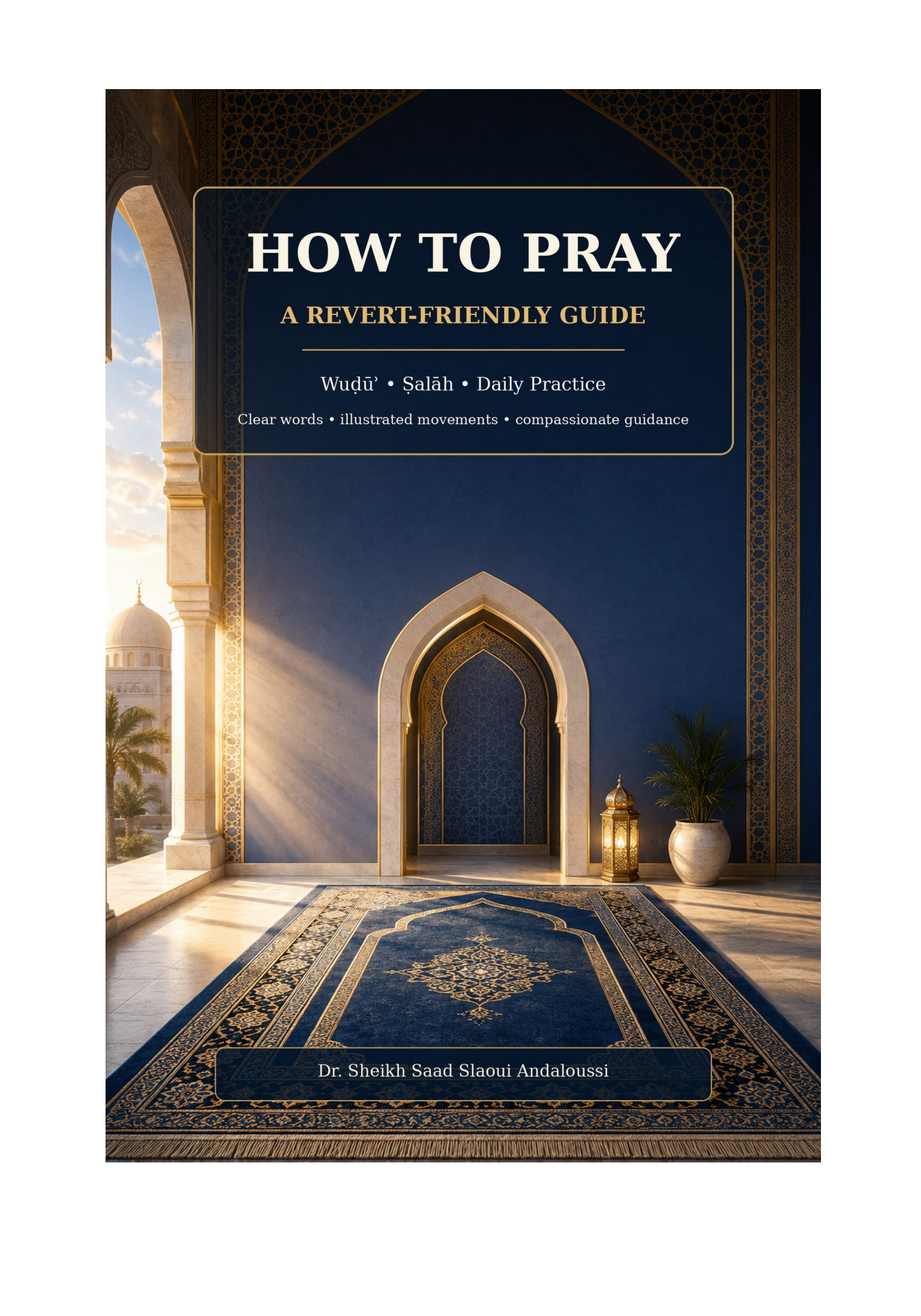




HOW TO PRAY

A REVERT-FRIENDLY GUIDE

Wuḍū' • Ṣalāh • Daily Practice

Clear words • illustrated movements • compassionate guidance

Dr. Sheikh Saad Slaoui Andaloussi

Copyright & educational note

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This guide provides general Sunni educational guidance for new Muslims. Recognized schools differ in some details. It is not a substitute for personal instruction, and complex circumstances should be referred to a qualified local scholar.

The purchaser may download the PDF for personal use and print a personal study copy. Mosques, classes, and organizations wishing to reproduce multiple copies should obtain the appropriate permission. Qur'anic translations and transliterations are meaning-based educational renderings and should be checked against oral instruction.

Every effort has been made to distinguish shared foundations from secondary juristic differences. Readers should not use this beginner guide to declare another Muslim's prayer invalid or to issue rulings for medical and exceptional circumstances.

TRANSLITERATION Transliteration supports memory but cannot fully represent Arabic pronunciation. Learn by listening.

Learn the prayer in layers

First understand the movement sequence. Next learn the minimum recitations. Then improve pronunciation and add Sunnah words. Finally deepen meaning and concentration. Use the illustrations as memory cues, not as a replacement for praying beside a knowledgeable person.

