**Supporting Information: 5 Pillars of Islam**

**Shahada:**

Muslims have a profession of faith which expresses two simple but central beliefs that makes a person a Muslim:

* There is no god but God (Allah)
* Muhammad (Pbuh) is the prophet of God (Allah)

**Salat (Prayer 5 times a day)**

**Fajr:** near dawn, **Dhuhr or Zuhr** – after midday, **Asr** – in the afternoon, **Maghrib** – just after sunset, **Isha** – around nightfall

**Purpose of prayer:** To communicate with God - reminds Muslims to give thanks for God’s blessing and that submission to God takes precedence over all other concerns.

Men are encouraged to pray in congregation – go to the mosque. Women do not have to pray in congregation. Lunch time prayer on the Friday is the main prayer of the week for men.

Wudu does not need to be performed before every prayer but is recommended; however it must be performed before prayer if any of the following has taken place: after going to the toilet, passing wind, bleeding heavily, contact with excrement, vomiting, falling asleep and taking intoxicating substances.

Wudu process:

**Hands** – 3 times – always start in the name of God.

**Mouth** is cleaned 3 times.

**Nose** – water is breathed in gently through the nose 3 times.

**Face** – the whole of the face must be washed at least once and is often done 3 times.

**Right arm** – the arm is washed right up until the elbow and is done 3 times.

**Left arm** – same as the right.

**Hair** – water is passed through the air – this is done only once but is compulsory.

**Ears** – the back and inside of the ears are wiped.

**Right foot** – washed up to ankle – 3 times – compulsory

**Left foot** – washed up to ankle – 3 times

**Pattern of Prayer:**

**Takbir** – entering state of prayer by glorifying God. Muslims face towards Mekkah. – They begin the prayer by saying – Allahu Akbar – God is great – preparing for prayer.

**Qioyaam** – Seeking God’s protection – followed by first chapter of the Qur’an and other chapters.

**Ruku** – means to bow- Muslims say – glory be to God the most great 3 times.

**Brief qiyaam** – Muslims recite – God listen to the one who praises Him. God is great is recited again. Acknowledging God’s greatness.

**Sujad** –means to prostrate – Glory be to God, the Most High is repeated 3 times. Acknowledging God’s greatness.

**Brief sitting** – God is great. Muslims pause here for a few seconds, either staying silent, or reciting a shorter prayer. God is great is recited once more. Time of silence.

**Sujad** – same as before

**Tashahhud** – God is great then Muslims return to the sitting position. They recite a number of short prayers in Arabic, praising God and sending peace to the Prophet. They ask for God to bestow blessings and peace upon Prophet Abraham and his family and ask for the same for Prophet Muhammed (PBUH). Finally, Muslims ask for forgiveness and mercy and ask God to bless them and their children until the day of judgement. Asking for peace and forgiveness.

**Peace to the right** – the prayer ends by Muslims first turning to the right saying ‘Peace be upon you, and the mercy and blessings of Allah.’ This is said to the Angels who Muslims believe accompany each human being torecord their actions. Asking for peace.

**Peace to the left** – the same is repeated – Muslims believe the Angel on the right side records all good actions and thoughts while the one on the left records all bad actions. Asking for peace.

**Zakat (charitable giving)**

Zakat is the compulsory giving of a set proportion of one's wealth to charity. It is regarded as a type of worship and of self-purification. Zakat is the third [**Pillar of Islam**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/practices/fivepillars.shtml).

Zakat does not refer to charitable gifts given out of kindness or generosity, but to the systematic giving of 2.5% of one's wealth each year to benefit the poor.

The benefits of Zakat, apart from helping the poor, are as follows:

* Obeying God
* Helping a person acknowledge that everything comes from [**God**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/beliefs.shtml) on loan and that we do not really own anything ourselves
* And since we cannot take anything with us when we die we need not cling to it
* Acknowledging that whether we are rich or poor is God's choice
* So we should help those he has chosen to make poor
* Learning self-discipline
* