holds in the heart.



- 1 Belief in Allah**
 The One God, the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, without partner or equal. We affirm the names and attributes He has affirmed for Himself, without distortion, reinterpretation, or likening Him to His creation.
- 2 Belief in His Angels**
 Beings created from light who never disobey Allah, among them Jibril, who delivered the revelation to the prophets.
- 3 Belief in His Books**
 The scriptures Allah revealed, including the Tawrah, the Zabur, and the Injil, completed and preserved in the Qur'an, His final revelation.
- 4 Belief in His Messengers**
 The prophets sent to guide humanity, such as Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, and 'Isa (Jesus), with Muhammad ﷺ as the last of them.
- 5 Belief in the Last Day**
 The resurrection, the Day of Judgment, and the eternal life that follows, Paradise for the righteous and Hell for the wrongdoers.
- 6 Belief in Divine Decree (al-Qadar)**
 That Allah knows all things and nothing happens except by His knowledge, will, and wisdom, the good of it and the bad of it.

Excellence in Worship الإحسان

The third and highest level, how a Muslim strives to feel and worship.



الإِحْسَانُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ
فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ

*“Ihsan is to worship Allah as though you see Him;
and though you do not see Him, He surely sees you.”*

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ · HADITH OF JIBRIL · BUKHARI & MUSLIM

Ihsan is the soul of worship. It is the difference between simply *performing* an act and truly *living* it, praying, giving, and speaking with the awareness that Allah is present and watching over you at every moment.

You are not expected to reach this all at once. It grows naturally as you keep remembering Allah in what you do, turning daily habits into sincere devotion, and slowly drawing your heart nearer to Him. When your Islam (actions) and Iman (belief) are joined by Ihsan (sincerity), your faith becomes complete and beautiful.

Wudu: Washing Before Prayer الوضوء

Before standing to pray, a Muslim purifies with a simple washing. It takes about two minutes.

First, a one-time washing: Ghusl

On the day you accept Islam, perform **ghusl**: one full washing of the entire body. Make the intention to purify yourself, then wash so that water reaches every part of the body, rinsing the mouth and nose as well. A thorough shower made with this intention fulfills it. After this one-time ghusl, the simple wudu below is what you renew before prayers.

For every prayer after that, **wudu** is the washing that prepares you. The Prophet ﷺ taught that as the water passes over you, small sins fall away with it. Do the steps in order, washing the right side before the left. The dashed lines show what each step covers.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1 |  | Intention & Bismillah
Intend wudu in your heart and say <i>Bismillah</i> (in the name of Allah). | 6 |  | Arms x3
Wash the right arm up to and including the elbow; then the left. |
| 2 |  | Hands x3
Wash both hands up to the wrists. | 7 |  | Head x1
With wet hands, wipe over the head from front to back. |
| 3 |  | Mouth x3
Take a handful of water and rinse your mouth. | 8 |  | Ears x1
Wipe inside the ears with the index fingers, behind them with the thumbs. |
| 4 |  | Nose x3
Sniff water gently into the nostrils and blow it out. | 9 |  | Feet x3
Wash the right foot up to and including the ankle; then the left. |
| 5 |  | Face x3
Wash the whole face, hairline to chin and ear to ear. | | | |