Practice outside prayer without embarrassment. During actual prayer, avoid holding a phone if possible; place a printed prompt where it can be glanced at only while genuinely needed and phase it out as memory grows.

Choose a calm twenty-minute practice period outside the obligatory prayer. Walk through the positions, then rehearse the words separately. Combining movement and memorization only after each feels familiar reduces overload. Ask a mentor to watch one complete practice prayer and give no more than two corrections at a time.

Mark passages with three simple symbols: learned, practicing, and ask a teacher. Return to the quick-reference pages weekly. Progress becomes visible when the learner records what is now automatic rather than focusing only on what remains unfamiliar.

A COMPASSIONATE RULE A beginner's sincere difficulty is different from carelessness. Keep learning and never let shame stop the next prayer.

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Prayer is learned, not performed perfectly overnight

Ṣalāh is your direct, repeated meeting with Allah. A new Muslim is not expected to know every word or ruling on the first day. Begin with the obligatory structure, keep learning, and ask Allah to make prayer beloved to you.

This guide teaches a widely recognized basic form of Sunni prayer. Authentic schools differ in some hand positions, movements, wording, and details. Those minor differences do not make another Muslim's prayer invalid. Follow a trustworthy local teacher consistently and avoid turning details into arguments.

A useful way to measure progress is not, "Did I feel completely confident?" but, "Did I answer the prayer time and complete what I presently know?" Confidence normally follows repetition. Keep one reliable source, one teacher, and one written sequence. Correct one issue at a time instead of rebuilding the entire prayer after every new detail.

YOUR FIRST GOAL Learn one complete two-rak'ah prayer, then use that foundation for the other prayers.

IMPORTANT Do not abandon prayer because your pronunciation, memory, or concentration is still developing.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Why Muslims pray five times each day

Prayer is worship, remembrance, gratitude, discipline, and a sign of submission. It interrupts the day so that work, family, stress, and desire do not become the center of life.

The five prayers became obligatory during the Prophet's Night Journey. They are Fajr, Ṣuḥr, 'Aṣr, Maghrib, and 'Ishā'. Each has an appointed time and a set number of obligatory units called rak'ahs.

Prayer does not benefit Allah; we need it. It cleans the heart, restrains wrongdoing, trains humility, and renews repentance.

Each prayer also gives the day a sacred architecture. Fajr begins it with dependence, Ṣuḥr interrupts worldly momentum, 'Aṣr protects the fading afternoon, Maghrib marks the day's departure, and 'Ishā' closes it with remembrance. Regularity matters even when emotion changes: worship trains the heart precisely because it is not left to mood alone.

QUR'ANIC ANCHOR “Indeed, prayer has been prescribed for the believers at appointed times.” — Qur'an 4:103

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

The five obligatory prayers

Fajr has 2 obligatory rak'ahs and is prayed from true dawn until sunrise. Zuhur has 4 and begins after the sun passes its highest point. 'Aṣr has 4 and begins later in the afternoon. Maghrib has 3 and begins immediately after sunset. 'Ishā' has 4 and begins when twilight has disappeared.

Exact calculations vary by location and scholarly method. Use a dependable local mosque timetable or reputable prayer-time application and learn which calculation your community follows.

The obligatory rak'ahs are the non-negotiable foundation. Voluntary Sunnah prayers are precious and should be learned, but a beginner should first protect the five obligations. Build reminders around real life: alarms before the time becomes narrow, a small prayer kit at work, and a known clean location wherever much of the day is spent.

NEVER PRAY AT THE GUESSED CLOCK TIME Prayer times move through the seasons. Confirm them for your date and location.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Six conditions to check

Before beginning, make sure the prayer time has entered; you possess ritual purity; body, clothing, and place are free from relevant impurity; the 'awrah is covered; you face the qiblah as accurately as reasonably possible; and you intend the specific prayer in your heart.

These six conditions must be present before the opening takbīr and remain present as required. If you discover a genuine problem, ask a qualified teacher how it affects that prayer; do not let uncertainty grow into obsessive repetition.

A condition is different from a movement inside prayer: it must already be present when prayer begins and remain present as required. This distinction prevents confusion. Wuḍū', cleanliness, covering, and qiblah prepare the worshipper; takbīr, recitation, bowing, and prostration form the prayer itself. Learning this map makes later rulings easier to understand.

SIMPLE CHECK TIME • PURITY • CLEANLINESS • COVERING • QIBLAH • INTENTION

INTENTION The intention is the heart's decision. It does not require a spoken formula.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

When wuḍū' is needed

Wuḍū' is ritual washing required before prayer after it has been broken. Common nullifiers include urination, defecation, passing wind, deep sleep or loss of awareness, and other matters detailed by jurists.

Normal doubts do not cancel certainty. If you are sure you had wuḍū' and merely wonder whether it broke, treat it as remaining. If you are sure it broke and wonder whether you renewed it, renew it.

Do not allow purification to become a cycle of fear. Islam builds rulings upon knowledge and reasonable certainty, not imagined possibilities. Ordinary moisture, a sensation in the stomach, or uncertainty about whether something happened should not automatically send you back to the sink. Persistent obsessive doubts deserve both compassionate religious guidance and, when severe, appropriate professional support.

ASK LOCALLY Details such as touching the opposite sex or bleeding differ among schools. Learn one reliable method.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Step-by-step ablution

1. Intend purification in the heart and say Bismillāh. 2. Wash both hands. 3. Rinse mouth and nose. 4. Wash the entire face. 5. Wash right then left arm through the elbows. 6. Wipe the head and ears with wet hands. 7. Wash right then left foot through the ankles.

Perform the required washing thoroughly without waste. Water must reach the skin; remove barriers such as opaque nail polish or substances that prevent water reaching it. Washing once fulfills the basic act; washing up to three times is a Prophetic practice for washed limbs. The head is wiped, not repeatedly washed.

After finishing, it is recommended to testify that none deserves worship except Allah and that Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and messenger. Wuḍū' is not merely hygiene; it is an act of worship that prepares the limbs to stand before Allah. Slow down enough to wash completely, but resist repeating washed areas beyond the Prophetic limit.

SEQUENCE Face → arms → head → feet. Keep the order and avoid long interruptions.

MERCY, NOT WASTE Use enough water to wash correctly, but do not leave the tap running needlessly.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Ghusl, tayammum, and special circumstances

Ghusl is the full ritual bath required after sexual intercourse or ejaculation and after menstruation or postpartum bleeding ends. A sound minimum includes intention and ensuring water reaches the entire body; learn the fuller Sunnah method from a qualified teacher.

When water is genuinely unavailable or harmful to use, tayammum may replace wuḍū' or ghusl. Intend purification, then touch or strike clean, pure natural dust, soil/earth, or sand—or a permitted surface carrying visible natural dust—according to your school. Use enough earthy material for a genuine touch; do not assume that a random smooth object with no clean dust, earth, or sand is suitable.

Wipe the face and hands according to your school's method, shaking or blowing away only the obvious excess. Bandages, casts, wounds, continence problems, and chronic discharge have merciful rulings. Ask a knowledgeable teacher about your exact situation.

The principle running through these rulings is ability: use water when it is available and safe, and use the lawful substitute when it is not. A new Muslim should privately list any medical device, skin condition, wound, cast, or recurring discharge that affects purification, then obtain a precise answer rather than applying a general internet ruling to a specialized case.

SUITABLE EARTHY MATERIAL Pure natural dust • clean soil/earth • clean sand • a permitted surface bearing natural dust.

DO NOT GUESS THROUGH HARM Islam does not require using water in a way that is medically harmful.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Clothing, cleanliness, and the prayer place

Clothing should be opaque, clean from ritual impurity, and cover the required 'awrah. For an adult man, the minimum commonly taught is from navel to knee; shoulders should also be covered for prayer when able. For an adult woman, the whole body is covered except the face and hands in the common Sunni view; details concerning the feet differ.

Pray on any clean surface. A prayer rug is helpful but not required. Remove obvious impurity from body, clothing, and place. Ordinary dust or dirt is not automatically ritually impure.

Modesty in prayer is not a demand for expensive Islamic clothing. Loose everyday garments can be completely suitable when they cover securely and are not transparent. Keep a simple backup garment or large scarf where needed. Before takbīr, test that the clothing remains covered when bowing and prostrating; this prevents distracting adjustments during prayer.

COMFORT MATTERS Wear clothing that stays covered in bowing and prostration without constant adjustment.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Finding the qiblah

The qiblah is the direction of the Ka'bah in Makkah. Use a mosque, compass, map, or trusted app. If you make a sincere reasonable effort and later learn the direction was slightly wrong, consult a teacher rather than assuming the prayer is lost.

A person unable to face the qiblah because of illness, danger, or certain travel conditions prays according to ability. Obligatory prayer on transport has additional details.

When away from home, determine the direction before the prayer time becomes tight. Hotel staff, maps, sunlight, and qiblah applications can all assist, but magnetic interference may affect a phone compass. Once a reasonable effort has been made, begin prayer with trust in Allah. Repeatedly rechecking during prayer undermines the stillness you are trying to build.

AVOID PERFECTIONISM Reasonable direction is enough; you are not required to calculate an invisible line with impossible precision.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Niyyah and beginning the prayer

Stand facing the qiblah and know which prayer you are about to perform. That settled decision is the intention. Do not repeatedly restart because you cannot feel a special sensation.

When ready, enter prayer by saying Allāhu akbar. This opening takbīr changes your state: ordinary speech, eating, and unrelated movement are left until the prayer ends.

Intention answers three simple questions in the heart: What worship am I performing? For whom am I performing it? Am I choosing to begin now? The heart already knows the answer when a person stands for Fajr or joins the imam for Maghrib. Spoken formulas can create unnecessary doubt, so keep the intention natural, conscious, and sincere.

MEANING Allāhu akbar: Allah is greater—greater than every distraction and concern.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

MOVEMENT 1

Standing before Allah



Stand upright if physically able, feet placed naturally, gaze lowered toward the place of prostration. Let the body become still. The obligatory prayer is performed standing when one can stand safely.

If standing causes genuine inability or harmful difficulty, pray sitting; if unable, pray lying according to ability. Disability does not remove the meeting with Allah—it changes its form.

Distribute the weight naturally and avoid a rigid military posture. Stillness does not mean tension. Relax the shoulders, keep the joints comfortable, and leave enough space between the feet for balance. The inward posture is equally important: you are not posing for an illustration; you are standing as a servant who has deliberately turned away from everything else toward the Lord of the worlds.

MOVEMENT 2

Opening takbīr



Raise the hands near the shoulders or ears and say: Allāhu akbar. Both placements are authentically reported. Then place the right hand over the left on the chest or torso according to the method you follow.

The spoken takbīr is essential. Say it clearly enough for yourself to hear when possible. Do not rush the transition before the phrase is complete.

The hands may be raised with fingers naturally extended, palms facing the qiblah, near the shoulders or ears. Do not strain to touch the ears, and do not turn the palms toward the face. Once the opening words are spoken, guard the prayer from conversation, looking around, and unnecessary movement. If an adjustment is genuinely needed, make it briefly and calmly.

COMMON MISTAKE Beginning with only an inward thought and omitting the spoken opening takbīr.

MOVEMENT 3

Qiyām: the standing recitation



Stand calmly with the right hand over the left. An opening supplication may be read, then seek refuge with Allah and say Bismillāh quietly. Recite Sūrat al-Fātiḥah in every rak‘ah.

After al-Fātiḥah, say Āmīn. In the first two rak‘ahs, recite another short sūrah or verses. If still memorizing, learn al-Fātiḥah as your highest priority and receive personal guidance for what to say meanwhile.

Recitation should be measured enough for the letters to be distinct. In quiet prayer, move the tongue and lips and recite softly; silent thought alone is not recitation. Pause at the ends of the verses of al-Fātiḥah. As meanings become familiar, let praise, mercy, judgment, worship, dependence, and the request for guidance pass consciously through the heart.

ESSENTIAL Al-Fātiḥah is central to every rak‘ah; work steadily on accurate pronunciation and meaning.

Sūrat al-Fātiḥah: Arabic text

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
 إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ تَسْتَعِينُ
 اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
 صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Learn from a teacher or trustworthy recording. Transliteration is only a bridge; Arabic sounds are best corrected by listening and repeating.

The learner should pay special attention to letters whose change may alter meaning, while remembering that genuine inability is treated with mercy. Work with a teacher on one phrase at a time: listen, repeat, record yourself, and receive correction. Do not adopt exaggerated sounds from transliteration; the written English letters are only reminders of sounds learned orally.

PRACTICE IN PHRASES Memorize one verse at a time and use it daily until the order becomes natural.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Al-Fātiḥah: transliteration and meaning

Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm.

Meaning: In the name of Allah, the Universally Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

Al-ḥamdu lillāhi Rabbil-‘ālamīn.

Meaning: All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all worlds.

Ar-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm.

Meaning: The Universally Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

Māliki yawmid-dīn.

Meaning: Master of the Day of Judgment.

Iyyāka na‘budu wa iyyāka nasta‘īn.

Meaning: You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.

Ihdinaṣ-ṣirāṭal-mustaqīm.

Meaning: Guide us to the straight path.

Ṣirāṭal-ladhīna an‘amta ‘alayhim, ghayril-maghḍūbi ‘alayhim wa laḍ-ḍāllīn.

Meaning: The path of those You favored—not those who earned anger nor those who went astray.

Al-Fātiḥah is a complete conversation of servitude. It begins with Allah’s name, moves through praise and His mercy, remembers accountability, declares exclusive worship and reliance, and ends with the greatest daily request: guidance.

Understanding this progression turns a memorized passage into a renewed covenant in every rak‘ah.

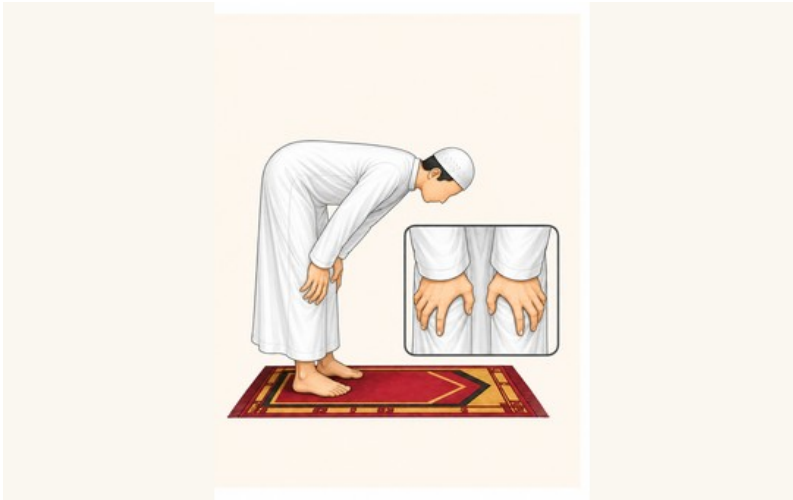
ĀMĪN Āmīn.

Meaning: O Allah, answer. It is not a verse of the sūrah.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

MOVEMENT 4

Rukū': bowing



Say Allāhu akbar while moving into bowing. Place both hands firmly around the knees with the fingers spread. Extend the back until it is straight and level, and keep the head and neck aligned with it. Settle before reciting.

Subhāna Rabbiyal-‘Azīm.

Meaning: Glory be to my Lord, the Magnificent.

Say it at least once; three times is a familiar Sunnah practice. Bowing is not a quick dip. Give each posture its calm right.

The purpose is humble stillness, not achieving a gymnast's angle. A person with limited mobility bows as far as safely possible. Keep the hands supported on the knees rather than hanging loosely, and avoid bouncing. The glorification of the Magnificent suits the body's lowered posture: the back bends while the heart acknowledges Allah's greatness.

BODY CUE Both hands grasping knees • straight level back • aligned head • complete stillness.

MOVEMENT 5

Rising from rukū‘



Rise until fully upright, raising the hands near the shoulders or ears as they were raised for the opening takbīr. If praying alone or leading, say *Sami‘Allāhu liman ḥamidah*—Allah hears the one who praises Him. Then say *Rabbanā wa lakal-ḥamd*—Our Lord, to You belongs all praise.

A follower says *Rabbanā wa lakal-ḥamd*. Let the spine return to standing, allow the arms to settle, and pause; do not fall directly from bowing into prostration.

This moment joins response and gratitude: Allah hears every sincere praise, and the servant stands to fill the posture with praise. Raise the hands near the shoulders or ears while rising, as in the opening takbīr, then let the arms settle naturally. The crucial point shared by all methods is complete return to upright stillness before descending.

STILLNESS Standing fully after rukū‘ is its own posture, not merely a passageway.

Sujūd: prostration



Say Allāhu akbar and descend with control. Prostrate on seven parts: forehead with nose, both palms, both knees, and the toes of both feet. Keep the elbows lifted from the ground and the abdomen reasonably away from the thighs when able.

Say Subhāna Rabbiyal-Aʿlā—Glory be to my Lord, the Most High—at least once. This is a special place for duʿāʾ. Use established Arabic supplications; outside the formal prayer, ask Allah freely in any language.

Keep the toes directed toward the qiblah as reasonably possible and allow the palms to face forward. The nose and forehead should both touch the place of prostration when able. Avoid placing the elbows on the floor like forearms at rest. If pain prevents normal prostration, do not improvise dangerously—use the lawful accommodation appropriate to your ability.

MEANING IN MOVEMENT The servant places the highest part of the body on the ground before the Most High.

MOVEMENT 7

Iftirāsh: the sitting posture



Sit upright directly upon the flattened left foot. Keep the right foot upright with its toes directed toward the qiblah. Rest the hands naturally on the thighs or knees. The front, rear, and close-up views show clearly that the left foot remains beneath the body.

Rabbighfir li.

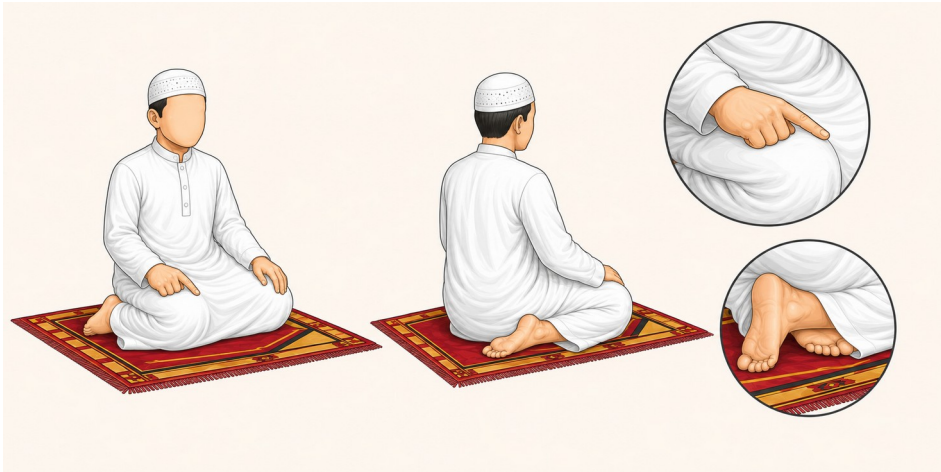
Meaning: My Lord, forgive me.

Pause with dignity and allow the body to become still before moving to the next prostration.

POSTURE CUE Sit on flattened left foot • right foot upright • torso centered.

MOVEMENT 8

Final sitting: tawarruk & pointing finger



In the final sitting, use tawarruk as illustrated: the buttocks rest on the floor, the left foot passes under the right leg, and the right foot remains upright. Rest the left hand on the left knee. Rest the right hand directly on the right knee, curl the other fingers naturally, and point the right index finger forward toward the qiblah.

At-taḥiyyātu lillāhi waṣ-ṣalawātu waṭ-ṭayyibāt.

Meaning: All greetings, prayers, and pure words belong to Allah.

As-salāmu ‘alayka ayyuhan-nabiyyu wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.

Meaning: Peace, Allah’s mercy, and His blessings be upon you, O Prophet.

As-salāmu ‘alaynā wa ‘alā ‘ibādillāhiṣ-ṣāliḥīn.

Meaning: Peace be upon us and upon Allah’s righteous servants.

Ash-hadu an lā ilāha illAllāh, wa ash-hadu anna Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa rasūluh.

Meaning: I testify that none deserves worship except Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

FRONT-VIEW HAND CUE Left hand on left knee • right hand resting on right knee • right index finger pointing forward.

Sending blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ

Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammad, kamā ṣallayta ‘alā Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli Ibrāhīm, innaka Ḥamīdun Majīd.

Meaning: O Allah, send Your blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent blessings upon Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm. You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.

Allāhumma bārik ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammad, kamā bārakta ‘alā Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli Ibrāhīm, innaka Ḥamīdun Majīd.

Meaning: O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You blessed Ibrāhīm and the family of Ibrāhīm. You are Praiseworthy, Glorious.

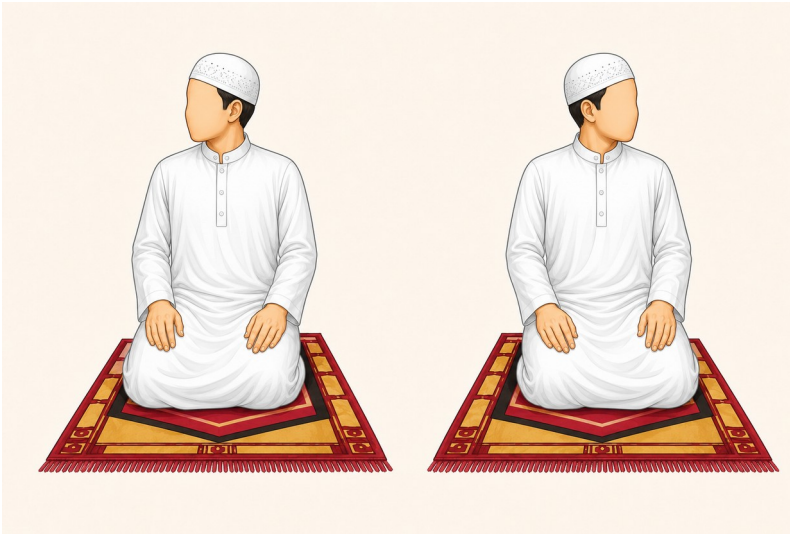
Then seek refuge from the punishment of Hell, the grave, the trials of life and death, and the trial of the False Messiah. You may make an established supplication before ending.

These blessings connect the worshipper to the long line of revelation represented by Ibrāhīm and Muhammad عليهما الصلاة والسلام. Pronounce them without rushing and remember that following the Prophet ﷺ includes learning prayer as he taught it. The final supplications also remind the believer that prayer prepares a person for the grave, judgment, and steadfastness amid trials.

LEARN IN STAGES First secure the prayer’s core. Add the fuller final supplications as memory grows.

LESSON CHECKPOINT Explain the main ruling in your own words, identify how it changes your next prayer, and mark any personal circumstance that should be confirmed with a qualified teacher.

Taslīm: ending the prayer



Turn the head to the right and say:
As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāh.
Meaning: Peace and Allah’s mercy be upon you.
Then turn left and repeat it.

The prayer has ended. Remain briefly for remembrance: ask Allah’s forgiveness three times, say Allāhumma antas-Salām wa minkas-salām, and learn the other established adhkār gradually.

Turn only the head, not the shoulders and whole body. The greeting is offered to the angels and worshippers on either side according to the scholarly explanation. Afterward, avoid immediately judging the prayer by emotion. A prayer performed sincerely and correctly remains valuable even when concentration was imperfect; ask forgiveness for shortcomings and continue.

DO NOT RACE AWAY A quiet minute of remembrance helps the prayer continue shaping the heart.

Anatomy of one rak'ah

Stand and recite al-Fātiḥah; bow; rise fully; prostrate; sit; prostrate again. That cycle is one rak'ah. A prayer ends only after its assigned rak'ahs, final sitting, and taslīm.

Do not leave this ruling as information on a page. Visualize the exact prayer in which it applies, rehearse the response before it is needed, and write down any circumstance that makes the rule uncertain. Prepared knowledge protects worship from panic and prevents a minor question from becoming a reason to delay prayer.

APPLY IT Read the sequence aloud, rehearse it slowly, and identify the one detail you need to confirm with a trustworthy teacher.

PRAYER MAP

How to pray Fajr: two rak'ahs

Pray two rak'ahs. After the second prostration of rak'ah two, sit for tashahhud, blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ, final supplication, and taslīm.

Build this point into a simple personal plan: what you will do, what you will avoid, and whom you will ask if the circumstance occurs. This turns a general rule into usable worship. When a school-specific detail appears, follow a qualified teacher consistently instead of selecting answers only because they seem easiest.

BEGINNER SAFEGUARD Use the rule with calm certainty. Recognized differences are learned from scholarship, not arguments or isolated clips.

How to pray Maghrib: three rak'ahs

After rak'ah two, sit for the first tashahhud, then stand for rak'ah three. Recite al-Fātiḥah, complete bowing and prostrations, then sit for the full final tashahhud and end.

