

How Muslims Pray and What They Say

A web page explaining Muslim prayers for non-Muslims

Call to the prayers

A Call is made from the mosque, indicating that it is time for the obligatory prayer. There are five obligatory prayers in a day. On hearing the Call, people start preparing themselves for the prayer. Appearing below is the transliteration and translation of what a caller to the prayer says.

([click here](#) to listen to the call of prayers)

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

[God is the greatest, God is the greatest]

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

[God is the greatest, God is the greatest]

Ashadu an la ilaha ill Allah

[I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but God]

Ashadu an la ilaha ill Allah

[I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but God]

Ashadu anna Muhammadan rasoolullah

[I bear witness that Muhammad is the prophet of God]

Ashadu anna Muhammadan rasoolullah

[I bear witness that Muhammad is the prophet of God]

Hayya'alas salah **[Come to prayer,]**

Hayya'alas salah **[Come to prayer,]**

Hayya'alal falah **[Come to success,]**

Hayya'alal falah **[Come to success,]**

Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar

[God is the greatest, God is the greatest]

La ilaha ill Allah

[There is no deity but God.]

Who do Muslims pray to?

Muslims pray to One God without associating any partners with Him. They pray facing the Holy Mosque in the city of Makkah. Facing this mosque is simply for uniformity and homogeneity in the prayers of all Muslims around the world and not as an act of worship to the mosque itself.

What do Muslims say and do?

Muslims stand before their God by making the intention to pray, leaving all other chores and concerns aside.

While standing

While standing, the first chapter of the Quran is recited. This chapter can be translated as follows.

“In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee (alone) we worship and Thee (alone) we ask for help. Show us the straight path. The path of those whom Thou hast favoured; Not the (path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.” (1:1–1:7)

After the first chapter, any other passage from the Quran is recited. Following is a translation of one such passage.

“Say: He is Allah, the One! Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begetteth not, nor is He begotten. And there is none like unto Him.” (112:1–112:4)

While bowing

Muslims then bow to God and glorify Him. This glorification can be translated as follows.

“Glory be to my Lord, the Almighty.”

While Prostrating

To express complete submission and humility before God, Muslims then prostrate and place their foreheads on ground. According to the prophetic traditions, at this moment of humility, the worshipper is closest to his/her Lord. While prostrating, Muslims glorify God as follows.

“Glory be to my Lord, the most High.”

Other than glorifying God, it is also a moment for Muslims to ask God for His forgiveness, mercy, blessings and bounties. Muslims then sit for a few seconds and prostrate one more time before standing up again. Depending on the time of the prayer, Muslims repeat this cycle once, twice or thrice in each prayer.

While sitting

In the end (and also in the middle for some prayers) Muslims sit as shown in the figure. At this point they testify before God that there is none worthy of worship but Him and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His slave (meaning creation that is subject to it's Lord's commands at all times) and His Messenger. Muslims then ask God to send His peace and blessings on His Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) as He did on Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). The translation is as follows.

“All service is for Allah and all acts of worship and good deeds are for Him. Peace and the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you O Prophet. Peace be upon us and all of Allah's righteous slaves. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

O Allah exalt Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, just as you exalted Abraham and the followers of Abraham. Verily you are full of praise and majesty. O Allah send blessings on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, just as you sent blessings on Abraham and upon the followers of Abraham. Verily you are full of praise and majesty.”

At the very end, Muslims turn their face to the right and the left, sending God's Peace on those surrounding them. This greeting of peace can be translated as follows.

“Peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah”

With this greeting, the obligatory prayer ends.

We hope that this brochure was beneficial to you in understanding how Muslims pray the obligatory prayers. In addition to the obligatory prayers, Muslims may supplicate and glorify God at any time. It is commendable in Islam to be in a habit of unceasingly glorifying God and supplicating to Him.