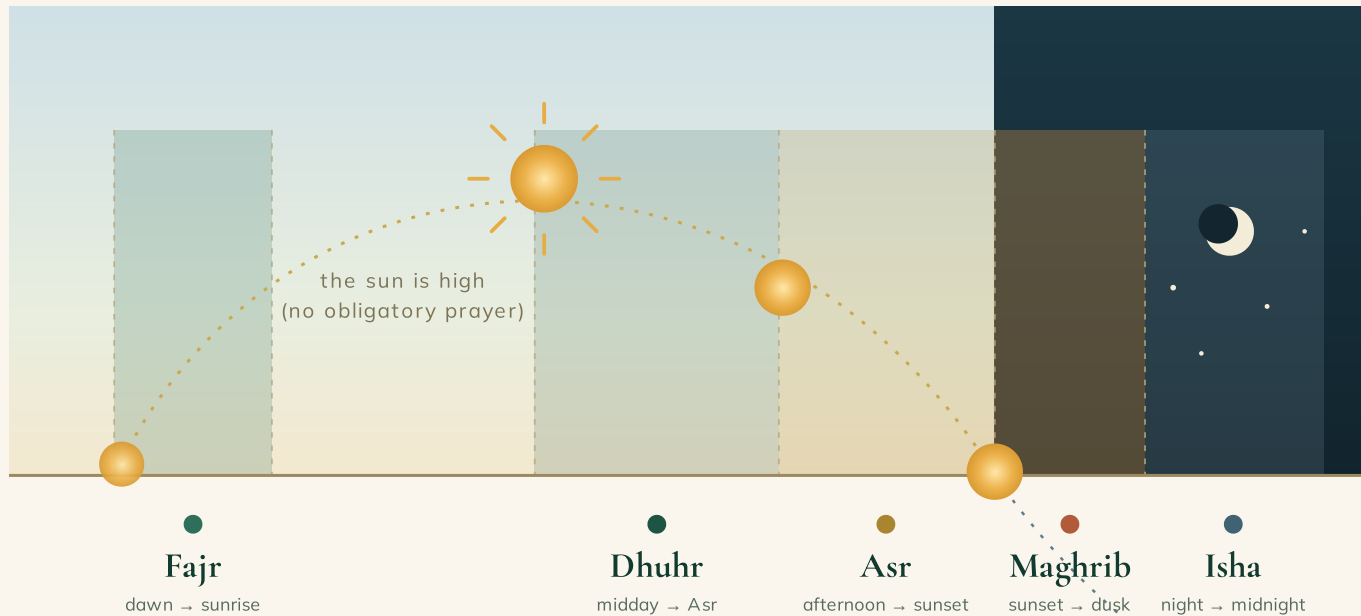
What breaks wudu: using the bathroom, passing wind, or deep sleep. Once made, wudu **remains valid until broken**, so you may pray several prayers with a single wudu; simply renew it when needed.

It is also a beloved sunnah (recommended, not required) to say the Shahada after finishing your wudu.

The Prayer & Its Times الصلاة

After the Shahada, prayer is the most important act in Islam, the pillar that holds up the rest.

Salah is performed **five times every day**, at times set by the sun's movement across the sky. Each prayer opens a **window of time**, shown shaded below, and stays open until the next prayer begins. You may pray any moment inside that window, but praying **early** in it is best and most beloved to Allah.



Notice the unshaded stretch after sunrise: once the sun is up, there is a gap with **no obligatory prayer** until *Dhuhr* arrives just after midday. From *Dhuhr* onward, each window leads straight into the next, all the way to *Isha* at night, which may be prayed up until midnight.

The Five Daily Prayers

Their times, their length, and how each is recited.

PRAYER	WHEN IT BEGINS	UNITS (FARD)	RECITATION
Fajr الفجر	At dawn, before sunrise	● ● 2	ALOUD
Dhuhr الظهر	Just after midday	● ● ● ● 4	SILENT
Asr العصر	Late afternoon	● ● ● ● 4	SILENT
Maghrib المغرب	Just after sunset	● ● ● 3	2 ALOUD • 1 SILENT
Isha العشاء	At night, after dusk	● ● ● ● 4	2 ALOUD • 2 SILENT

● recited aloud ● recited silently “Units” = rak’ahs (Chapter 8)

These are the obligatory (fard) units. There are also recommended (sunnah) prayers around them, which you'll learn later, for now, focus on getting the fard prayers in.

In Fajr, Maghrib, and Isha the opening recitation is said aloud; in Dhuhr and Asr it is said silently. This is most noticeable when praying behind an imam, who recites aloud on everyone's behalf.

Two things to set up today

- 1. Get a prayer-time app.** Apps such as *Athan*, *Muslim Pro*, or *Pillars* show the five daily times for your exact city, sound the *adhan* (call to prayer), and point you toward the *qiblah*, the direction of the Ka'bah you face when praying. Set your location and you'll always know when it's time.
- 2. Find your local masjid.** We are encouraged to pray the five prayers in congregation at the mosque whenever we can, it carries far greater reward, and it's the fastest way to learn, find help, and meet your new community.

