Salah Workshop
Part I

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Every Sunday at 11:00 to 12:00 noon at PGMA

Designed For:

- New Muslims
- Muslims who need to learn how to pray
- Children and Youth
- Muslims who know how to pray and need to get experienced in teaching others how to pray

To obtain a hard copy of the workshop or to get direction to PGMA please visit www.pgmamd.org
Why Salah!? Why Salah!?
Why should you pray!?

If a person really believes in Allah (God), how will he show it? And how will it affect his life?

For a Muslim, his faith is first demonstrated by the five daily ritual Prayers called Salah. These Prayers are so important that they are the second Pillar of Islam after the Testimony of Faith ("There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God"), obligatory for all, and they are the first thing the Muslim will be asked about on Judgment Day.

Five times a day a Muslim is asked to stop whatever he is doing — be it sleep, work, or play — and make a ritual ablution before facing his Lord in Prayer. No matter what his actions, the most important thing to a Muslim is his relationship with Allah. This relationship is demonstrated and put into practice, as well as improved and increased, by the ritual Prayers. Only if the Prayers are sound and proper will the deeds be sound and proper.

In the Prayer, the Muslim faces towards the Ka’bah in Makkah, the symbol of the Oneness of Allah and the unity of Muslims. He stands, bows, and prostrates to his Lord while praising Him, reciting some of the words He revealed in the Qur’an, and asking for His forgiveness and mercy. In doing so, the Muslim reminds himself of his position in the universe as a humble servant of Allah and of his total dependence on his Creator, Cherisher and Sustainer.

When the Prayer is performed properly — with due humility and remembrance of Allah — it has a lasting effect on the person. It fills his heart with the remembrance of Allah, and with fear of and hope in Him. He will not want to move from that lofty position by disobeying Allah.

The Prophet compared this experience of making ablution and praying five times a day to having a river running in front of one’s house. If one bathed in that river five times a day, would any filth remain on his body? Likewise,
the ablution and Prayer five times a day removes one’s sins and also prevents him from sinning.

Prayers also affect the life of the Muslim by encouraging him to schedule his activities around their fixed times. There is some flexibility, for each time is actually a span of one hour or more. But the Muslim who is conscious of Allah will strive to schedule his life in such a way that he does not miss any of the Prayers — for example, by postponing a shopping trip until after a Prayer, or by taking a break from work, or by sleeping earlier so as to able to rise for the Dawn Prayer.

Therefore, if one really believes in Allah, he will show it by his commitment to the five daily Prayers, and these, in turn, will help him to live righteously.

How to Perform Salah (Ritual Prayers)

Introduction

The first step of becoming a Muslim is to declare the Shahadah (Testimony of Faith). The words mean, “I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Servant and Messenger of Allah.”

Once this is done, performing the ritual Prayer called Salah five times a day becomes obligatory. Each Prayer must be performed at its specified time everyday.

It is highly recommended that men perform the five daily Prayers in congregation at a mosque. However, women—especially those with young children—may pray at home. If there is not a mosque nearby, one can pray at home, school, the workplace, et cetera.

Conscientious performance of the ritual Prayers is an important
quality of a believer that distinguishes him from a non-believer, and it should be done in complete humility and submissiveness to Allah. While performing the Prayer, a person should give it his undivided attention. He should not look around, talk to anyone, answer the door or phone, or attend to any worldly matters during Prayer.

The words of the ritual Prayer must be said in Arabic, though non-Arab new Muslims can pray in their own language until they learn the Prayers in Arabic. The best way to learn how to perform Prayer is to watch other Muslims.

**Names and Times of the Five Prayers**

The times of the Prayer are determined by the position of the sun. Thus the times vary from one place to another and from season to season. Most Muslims today refer to a Prayer schedule published by their local mosque. It is best to pray right after the start of the time for the Prayer, but one may wait a bit to pray. The Prayer is considered on time if it is offered before the end of its time period. (See below.)

- **Fajr or Subh** (Dawn Prayer) takes place before sunrise. At moderate latitudes, it begins approximately one hour and twenty minutes before sunrise and ends about ten minutes before sunrise.

- **Zhuhr** (Noon Prayer) begins just after the sun has passed the meridian. It lasts until shortly before the 'Asr Prayer begins.

- **'Asr** (Afternoon Prayer) begins when the length of the shadow of an object is equal to the object’s length plus the shadow’s length at noon. It ends about 10 minutes before sunset.

- **Maghrib** (Sunset Prayer) begins immediately after sunset. At moderate latitudes, it ends before complete
darkness approaches.

- **'Isha'** (Night Prayer) begins, at moderate latitudes, when the sky is completely dark and ends just before the Dawn Prayer.

### Prerequisites of Ritual Prayer

- First and foremost, the worshiper should be physically and ritually clean. The body and clothes must be free of urine, feces, blood (other than your own, which is forgiven), et cetera. However, sweat, mud, dust and the like are not impurities and need not be removed. To be ritually clean, the worshiper must perform ablution called *wudu* before praying.

- Physical purity means cleanliness of the body, clothing and environment. According to the rules of Islam, Muslims should keep their bodies and clothing clean from any impurities, especially the body wastes of humans and animals.

- Islam insists on the use of clean water to cleanse the body of impurities, and only when water is not available can a person use other things. Even the clothing should be perfectly clean from any drop of urine, speck of feces, or seminal discharge. For that reason, Muslim bathrooms have a source of running water or pitchers of water next to the toilet.

- Similarly, any animal discharges — including the saliva of dogs — are unclean and Muslims should make sure their clothing, environment, and bodies are free of those impurities.
• Muslims must have perfect physical purity to pray the Salah (ritual Prayers).

• If the worshiper has major ritual impurity, such as sexual emission, he or she must perform a ritual bathing of the whole body, called ghusl.

• See next details on how to make Wudu and Ghusl.

**Physical Purity**

**Wudu’ (Ablution)**

Before performing the ritual Prayer known as Salah, the Muslim’s body must be totally purified. To be in this state, one must perform the ritual washing known as wudu’ (ablution). The best way to learn wudu’ is to watch others do it. Here are the steps for wudu’:

1. Have the intention of purifying your heart.

2. Wash your hands, front and back, up to and beyond the wrist three times, right hand first, then left.

3. Rinse your mouth three times, scooping the water up with your right hand.

4. Wash your nose three times by sniffing water up the nostrils and blowing it out.

5. Wash each arm up to and beyond the elbow three times, right arm first and then the left.

6. Wash your face three times.

7. Pass the wet palms of both hands over your head and
back. Then rub the inside and outside of the ears with
the thumbs and forefingers.

8. Wash your feet up to and beyond the ankle three times,
right foot first and then the left. Make sure the water
gets between the toes by using your fingers.

9. You are in this state of ritual purity of wudu’ until you
urinate or defecate, pass wind, sleep, or become
unconscious. If you do any of these things before or
during the Salah, you must repeat the wudu’.

**Ghusl (Bathing)**

A state of major impurity results from actions like sexual
intercourse or sexual discharge for both men and women. A
person in such a state much perform ghusl (bathing) before
praying Salah or reading the Qur’an. Women also have to
perform ghusl after their menstrual periods and postpartum
bleeding. The procedure for ghusl (bathing) is as follows:

1. Make the intention for ghusl.

2. Wash the private parts, using the left hand. Then wash
the left hand three times.

3. Perform wudu’ (ablution) as described above, except for
the feet.

4. Pour water over your head to thoroughly wet your hair
three times.

5. Wash the whole head and body three times, starting with
the right side. Use your hands to make sure that water
reaches every part of your body.

6. Wash your feet up to and beyond the ankles three times,
making sure the water gets between the toes.
• A Muslim must bathe the whole body at least once a week. It is highly recommended that this be done each Friday before the congregational Prayer.

• Because the Salah (ritual Prayer) requires that one be in a state of purity, a woman is excused from Salah during her menstrual periods and after childbirth until the postpartum bleeding stops or 40 days have passed, whichever comes first. She can and should make other kinds of prayer, such as du'a’ (supplication), five times a day while she is unable to perform Salah. When her bleeding stops, she must perform ghusl (bathing) before performing Salah.

• If after making ablution, one passes gas or does anything else to nullify the ablution, he or she must perform ablution again. If the ablution is nullified during the Prayer, he or she must leave the Prayer, repeat the ablution, and start the Prayer from the beginning.

• Note that a woman who is having her menstrual period or postpartum bleeding cannot perform ritual Prayers until the bleeding has stopped and she has performed ghusl. But it is recommended that she stop what she is doing at the times of the Prayer and remember Allah and supplicate Him. She does not have to make up for the missed Prayers.

• **Acts that nullify ablution.**

  Passing urine, feces or gas.

  Ablution is nullified by urinating, defecating (Almighty Allah says, "...or one of you comes from relieving himself," thus proving that such an act obligates a new purification),
and releasing gas from the anus. Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Allah does not accept the prayer of a person who has released gas until he makes a new ablution." A person from Hazhramaut asked Abu Hurairah, "What does 'releasing gas' mean?" He answered, "Wind with or without sound." (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.) He also quoted the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying, "If one of you finds a disturbance in his abdomen and is not certain if he has released any gas or not, he should not leave the Prayer unless he hears its sound or smells its scent." (Reported by Muslim)

Hearing the escaping gas or smelling it is not a condition for nullifying ablution, but the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stressed that one should be certain of the action.

**Sexual discharge.**

As for madhi, which is prostatic fluid in men, and sexual vaginal discharge in women, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "**Make ablution**" (i.e. one should renew his ablution upon noticing such discharge). Concerning semen or *mani*, said Ibn `Abbas, "It requires ghusl (bathing) and for *madhi* and *wadi* (a thick white secretion discharged (by some people) after urination), wash your sex organs and make wudu’ (ablution)." This was reported by Al-Baihaqi in his *Sunan*.

