



Islam

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The Shahada: *Ash -hadu La Ilaha Illa Allah;*

Wa ash hadu ana Muhammadur-Rasulullah.

“I bear witness; there is no God but Allah; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.”

Another translation of this phrase is, “None has the right to be worshiped but Allah, and Muhammad (Peace Be Unto Him) is the Messenger of Allah.” This phrase expresses the kernel of the Islamic faith: the monotheism of the religion and Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) as the culmination of the long line of prophets (Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Jesus). The final revelation from Allah came to the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.). This declaration of faith is reaffirmed five times daily by more than 1.3 billion Muslims throughout the world.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Required Daily Observances. Muslims perform the proscribed prayers (*salat*) five times daily (within their time frames):

- Morning prayer (al-Fajr).
- Noon Prayer (al-Zuhr).
- Afternoon Prayer (al-Asr).
- Sunset Prayer (al-Maghrib).
- After-Sunset Prayer (al-Ashaa).

Exact prayer times for each locality are available from a variety of sources. An Imam or volunteer Muslim will be able to provide a schedule with the beginning time of each prayer for a specific location. Websites with accurate times are also available (type “*Salat*” or “Muslim Prayers” into a search engine).

Ritual washing is required, as well as a clean place where the prayer can be made. The purification must be total (*ghosl*) after coitus, semen emission, and cessation of menses. The ablution (*wudu*) is prescribed before all prayer. This includes washing the hands three times; rinsing the mouth three times; cleaning the nostrils by sniffing water three times; washing the face from forehead to chin, and ear to ear, three times; washing the forearms to the elbow three times; passing a wet hand over the whole head; and washing the feet up to the ankles three times. Ablutions may be performed in a designated place in the chapel or in the housing unit. The place of ablution should be included in the Institution Supplement.

For the prayer itself, Muslims face Mecca on a clean surface (prayer rug, towel, mat, carpet, blanket, or any other material that is kept clean and used only for this purpose), and prostrate themselves in prayer as prescribed by religious law. Prayers can be made individually. In BOP institutions, prayers are made during breaks at work, or between classes at school. If an inmate is in the Special Housing Unit and a prayer rug is not permitted, an extra towel will suffice. Once the prayer has started, the inmate should be able to finish without interruption.

During certain times of the year, the afternoon prayer comes in around the institution’s 4:00 p.m.

stand-up count. Participants should not begin the prayer until after the count has been cleared. Standard Muslim law accommodates this practice. Nothing interferes with an institution count.

Security note: daily prayers

- Inmates should have the opportunity to pray five times daily.
- Other than Jumu'ah, it is recommended that prayers be made individually or in very small groups (2 or 3 inmates).
- Prayers can be made at work detail sites, school, or units during break times.
- Prayers require a clean area, prayer rug, or clean towel to cover the floor.

The prayer involves four basic positions. The first position is standing erect, with hands beside the head, palms facing forward. The individual says silently, or in a low voice, "*Allahu Akbar*" (Allah is the most great). Then the opening *surah* of the Qur'an is recited. The second position is with back straight; the person bows forward from the hips and rests hands on knees, symbolizing Allah's power over the Muslim. Another phrase is recited. The third position is standing up, again with arms at the side. Then the phrase "*Allahu Akbar*" is repeated and the person glides to his knees and touches his head to the floor as the act of surrender to the only One who really matters in the universe. Next, the individual goes to a sitting position, places hands on knees, and repeats the phrase "*Allahu Akbar*." Upon completion, the individual rises and stands again. The whole procedure is known as a *rak'a*. The process is repeated, with the number of *rak'as* depending on the particular prayer. Daily prayers can usually be completed in 5-10 minutes.

Required Weekly Observance. Weekly congregational prayer, called Jumu'ah, is conducted by an Imam or designee every Friday. This service takes the place of the noon prayer and is said in congregation, including a sermon (*Khutbah*) that can be on any aspect of the life of the Muslim community. The actual prayer consists of two *rak'as*. Before this prayer, as before all prayers, Muslims must perform ritual washing (ablution) as outlined in the Qur'an. A minimum of one hour should be set aside for the prayer. When participating inmates are placed on the call-out sheet for that day, be sure to schedule enough time for the ritual ablution. The Muslims line up in rows to make the prayers. Only Muslims should be allowed in the prayer rows, since there is a ceremonial prerequisite (a confession of the *Shahadah*) to participating in the prayer. Visitors form a separate line behind the Muslims. The two-part sermon can be heard by all without infringing on the sanctity of prayer.

Security note: Jumu'ah

- Set aside a minimum of one hour for prayer.
- Allow additional time for inmates to perform ablution (*wudu*) in the chapel or housing unit before the prayer starts.

Required Occasional Observances. Accommodations may be made for prayers during the Night of Power, which happens on odd nights during the last third of the month of Ramadan. For