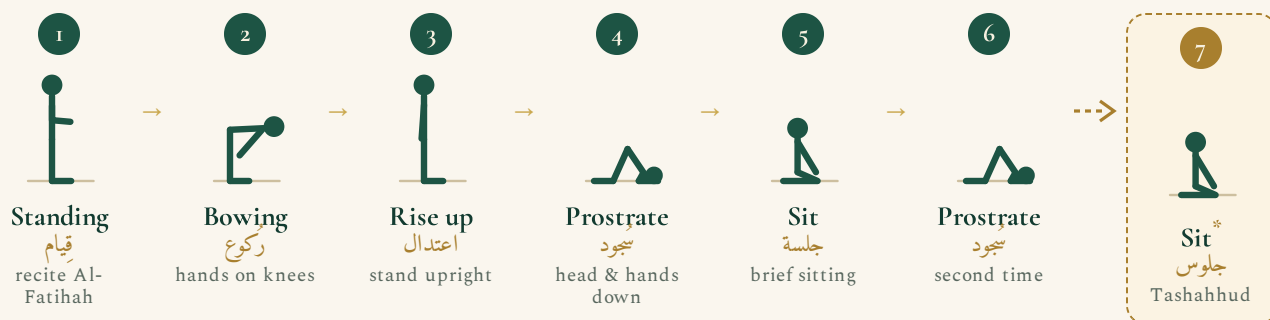
How We Pray: One Rak'ah الركعة

Every prayer is built from identical cycles called rak'ahs. Learn one, and you know them all.

What is a rak'ah?

A **rak'ah** (unit) is one complete cycle of the prayer: you **stand** and recite, **bow** once, rise, then **prostrate twice** with a brief sitting between. Each of the five prayers is simply a set number of these identical cycles, two, three, or four, joined one after another.

With wudu made (Chapter 6), you begin by facing the *qiblah*, making the intention in your heart, then raising your hands and saying “**Allahu akbar**.” You say it again at every change of position. One rak'ah moves through these postures, in order:



* The second sitting is only in the even (2nd & 4th) and the final rak'ah, where you stay seated for the Tashahhud.

Completing those steps is **one rak'ah**. After the second prostration you stand again for the next rak'ah. After **every two rak'ahs**, and at the very end of the prayer, you stay seated for the **Tashahhud**, and you close the whole prayer with the **Taslim**, turning your head right, then left. The exact words for each position, and what they mean, are on the pages that follow.

*Don't worry about getting every motion perfect at first, learn **Al-Fatihah** to begin, pray alongside others at the masjid, and the rest will follow naturally.*

What We Say & What It Means

A simple reference for each position. Read the meaning, and your prayer becomes a conversation.

	Opening تكبيرة الإحرام	Allahu akbar "Allah is the Greatest." Said as you begin, and with every change of position.	اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
	Standing الفاتحة	Al-hamdu lillahi rabbil-alamin ... Recite Surah Al-Fatihah ("The Opening") in every unit; it praises Allah and asks Him for guidance. A short passage follows it in the first two units.	الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ...
	Bowing ركوع	Subhana Rabbiyal-Adheem (×3) "Glory to my Lord, the Most Great."	سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ
	Rising up اعتدال	Sami'Allahu liman hamidah / Rabbana wa lakal-hamd "Allah hears the one who praises Him; our Lord, to You belongs all praise."	سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ
	Prostrating سجود	Subhana Rabbiyal-A'la (×3) "Glory to my Lord, the Most High." Forehead, nose, palms, knees, and toes touch the ground.	سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى
	Sitting between جلسة	Rabbighfir li "My Lord, forgive me." Said between the two prostrations.	رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي
	Final sitting التشهد	At-tahiyyatu lillah ... The Tashahhud and the Salawat ; written in full on the next page.	التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ ...
	Ending التسليم	As-salamu alaykum wa rahmatullah "Peace and the mercy of Allah be upon you." Turning the head right, then left, ends the prayer.	السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

Start with **Al-Fatihah** (written out in Chapter 9) and the short praises in bowing and prostration, these carry the whole prayer. Add the Tashahhud over time. Knowing the *meaning* is what turns the motions into worship from the heart.

The Tashahhud التشهد

The words of the sitting, said after every two rak'ahs and at the end of every prayer.

After the second prostration of the **2nd rak'ah**, stay seated and recite the Tashahhud. While saying the testimony (Ash-hadu...), it is sunnah to raise the index finger.