**Deep sleep that makes a person completely unaware of his surroundings.**

If a person does not keep his buttocks firmly seated on the floor while sleeping, he must make a new ablution. If one's
buttocks are kept firmly on the floor during one’s sleep, no new ablution is necessary. This is implied by the Hadith of Anas who said, "The Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) were waiting for the late night Prayer until their heads began nodding up and down (from drowsiness and sleep). They would then pray without performing ablution." (Reported by Ash-Shafi`i, Muslim, Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi). The wording that At-Tirmidhi recorded from the chain of Shu`bah is, "I have seen the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) sleeping to the extent that one could hear some of them snoring. But, they would stand for Prayer without a new ablution." Ibn Al-Mubarak said, “In our opinion, this happened when they were sitting.”

**Loss of consciousness.**

This nullifies the ablution regardless of whether it is due to insanity, fainting, drunkenness, or some medicine. It also does not matter if one is unconscious for a short or long period of time, or if one is sitting, or falls to the ground, and so on. The aspect of unawareness here is greater than that of sleeping. The scholars have unanimous view on this point.

**Touching the sexual organ with the bare hand.**

Busrah bint Safwan narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "**Whoever touches his sexual organ cannot pray until he performs ablution.**" (Reported by Al-Bukhari) In the narration of Ahmad and An-Nasa'i, Busrah heard the Prophet saying, "**Ablution is to be made by a person who touches his sexual organ.**" This is
general and encompasses touching one’s own sexual organs or touching somebody else’s. Abu Hurairah reported the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as saying, “Whoever touches his sexual organ without any covering (between them) must perform ablution.” (Reported by Ahmad, Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim, who classified it as sahih (authentic), as did Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr).

Ibn As-Sakin said, "That Hadith is from the best of what has been related on this topic." Ash-Shaf‘i related: "Any man who touches his penis must perform ablution. Any woman who touches her vagina must perform ablution." Commenting on its authenticity, Ibn Al-Qayyim quotes Al-Hazimi as saying, "That chain is sahih."

However, the Hanifi scholars are of the opinion, based on the following Hadith, that touching the sexual organ does not nullify the ablution: "A man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) if touching the penis necessitates performing ablution. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "No, it is just a part of you." (Reported by "the five" (five scholars of Hadith). Ibn Hibban classified it as sahih, and Ibn al-Madini said, "It is better than the Hadith of Busrah.")

- **Acts that do not nullify ablution.**

  **Touching a woman.**

  ‘A’ishah reported that Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) kissed her while he was fasting and said, "Kissing does not nullify the ablution, nor does it break the fast." (Reported by Ishaq ibn Rahawaih and Al-
Bazzar with a good chain of transmission.)

`A'ishah also said, "One night, I missed Allah's Messenger in my bed, and so went to look for him. I put my hand on the bottom of his feet while he was praying and saying, 'O Allah, I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger, in Your forgiveness from Your punishment, in You from You. I cannot praise you as You have praised Yourself.'"

(Reported by Muslim and At-Tirmidhi, who classified it as *sahih*), and she also reported, "The Prophet kissed some of his wives and went to Prayer, without performing ablution." (Reported by Ahmad and "the four'' and its narrators are trustworthy.) She also said, "I would sleep in front of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) with my feet in the direction of the qiblah (to him). When he prostrated, he would touch me, and I would move my feet." In another narration it says, "When he wanted to prostrate, he would touch my legs."

• **Bleeding.**

This involves bleeding due to a wound, cupping or a nosebleed, and regardless of the quantity of blood.

Al-Hassan says, "The Muslims used to pray even while wounded." (Reported by Al-Bukhari) He also reported, "Ibn `Umar squeezed a pimple until it bled, but he did not renew his ablution. Ibn Abi `Uqiyy spat blood and continued his Prayer. `Umar ibn Al-Khatttab prayed while blood was flowing from him. `Ibbad ibn Bishr was hit with an arrow while praying, but continued his Prayers." (Reported by Abu Dawud, Ibn Khuzaimah, and Al-Bukhari.)
Vomit.

Regardless of whether the amount of vomit is great or small, there is no authentic Hadith stating that it nullifies ablution.

Having doubts about releasing gas.

This is the case where a person is not quite sure whether he is in a state of purity or not. Such a confusing state of mind does not nullify ablution, regardless of whether the person is in Prayer or not, until he is certain that his ablution has been nullified. `Abbad ibn Tameem related that his uncle queried the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) about a person who feels something in his abdomen while praying. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said, "He should not leave (the Prayer) until he has heard or smelled it." (Reported by Muslim, Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi). It does not mean that its sound or bad smell nullifies ablution, but that one must be certain of the act that nullifies one’s ablution. Ibn Al-Mubarak said: "If one is uncertain about one’s condition of purity, one does not need to perform a new ablution." Further, if one is certain that his ablution has been nullified and doubts whether he has purified himself or not, he must perform a new ablution.

- Allah Almighty knows best.