



Akh World Da'wah Foundation

COURSE 102

Foundations of Islamic Worship

Six lessons · Free independent-study handbook · Chicago

An introductory guide with references to the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah. This handbook is not an accredited course, formal qualification, personalized religious ruling, or substitute for studying with qualified teachers.

Contents & Learning Path

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How to study: Read each lesson in order; follow its source references using a trustworthy Qur'an translation and authenticated hadith collections; answer the review questions; discuss points of uncertainty with a qualified teacher.

Important: Schools of jurisprudence differ on some details of worship. Health conditions can also affect religious practice. This guide introduces general concepts, not comprehensive rulings.

Taharah — Purification in Islam

An introductory guide to the importance of cleanliness and ritual purification before worship, based on the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah.

Learning objectives

Meaning

Understand the meaning of taharah and its importance in Muslim worship.

Distinctions

Recognize the difference between everyday hygiene and ritual purification.

Methods

Identify wudu, ghusl, and tayammum as forms of purification.

Evidence

Locate the Qur'anic teaching on purification in Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:6.

1. What is Taharah?

Taharah means purification. In the context of Islamic worship, it includes removing physical impurities when required and attaining the state of ritual purity needed for acts such as Salah. Keeping clean is important, but ritual purification also has specific religious requirements.

Purification is not simply a symbol: Islam establishes specific ways to prepare for worship. The appropriate method depends on one's circumstances.

2. Purification in the Qur'an

Qur'an 5:6 explains the foundational acts of ablution before prayer, the requirement of full purification after major ritual impurity, and the concession of tayammum in stated circumstances.

Read the entire verse, paying attention to the distinction between washing, wiping, full purification, and the concession involving clean earth.

3. Three methods to know

Wudu (ablution)

Ritual washing and wiping prescribed for prayer and certain other acts of worship. The next lesson will cover its steps in greater detail.

Ghusl (ritual bath)

Full-body ritual purification required in particular situations. This course will address its basis and general practice in Lesson 3.

Tayammum

A form of dry purification involving clean earth when the conditions established by Islamic law apply, such as absence of water or certain circumstances of illness.

Removing physical impurity

Cleaning the body, clothing, or place of prayer when affected by substances considered impure, according to relevant legal guidance.

4. A prophetic reminder

Abu Malik al-Ash'ari narrated a saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) concerning purification and faith, recorded in Sahih Muslim 223 . Read the full narration and reflect on how it connects purification with prayer, gratitude and character.

5. Caution about detailed rulings

Questions such as what invalidates wudu, when ghusl becomes obligatory, and when tayammum is permitted have specific legal details and sometimes differences of scholarly interpretation. This introductory lesson does not attempt to resolve every ruling; subsequent lessons provide basic guidance with citations.

People with medical conditions, limited access to water, or other difficulties should consult a knowledgeable teacher about applicable concessions.

Review your understanding

Answer each question before opening the suggested response.

Review: 1. What does Taharah mean?

Suggested answer: Purification, including both removing physical impurity and attaining ritual purity when required.

Review: 2. Which Qur'anic verse gives foundational guidance on purification before Salah?

Suggested answer: Qur'an 5:6 in Surah Al-Ma'idah.

Review: 3. What is Wudu?

Suggested answer: Prescribed ritual ablution involving washing and wiping certain parts of the body.

Review: 4. How is Ghusl different from Wudu?

Suggested answer: Ghusl is full-body ritual purification required in particular circumstances; wudu is the prescribed ablution.

Review: 5. When might Tayammum be relevant?

Suggested answer: When its legal conditions apply, such as when water is unavailable or cannot safely be used in certain circumstances.

Independent study assignment

Read Qur'an 5:6 in a trusted translation and list what it says about wudu, major ritual impurity and tayammum. Then read Sahih Muslim 223 and reflect on why preparation for prayer matters.

Continue: Lesson 2 — Wudu: Preparing for Salah.

Source and further study: <https://quran.com/5/6> <https://sunnah.com/muslim/2/1>

Wudu — Preparing for Salah

Learn the basic acts of ablution through Qur'an 5:6 and a narration describing the Prophet's (peace be upon him) practice.

Learning objectives

Purpose

Explain why ablution is performed before Salah.