Do not leave this ruling as information on a page. Visualize the exact prayer in which it applies, rehearse the response before it is needed, and write down any circumstance that makes the rule uncertain. Prepared knowledge protects worship from panic and prevents a minor question from becoming a reason to delay prayer.

APPLY IT Read the sequence aloud, rehearse it slowly, and identify the one detail you need to confirm with a trustworthy teacher.

PRAYER MAP

How to pray Ṣuḥr, 'Aṣr, and 'Ishā'

After rak'ah two, sit for the first tashahhud and rise. Pray rak'ahs three and four, normally with al-Fātiḥah alone. After the fourth, complete the final sitting and taslīm.

Build this point into a simple personal plan: what you will do, what you will avoid, and whom you will ask if the circumstance occurs. This turns a general rule into usable worship. When a school-specific detail appears, follow a qualified teacher consistently instead of selecting answers only because they seem easiest.

BEGINNER SAFEGUARD Use the rule with calm certainty. Recognized differences are learned from scholarship, not arguments or isolated clips.

Which prayers are recited aloud?

Fajr is recited aloud. In Maghrib and ‘Ishā’, the first two rak‘ahs are aloud and later rak‘ahs quiet. Ṣuḥr and ‘Aṣr are quiet. “Quiet” still means forming and softly voicing the words, not merely thinking them.

Do not leave this ruling as information on a page. Visualize the exact prayer in which it applies, rehearse the response before it is needed, and write down any circumstance that makes the rule uncertain. Prepared knowledge protects worship from panic and prevents a minor question from becoming a reason to delay prayer.

APPLY IT Read the sequence aloud, rehearse it slowly, and identify the one detail you need to confirm with a trustworthy teacher.

CONGREGATION

Following an imam

Stand in line and follow the imam without preceding him. Say the opening takbīr while standing. Listen during audible recitation and follow your school’s guidance regarding al-Fātiḥah behind the imam. Move after the imam moves.

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If you arrive late

Join the imam immediately in the posture found; do not wait for a new rak'ah. After the imam's final salām, stand and complete what you missed. Details of how a rak'ah is counted and what you recite can vary; ask your mosque teacher.

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FRIDAY

Jumu'ah prayer

Friday congregational prayer replaces Ṣuḥr for adult Muslim men who meet its conditions. Listen silently to the sermon and pray two rak'ahs behind the imam. Women may attend and their Jumu'ah is valid; otherwise they pray Ṣuḥr.

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REPAIR

If you forget something

Do not panic. Some omissions require returning to a posture, some are repaired by two prostrations of forgetfulness, and some do not affect validity. The timing and details of sujūd al-sahw differ by school; learn a simple decision guide from your teacher.

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APPLY IT Read the sequence aloud, rehearse it slowly, and identify the one detail you need to confirm with a trustworthy teacher.

MISSED PRAYER

Oversleeping, forgetting, or delaying

If sleep or genuine forgetfulness causes a missed prayer, pray it when remembered. Deliberately delaying beyond its time is a serious sin requiring immediate repentance; how missed prayers are made up has juristic detail, so seek reliable guidance and begin repairing your schedule now.

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Prayer during illness or disability

Pray standing if able; if not, sitting; if not, on the side or back, indicating bowing and prostration with the head. Make prostration lower than bowing. A chair is used only to the extent needed; do every posture you can safely do.

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TRAVEL

Shortening and combining

A qualifying traveler may shorten four-rak'ah prayers to two. Zuhur may be combined with 'Aṣr, and Maghrib with 'Ishā', when recognized conditions apply. Fajr is never shortened and Maghrib remains three. Distance, duration, and combining rules differ by school.

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Menstruation and postpartum bleeding

A woman does not perform ṣalāh during menstruation or valid postpartum bleeding and does not make up those prayers afterward. When bleeding ends, she performs ghusl and resumes prayer. Irregular bleeding has separate rulings; learn them privately from a qualified teacher.

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WOMEN

Prayer movements and modesty

The essential structure of prayer is shared by men and women. Jurists differ about some preferred details of posture and compactness. Follow a reliable school or teacher and do not accept claims that ordinary recognized differences invalidate prayer.

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Building khushū‘

Know the meanings of what you say. Prepare before the time becomes tight, remove phone distractions, look toward the place of prostration, slow each posture, and remember that Allah sees and hears you. Wandering thoughts are redirected gently, not answered with despair.

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TROUBLESHOOTING

Ten common beginner mistakes

Common errors include praying before the time, rushing without stillness, incomplete washing, uncovered ‘awrah, skipping al-Fātiḥah, not rising fully from rukū‘, lifting the forehead too quickly, following the imam too early, obsessive restarting, and abandoning prayer while waiting to become perfect.

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Arabic without information overload

Learn in this order: Allāhu akbar; al-Fātiḥah; rukū' and sujūd phrases; Rabbighfir li; tashahhud; blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ; final supplications. Use audio, one phrase per day, and weekly correction with a teacher.

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APPLY IT Read the sequence aloud, rehearse it slowly, and identify the one detail you need to confirm with a trustworthy teacher.

PRACTICE

A seven-day prayer launch

Day 1: times and wuḍū'. Day 2: movement sequence. Day 3: opening through rukū'. Day 4: sujūd and sitting. Day 5: al-Fātiḥah. Day 6: tashahhud and taslīm. Day 7: pray a complete two-rak'ah practice with a mentor.

