

## **Knowledge to Follow God**

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

May Allah's blessing be upon our master Muhammad and upon his family

and his companions. May He grant them peace.

May He bless him eternally. Ablution is an obligation.

The obligations [of ablution] amount to seven. Another version says eight:

1. Intending [to ablute] with clean water;
2. Washing the face;
3. Washing of the hands and forearms up to the elbows;
4. Rubbing your wet hands all over your head, i.e., from the forehead to the back of your neck  
(one time only);
5. Washing the feet up to the ankles;
6. The rapid sequencing of these steps;
7. Rubbing the limbs of the body to purify them.

The traditional obligations of ablution are eight:

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1. Washing your hands before putting them in the ablution container;
2. Rinsing of the mouth;
3. Breathing water into your nose;
4. Blowing the water out of your nose while putting two fingers on it;
5. Rubbing your wet fingers inside and outside of your ears;
6. Wetting your hands again (after rubbing your head) in order to rub your ears;

7. Rubbing your head with your two hands back and forth, from the back of your neck to your forehead;
8. Performing the obligations of the minor ablution in the proper order.

The obligations of the major purification are five:

1. Have the intention to do the great ablution;
2. Use clean and purifying water;
3. Rub the whole of the wet body;
4. Pass the water through hairy areas, even if the hairs are dense.
5. Do not pause the sequencing of the steps until the end.

The traditional obligations are four:

1. Wash your hands before putting them in the ablution container;
2. Rinse your mouth;
3. Breath in water through your nose and blow the water out (putting your two fingers on it);
4. Rub your wet fingers inside and outside of your ears;

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The requirements for dry ablution<sup>1</sup> are two:

1. Not finding water;
2. Being unable to use water;

The obligations of dry ablution are seven:

1. Have the intention;
2. Use pure soil or clean sand;
3. Flatten your hands on the sand one time;

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<sup>1</sup> If the worshiper cannot find water or cannot use it for medical reasons, s/he can perform a dry ablution also called *tayammum* in Arabic.

4. Rub your hands on your face;
5. Rub your two hands against each other up to the wrists;
6. Quickly sequence the acts of dry ablution;
7. Perform it only at the moment of prayer;

The traditional obligations are four:

1. Flattening the hands on the soil (sand) once;<sup>2</sup>
2. Rubbing the arms from the elbows to the wrists;
3. Rubbing well your hands against each arm;
4. Doing it exactly in the order prescribed above.

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The obligations of praying are fifteen:

1. Know the times of the (five) daily prayers;
2. Purify your body from any impurity;<sup>3</sup>
3. Hide one's private parts;
4. Be silent and focus on your prayers;
5. Choose an area adequate for praying;
6. Face the Qibla;<sup>4</sup>
7. Have the intention to pray;
8. Pronounce the Takbīr of sacralization (Allāhu Akbar)<sup>5</sup> in a stand-up position.

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<sup>2</sup> The author made a mistake here. It is the act of flattening one's hand on the sand (after rubbing your face) that should be considered a traditional obligation, since the act of flattening one's hand the first time is mandatory (farā'id in Arabic)

<sup>3</sup> This consists of two levels. The first is to have a purified body (in case of major impurity), and the second is to have done your ablutions (in case of minor impurity). In both cases, prayer should be done with clean clothes and in a clean spot.

<sup>4</sup> *Qibla* in Islam means the direction that Muslims face when praying. This direction is towards the sacred mosque of Mecca.

<sup>5</sup> *Takbīr* is a mandatory element of canonical and supererogatory prayers, and for the faithful (*Imām*) leading the prayer or someone who is being led (*Ma'mūm*) or one praying alone (*fadhli*).

9. Recite the Fātiḥa;<sup>6</sup>
10. Do the inclination;<sup>7</sup>
11. Standing up from the inclination;
12. Do the prostration;
13. Sit back up from the prostration;
14. Sit for the final salutation (of desacralization);
15. Pronounce the final salutation;

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The traditional obligations are thirteen:<sup>8</sup>

1. The Iqāma (the formula pronounced marking the effective beginning of the prayer);
2. Lift the hands at the time of pronouncing the Takbīr of sacralization (Allāhu Akbar);
3. Say amen at the end of the chapter Fātiḥa;
4. Recite one chapter after Fātiḥa;
5. Stand up straight during the prayer;
6. Sit down halfway during the prayer;
7. Formulate all Takbīr (Allāhu Akbar) during the prayer, except the Takbīr of sacralization (which is mandatory);
8. Pronounce the formula: "God listens to the ones who praise Him";
9. Recite loudly when necessary;
10. Recite in a lower voice when necessary;
11. Say both Tashahhud<sup>9</sup> while seated;

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<sup>6</sup> First chapter of the Quran while standing.

<sup>7</sup> The flexing of the body while keeping your hands on your knees.

<sup>8</sup> The Ajami text talks about 15 obligations. However, only 13 obligations are listed.

<sup>9</sup> *Tashahhud* or *Tahīyyat* is the sitting position during mandatory prayers.