The Tashahhud

At-tahiyyatu lillahi was-salawatu wat-tayyibat

All greetings, prayers, and pure words are for Allah.

As-salamu alayka ayyuhan-Nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh

Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

As-salamu alayna wa ala ibadillahis-salihin

Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah.

Ash-hadu an la ilaha illa-Llah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.

التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

The Salawat: blessings on the Prophet ﷺ

Allahumma salli ala Muhammadin wa ala ali Muhammad, kama sallayta ala Ibrahima wa ala ali Ibrahim, innaka Hamidun Majid

O Allah, send Your prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent Your prayers upon Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim; You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.

Allahumma barik ala Muhammadin wa ala ali Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibrahima wa ala ali Ibrahim, innaka Hamidun Majid

O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim; You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

Middle sitting (after the 2nd rak'ah of a 3- or 4-rak'ah prayer): say the **Tashahhud only**, then rise with “Allahu akbar” for the next rak'ah.

Final sitting (the last rak'ah of every prayer): say the **Tashahhud and the Salawat**, add any du'a you wish, then end with the Taslim.

Fajr has only two rak'ahs, so it has just one sitting: the final one.

Surah Al-Fatihah الفاتحة

Recited in every rak'ah of every prayer, these seven verses are the heart of the salah. Learn them first.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim
In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. | بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ |
| 2 | Al-hamdu lillahi Rabbil-alam
All praise is for Allah, Lord of all the worlds. | الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ |
| 3 | Ar-Rahmanir-Rahim
The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. | الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ |
| 4 | Maliki yawmid-din
Master of the Day of Judgment. | مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ |
| 5 | Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in
You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. | إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ |
| 6 | Ihdinas-siratal-mustaqim
Guide us along the straight path. | اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ |
| 7 | Siratal-ladhina an'amta alayhim, ghayril-maghdubi alayhim wa lad-dallin
The path of those You have blessed; not of those who earned anger, nor of those who went astray. | صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ |

When Al-Fatihah is finished we say “Ameen” (O Allah, accept). In the aloud prayers behind an imam, the whole congregation says it together after his recitation.

How to memorize it: listen to a recitation of “Surah Al-Fatihah” on repeat (any Qur'an app or YouTube), learn one verse a day, and recite what you know in every prayer. Within a week or two it will be yours for life.

Your First Steps

A simple path forward. Take it one step at a time, there is no rush.

You don't need to do everything in this guide tomorrow. Faith grows like a tree, planted once, watered a little each day. Here is a gentle order to begin with:

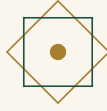
- ✓ **Learn to make wudu** using the steps in Chapter 6; a friend at the masjid can also show you in minutes.
- ✓ **Memorize Surat al-Fatihah**, the opening chapter of the Qur'an, recited in every unit of prayer.
- ✓ **Start praying the five daily prayers:** begin now, even while still learning. Effort matters more than perfection.
- ✓ **Download a prayer-time app** and set it to your city so you always know the times and the qiblah.
- ✓ **Visit your local masjid** and introduce yourself. You will find people glad to welcome you, teach you, and pray alongside you.
- ✓ **Keep learning, slowly and steadily.** Seek knowledge from trustworthy teachers, and ask questions; no question is too small.

Find your masjid this week

How to find one: search “masjid” or “mosque” in Google Maps, or open a prayer app such as *Athan*, *Muslim Pro*, or *Pillars*; they list nearby mosques with their prayer times. Most masjids also post timings on their website or social media pages.

Introduce yourself: tell them you have just become Muslim. You will be welcomed warmly; communities love meeting new brothers and sisters, and they will connect you with teachers, friends, and classes for new Muslims.

Come for Isha: the night prayer is usually the most attended of the five daily prayers, which makes it the easiest place to meet the community. Arrive ten minutes early, pray, and stay afterward to give salam.



A FINAL WORD

Welcome again, and congratulations. You are not walking this path alone:

Allah is with those who turn to Him, and your community is here to support you every step of the way. May Allah make your journey easy, keep your heart firm, and fill your life with peace.

وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

And may the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

QUESTIONS? REACH OUT ANYTIME

No question is too small, and you never have to figure this out alone. Call or text Amine:

(502) 693-1063