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PRACTICE

A thirty-day strengthening plan

Week 1 protects the five times. Week 2 improves al-Fātiḥah. Week 3 adds meanings and post-prayer remembrance. Week 4 reviews errors, congregation, and special circumstances. Track consistency, not perfection.

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APPLY IT Read the sequence aloud, rehearse it slowly, and identify the one detail you need to confirm with a trustworthy teacher.

CHECKLIST

Before, during, and after

Before: time, ritual purity, cleanliness from relevant impurity, covering, qiblah, and intention. During: follow the sequence, recite, pause in each posture, and avoid unrelated action. After: ask forgiveness, remember Allah, note one point to improve, and prepare for the next prayer.

Build this point into a simple personal plan: what you will do, what you will avoid, and whom you will ask if the circumstance occurs. This turns a general rule into usable worship. When a school-specific detail appears, follow a qualified teacher consistently instead of selecting answers only because they seem easiest.

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QUESTIONS

When to ask a teacher

Ask about chronic discharge, wounds, casts, pregnancy complications, irregular bleeding, travel status, missed prayers, serious pronunciation difficulty, persistent doubts, and any repeated mistake that may affect a condition or pillar.

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APPLY IT Read the sequence aloud, rehearse it slowly, and identify the one detail you need to confirm with a trustworthy teacher.

CLOSING

Keep returning to prayer

Your prayer will grow with you. Some days will feel luminous and others ordinary, but faithfulness is built by returning at every appointed time. The One who invited you to pray also knows your effort, language, wounds, and sincere desire to learn.

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BEGINNER SAFEGUARD Use the rule with calm certainty. Recognized differences are learned from scholarship, not arguments or isolated clips.

Essential prayer words at a glance

Allāhu akbar.

Meaning: Allah is greater.

Subḥāna Rabbiyal-‘Azīm.

Meaning: Glory be to my Lord, the Magnificent.

Sami‘ Allāhu liman ḥamidah.

Meaning: Allah hears the one who praises Him.

Rabbanā wa lakal-ḥamd.

Meaning: Our Lord, to You belongs all praise.

Subḥāna Rabbiyal-A‘lā.

Meaning: Glory be to my Lord, the Most High.

Rabbighfir li.

Meaning: My Lord, forgive me.

As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāh.

Meaning: Peace and Allah’s mercy be upon you.

Movement memory line: stand and recite; bow and glorify; rise and praise; prostrate and glorify; sit and seek forgiveness; prostrate again. After the assigned rak‘ahs, complete the final testimony, blessings, supplication, and salām.

Memorize by attaching each phrase to its movement. Say the phrase while practicing the posture, then test yourself without the page. If a word remains difficult, isolate it into syllables and obtain oral correction rather than repeating an uncertain pronunciation many times.

PRINT THIS PAGE Keep it near your prayer place during the learning period.

WEEKLY REVIEW Recite every phrase to a teacher or fluent helper until the sequence and pronunciation are secure.

Selected foundations

The Qur'an; Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim; Sunan Abī Dāwūd; Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī; Sunan al-Nasā'ī; and established manuals of the recognized Sunni schools.

Key Prophetic instruction: “Pray as you have seen me praying.” The guide deliberately distinguishes the shared structure from secondary matters in which qualified jurists differ.

The presentation follows the broadly shared sequence reported in authentic narrations: purification and conditions, opening takbīr, standing recitation, bowing, rising, two prostrations with sitting between them, tashahhud, blessings, and taslīm. Variations supported within recognized scholarship are described without portraying one ordinary school practice as the only possible prayer.

This is an introductory teaching manual rather than a comparative fiqh encyclopedia. It therefore identifies areas requiring local guidance—such as chronic excuses, travel definitions, irregular bleeding, missed prayers, and the detailed placement of sujūd al-sahw—while giving the beginner enough structure to recognize and ask the right question.

EDITORIAL RECOMMENDATION Before commercial publication, obtain a final review from a qualified scholar familiar with the intended audience and school context.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Dr. Sheikh Saad Slaoui Andaloussi is an imam, teacher, author, and student of Islamic knowledge with decades of experience serving Muslims in the United States. His work focuses on Tawhīd, Qur’anic studies, Tajwīd, Prophetic biography, family education, and accessible Islamic learning.

He serves the community of Masjid Ebad Al Rahman at the Islamic Society of Pinellas County in Florida.

His educational approach emphasizes clear foundations, evidence-based teaching, compassionate progression, and the connection between knowledge and worship. He has worked with Muslims from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and is especially concerned that new Muslims receive guidance without unnecessary complexity or avoidable shame.

This guide belongs to a growing collection designed to place trustworthy introductory learning into the hands of individuals, families, teachers, and Islamic centers. Each volume aims to turn essential knowledge into practical daily worship while encouraging direct connection with qualified community scholarship.

SERIES Clear, evidence-based Islamic learning guides for new Muslims, families, and community educators.

EDUCATIONAL AIM Clarity without oversimplification, depth without information overload, and worship built upon knowledge.