12. Pray upon the Prophet of Allah, peace be upon him;

13. Remain calm during the final salutation;

The obligations of fasting are five:

1. Know the month of fasting (Ramadan);
2. Have the intention to fast;
3. Not eating during the day;
4. Not drinking during the day;
5. Not having sexual intercourse during the day;

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The traditional obligations of fasting are five:

1. Not delaying breaking the fast;
2. Eating your meal late at dawn;<sup>10</sup>
3. Using a minimum of water;
4. Rinsing your mouth and breathing water in your nose;
5. Making the *Tarāwīḥ*<sup>11</sup> at night;

The obligations of zakat are four;

1. Being free;<sup>12</sup>
2. Having the intention to give it;
3. Spending a whole lunar year (in possession of the assets subjected to this requirement);

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<sup>10</sup> This refers to the light meal that Muslims take before dawn during the month of Ramadan to better prepare physically for their fast.

<sup>11</sup> *Tarāwīḥ* are nightly prayers performed after *Isha* (last daily prayer), during the fasting month of Ramadan (beginning on the eve of the first day of the month)

<sup>12</sup> At the time of slavery, zakat was an obligation for slave masters. Someone who was enslaved could not give zakat since s/he was considered the property of the master.

4. The threshold (*al-Niṣāb*).<sup>13</sup>

The traditional obligation of Zakat are four:

1. Giving a small portion of one's assets;
2. Giving it discreetly;
3. Giving it with the right hand;
4. Giving it to needy people living near you in the country where you live;

The obligations of ḥajj<sup>14</sup> are four:

1. Stating the intention to perform the pilgrimage by repeating the ritual formula three times.
2. Putting oneself in a state of sacralization;
3. The seven circumambulations of the Ka 'ba;<sup>15</sup>
4. Running back and forth between the hills Ṣafa and Marwa.<sup>16</sup>

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The traditional obligations of the ḥajj are five:

1. Shaving one's hair;
2. Casting stones;<sup>17</sup>
3. Removing one's jewelries;
4. Wearing no perfume;
5. Wearing no sewn clothing.<sup>18</sup>

Our Prophet, peace be upon him, has said: "Allah does not accept someone praying without purity."

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<sup>13</sup> The threshold (*al-Niṣāb*) means the minimum wealth one should possess for zakat to be mandatory.

<sup>14</sup> *Ḥajj* is the annual pilgrimage of Muslims to Mecca.

<sup>15</sup> This ritual is called *Tawāf* (circumambulation). It consists of going around the Ka 'ba seven times.

<sup>16</sup> This ritual called *Sa'ī* consists of walking seven times, back and forth, between the hills of Ṣafa and Marwa.

<sup>17</sup> This ritual is also called "lapidating Satan". The casting of stones reenacts what Ibrāhīm, and his family did when the devil appeared before them at this place. First, before Ibrāhīm, then his wife Hājar and then their son Ismā'īl.

<sup>18</sup> For the men, *Iḥrām* should consist of two unsewn pieces of white cloth. One should be wrapped below the torso (to cover the parts from the belly to the knees) and the other must be worn above it to cover the shoulders.

Our Prophet, peace be upon him, has said: "Know that Islamic rituals are based upon purity." It is reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, has said: "May Allah not accept the prayer of someone who does not give zakat out of his wealth."

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It is reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, has said: "Allah has banned from paradise the one who has in their heart the tiniest grain of pride equivalent to the weight of an atom." The Prophet, peace be upon him, has said: "Know that talking behind people's back consumes someone's good deeds like fire burns small firewood." It is reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, has said: "Anyone who does not know about the bad and undesirable practices of their prayer will not benefit much, save by the grace and mercy of Allah." He has said: "vanity erases someone's good deeds like fire consumes small dried firewood."

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He has said: "The one who cannot keep their tongue, cannot keep their religion." He has also said: "Allah will not be merciful towards His servants, save for one who is merciful [toward others]." He has said: "There is no good deed for one who has no modesty." He has also said: "Know that modesty is part of dignity. Whoever doubts this or takes it as a lie is among those who do not believe in Allah." Know that purity in prayer is an obligation. Allah will not accept a prayer with a dry ablution, except under these two conditions: not having water or having water that cannot be used.

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The pillars of Islam are five:

1. The first is: Attesting that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad, peace be upon him, is His prophet;<sup>19</sup>
2. The second is the (five) prayers (daily);
3. The third is fasting during the month of Ramadan;
4. The fourth is the zakat;
5. The fifth is the pilgrimage to Mecca, for one who can afford it.

The word "Islam" means submission and to submit oneself. It is to fulfill the divine recommendations and avoid the prohibitions. Know that the Creator in His wisdom and Greatness is unique in His power and in His quality. His manners are unique, and His actions are unique in His power.

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He has no comparable, neither in His image and nor in His ways of doing things. He has no associates for His actions. He has no deputy in His power. Know that our Master is Muhammad, peace and blessing upon him. He (Allah) has sent him to the jinn (spirits) and humans. He [Muhammad] is truthful in all he has announced, in this life and in the afterlife, and what is said about his family and companions is equally true. May Allah's blessing and peace be upon them.

Glory to Allah, Lord of the universe. May Allah pray upon Muhammad and bless him.

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<sup>19</sup> This is known as the *Shahāda* (the profession of faith).