Sequence

Recognize the major washing and wiping acts described in revelation and narrations.

Evidence

Read Qur'an 5:6 and Sahih al-Bukhari 159.

Reflection

Distinguish basic guidance from detailed fiqh questions requiring further study.

1. What is Wudu?

Wudu is ritual ablution performed with water as preparation for prayer and certain other acts of worship. It includes washing and wiping specific parts of the body. Performing wudu with attentiveness is an act of worship, not merely a hygiene routine.

2. The Qur'anic foundation

Read the verse and identify the commands to wash the face, wash the arms to the elbows, wipe the head, and wash the feet to the ankles. The verse also explains other forms of purification and concessions.

3. A practical outline from the Sunnah

The following common sequence reflects the description narrated by Humran from 'Uthman ibn 'Affan in Sahih al-Bukhari 159 . Read the full narration for context.

- Intend purification for worship. Intention is a matter of the heart.
- Wash both hands at the beginning.

- Rinse the mouth and nose with water.
- Wash the entire face.
- Wash both forearms including the elbows.
- Wipe the head with wet hands.
- Wash both feet including the ankles.

The narration describes several washing actions repeated three times, while the head is wiped. Repetition and further details should be studied with a teacher; do not assume every repetition is an obligatory condition.

4. Important points to remember

Water coverage

Pay attention to reaching the areas required to be washed, including the elbows and ankles.

Washing vs. wiping

Qur'an 5:6 distinguishes washing prescribed parts from wiping over the head.

Concessions

When water is unavailable or harmful, Islamic law includes specific concessions such as tayammum under its conditions.

Differences in fiqh

Details around nullifiers of wudu, order, wiping the ears, and footwear should be learned with scholarly guidance.

5. Review your understanding

Try answering before revealing the suggested responses.

Review: 1. What is the purpose of wudu?

Suggested answer: It is a prescribed state of ritual purification for Salah and certain other acts of worship.

Review: 2. Which Qur'anic passage teaches the basic acts of wudu?

Suggested answer: Surah Al-Ma'idah, Qur'an 5:6.

Review: 3. Which areas does Qur'an 5:6 specifically command believers to wash for wudu?

Suggested answer: The face, arms including elbows, and feet including ankles.

Review: 4. What does the Qur'an prescribe doing to the head?

Suggested answer: Wiping the head.

Review: 5. Which companion's ablution is narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari 159?

Suggested answer: 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, narrated by Humran.

Review: 6. Why should someone ask a qualified teacher about certain wudu rulings?

Suggested answer: Some practical details have scholarly differences and may depend on individual circumstances.

Independent study assignment

Read Qur'an 5:6 and Sahih al-Bukhari 159. Write down each washing or wiping action mentioned, and identify which acts are explicitly named in the Qur'an and which are described in the hadith. Discuss your notes with a qualified teacher.

Next: Next: Lesson 3 — Ghusl: Full-Body Ritual Purification. Open Lesson 3 -

Source and further study: <https://quran.com/5/6> <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:159>

Ghusl — Ritual Purification

An introductory explanation of when ghusl is required and what the Qur'an and authentic narrations teach about the ritual bath.

Learning objectives

Meaning

Describe ghusl as whole-body ritual washing.

Occasions

Recognize common situations in which ghusl is required.

Evidence

Read Qur'an 5:6 and Sahih al-Bukhari 248.

Practice

Identify the steps reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) without confusing recommended details with requirements.

1. What is Ghusl?

Ghusl is the ritual washing of the whole body with water to attain purification from a state of major ritual impurity. It is different from an ordinary shower because it is performed as an act of worship with the intention to purify.

The word janabah refers to a state of major ritual impurity that may arise, for example, after sexual intercourse or seminal emission. There are also rules for purification after menstruation or postnatal bleeding ends; students should learn the relevant details with qualified guidance.

2. The Qur'anic foundation

The verse instructs believers who are in a state of major ritual impurity to purify themselves. It also describes allowances involving tayammum when its conditions apply.

3. Description of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Ghusl

In Sahih al-Bukhari 248 , A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) describes the Prophet's ghusl after janabah. The following is a learning outline of the actions reported in that narration:

- Begin with the intention to purify for worship.
- Wash the hands.
- Perform wudu as for prayer.
- Work water into the roots of the hair with the fingers.
- Pour water over the head three times as described in the narration.
- Wash the entire body , ensuring water reaches all skin that must be washed.

This reports a Prophetic manner of bathing. Scholars explain the minimum valid ghusl and which additional actions are recommended in somewhat different ways; do not assume each listed action is an independent obligatory condition.

4. Practical considerations

Complete coverage

Pay attention to ensuring water reaches the body, including areas often overlooked.

Ghusl and Wudu

Their relationship in different circumstances is discussed by jurists; ask a teacher rather than assuming every ghusl substitutes for wudu in every case.

Water difficulties

Qur'an 5:6 explains a concession involving tayammum. Consult knowledgeable guidance when water is unavailable or its use causes harm.

Individual situations

Questions about hair, menstrual and postnatal purification, and what makes ghusl necessary warrant detailed study.

5. Review your understanding

Answer each question before opening the suggested response.

Review: 1. What does ghusl mean in Islamic worship?

Suggested answer: The whole-body ritual washing undertaken for purification.

Review: 2. Which verse discusses purification from major ritual impurity?

Suggested answer: Qur'an 5:6.

Review: 3. Who narrated the description of the Prophet's ghusl in Sahih al-Bukhari 248?

Suggested answer: A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her).

Review: 4. What does the narration describe doing before pouring water over the body?

Suggested answer: Washing the hands, performing wudu, and working water through the hair roots before pouring water on the head.

Review: 5. Why is an ordinary shower not automatically identical in purpose to ghusl?

Suggested answer: Ghusl is an act of ritual purification performed with intention and according to the prescribed requirements.

Review: 6. Why should a student avoid treating every step of the narrated method as obligatory?

Suggested answer: Scholars distinguish between requirements for validity and additional Sunnah practices; fiqh details should be studied carefully.

Independent study assignment

Read Qur'an 5:6 and Sahih al-Bukhari 248. Write down the steps that A'ishah describes, then list questions about which aspects are required and which are recommended. Review the list with a qualified teacher.

Coming next: Lesson 4 — Salah: The Five Daily Prayers -

Source and further study: <https://quran.com/5/6> <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:248>

Salah — The Five Daily Prayers

Learn why the prescribed prayer is central to Muslim worship, the names of the five prayers, and the importance of observing their appointed times.

Learning objectives

Meaning

Explain why Salah is a fundamental act of worship.

Daily prayers

Name the five obligatory daily prayers in order.

Appointed times

Recognize that each prayer has a prescribed time.

Evidence

Explore Qur'an 4:103 and an authentic hadith about the five prayers.

1. Why Salah matters

Salah is the prescribed ritual prayer offered by Muslims to Allah. It is among the five pillars of Islam and a regular act of remembrance, humility, recitation, bowing, and prostration.

The five daily prayers structure the believer's day around worship rather than leaving worship to occasional moments. The precise manner of prayer is taught in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

2. The five daily prayers

Fajr

Morning prayer; its time begins at true dawn and ends at sunrise.

Dhuhr

Midday prayer; begins after the sun passes its highest point.

Asr

Afternoon prayer; its starting point has juristic differences linked to shadow length.

Maghrib

Sunset prayer; begins after the sun has set.

Isha

Night prayer; begins after the disappearance of twilight according to the applicable juristic calculation.

These are general descriptions, not a timetable . Actual clock times depend on location, date and the prayer-time calculation followed by the local community.

3. The Qur'an on prescribed prayer times

This verse establishes that prayer is prescribed for believers at fixed times.

Read the verse together with a recognized tafsir for context about appointed prayer times.

4. The value of consistent prayer

In Sahih al-Bukhari 528 , Abu Hurairah reports that the Prophet (peace be upon him) compared the five prayers to bathing in a river five times daily, illustrating how Allah wipes away sins through these prayers. The narration encourages consistency, repentance and devotion.

5. Preparing to learn the prayer itself

- Learn the basics of ritual purification covered in Course 102 Lessons 1–3.
- Learn the prayer names and consult reliable local prayer times.
- Study prayer conditions, the direction of Qiblah, and appropriate clothing with a qualified teacher.
- Learn the actions and recitations of prayer through reliable narrations and supervised practice.
- Make time for all five daily prayers and ask for help when difficulties arise.

Coming next: Continue to Lesson 5: The Prophet's Prayer Described -

6. Review your understanding

Answer each question before opening its suggested response.

Review: 1. What is Salah?

Suggested answer: The prescribed ritual prayer offered by Muslims to Allah.

Review: 2. Name the five daily prayers in order.

Suggested answer: Fajr, Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha.

Review: 3. Which Qur'anic verse states that prayers are prescribed at fixed times?

Suggested answer: Qur'an 4:103.

Review: 4. Which prayer begins after sunset?

Suggested answer: Maghrib.

Review: 5. Why are generic time descriptions not sufficient for a daily timetable?

Suggested answer: Actual prayer times vary by place, date, and method of calculation.

Review: 6. Which hadith compares the five prayers to washing in a river five times a day?

Suggested answer: Sahih al-Bukhari 528.

Independent study assignment

Read Qur'an 4:103, Qur'an 17:78 and Sahih al-Bukhari 528. List the five prayers in order, then consult a reliable local timetable and note how the clock times change during the year.

Source and further study: <https://quran.com/4/103> <https://quran.com/17/78> <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:528>

The Prophet's Prayer Described

Learn the broad sequence of Salah as taught and demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), from the opening takbir through the final taslim.

Learning objectives

Follow the example

Recognize why the Prophet's (peace be upon him) example matters when learning Salah.

Know the sequence

Identify standing, bowing, rising, prostrating, sitting and concluding prayer.

Check the evidence

Read Sahih al-Bukhari 631 and Sahih Muslim 498 in their full context.

1. Why follow the Prophet's prayer?

The Qur'an describes the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) as an excellent example (Qur'an 33:21). Malik ibn al-Huwayrith narrated the instruction to pray as he had seen the Prophet (peace be upon him) pray (Sahih al-Bukhari 631).

Knowledge of Salah should be based on revelation and reliable reports, learned carefully rather than through guesswork.

2. The basic prayer sequence

- Preparation: Verify the prayer time, purification, appropriate covering and qiblah direction. Make the intention for the prayer.
- Opening takbir: Begin the prayer with the takbir, "Allahu Akbar."
- Standing and recitation (qiyam): Recite al-Fatihah and any additional recitation prescribed for that place in the prayer.
- Bowing (ruku'): Bow in humility and perform the prescribed remembrance.
- Rising: Return to an upright standing posture and perform the prescribed remembrance.
- Prostration (sujud): Prostrate, then sit calmly between the two prostrations, then prostrate again.
- Continue the rak'ahs: Rise and repeat the appropriate actions for the remaining units of the particular prayer.

- Tashahhud: Sit and recite the prescribed testimony at the relevant points in prayer.
- Taslim: Conclude with the salutations of peace.

Exact recitations, posture details, and which actions are obligatory or recommended must be studied with qualified teachers; the list above is a learning outline.

3. Hadith describing the prayer

This narration describes beginning the prayer with takbir, recitation, proper bowing and standing upright after bowing, sitting between prostrations, and the tashahhud.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) directed companions to pray as they had seen him pray.

4. Learning with care and sincerity

Seek calmness in every movement and learn the recitations accurately. A person new to Islam may need patient teaching and practice. Scholars differ on some details of hand placement, postures and other secondary matters; treat such differences with respect while prioritizing authentic sources and qualified instruction.

Further reading: Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani's *The Prophet's Prayer Described* is one study resource. Consult a reliable edition and compare its cited reports with the primary hadith collections under scholarly guidance.

5. Check your understanding

Review: 1. What is the opening takbir?

Suggested answer: The takbir at the beginning of Salah: "Allahu Akbar."

Review: 2. What is ruku'?

Suggested answer: The bowing position in prayer.

Review: 3. What should happen after ruku' before prostration?

Suggested answer: One returns to an upright standing posture.

Review: 4. What happens between the two prostrations?

Suggested answer: One sits calmly before the next prostration.

Review: 5. What is the tashahhud?

Suggested answer: A prescribed testimony and supplication recited while seated during prayer.

Review: 6. Which authentic narration instructs Muslims to pray as the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed?

Suggested answer: Sahih al-Bukhari 631.

Independent study

Read Qur'an 33:21, Sahih al-Bukhari 631, and Sahih Muslim 498. Write down the prayer movements in order. Practice the sequence with a knowledgeable teacher, and ask for help with Arabic pronunciation and distinctions between required and recommended actions.

Source and further study: <https://quran.com/33/21> <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:631> <https://sunnah.com/muslim:498>

Fasting and Ramadan

An introduction to the purpose, practices, and spiritual meaning of the fast of Ramadan, based on the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah.

Learning goals

Understand the purpose

Explain why Muslims fast and what taqwa means.

Understand the day

Identify the basic boundaries and conduct of a Ramadan fast.

Understand mercy and ease

Recognize that revelation addresses illness and travel and that rulings require care.

1. Why do Muslims fast?

Allah prescribed fasting as an act of worship and a means toward taqwa —mindfulness and reverence of Allah. Read Qur'an 2:183 . Fasting includes the intention to worship Allah and learning self-control, gratitude, patience, generosity, and care for others.

2. Ramadan and the Qur'an

Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed as guidance. Qur'an 2:185 describes the month of fasting and gives concessions regarding illness and travel. Read Qur'an 2:185 .

The fast is generally observed from the arrival of true dawn until sunset. Eating and drinking are refrained from during the fasting period; the detailed rulings also cover sexual relations and other matters. See Qur'an 2:187 .

3. A typical fasting day

- Before dawn: Eat suhur if able, prepare for the day and intend the fast sincerely.
- From dawn to sunset: Abstain from food and drink and guard one's speech and behavior.
- At sunset: Break the fast (iftar) and thank Allah.
- Throughout the month: Give attention to the five daily prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, charity, repentance and good character.

Check accurate local prayer times and learn the fasting rules from a reliable teacher; the outline is not a legal checklist.

4. Fasting with faith and hope

The Prophet (peace be upon him) linked fasting Ramadan with sincere faith and seeking Allah's reward, promising forgiveness of prior sins in the narration.

Fasting is not merely hunger. Muslims are encouraged to avoid hurtful speech, dishonesty and anger while increasing kindness and worship.

5. Exemptions and seeking guidance

Qur'an 2:184–185 addresses illness and travel and the making up of fasts. Other exemptions and specific rulings are explained in hadith and jurisprudence. Some circumstances require making up missed days; other circumstances have different requirements.

Health reminder: Do not assume fasting is safe for everyone. Anyone with a medical condition, a complex medication schedule, pregnancy-related concerns or a history of dehydration should obtain appropriate medical advice before fasting. This website does not issue individual religious or medical rulings.

6. Review questions

Review: 1. Which verse explains that fasting was prescribed to develop taqwa?

Suggested answer: Qur'an 2:183.

Review: 2. In which month was the Qur'an revealed, according to Qur'an 2:185?

Suggested answer: Ramadan.

Review: 3. What are the general daily boundaries of the fast?

Suggested answer: From true dawn to sunset.

Review: 4. Does fasting concern only food and drink?

Suggested answer: No. Sincerity, worship and upright conduct are also central.

Review: 5. What does Qur'an 2:185 address concerning illness and travel?

Suggested answer: It recognizes concessions and provides for making up missed fasting days in the circumstances described.

Review: 6. Which authentic hadith highlights fasting Ramadan with faith and hope for reward?

Suggested answer: Sahih al-Bukhari 1901.

Independent study and course completion

Read Qur'an 2:183–187 and Sahih al-Bukhari 1901 in full. Write down three spiritual goals for Ramadan and two questions you would like to ask a qualified teacher. Congratulations on reaching the final lesson of Course 102. Completion of the readings does not constitute a formal certification.

Source and further study: <https://quran.com/2/183> <https://quran.com/2/185> <https://quran.com/2/187>
<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1901>

Study Notes

Lesson 1: What did I learn? Which sources should I revisit?

Lesson 2: What did I learn? Which sources should I revisit?

Lesson 3: What did I learn? Which sources should I revisit?

Lesson 4: What did I learn? Which sources should I revisit?

Lesson 5: What did I learn? Which sources should I revisit?

Lesson 6: What did I learn? Which sources should I revisit?

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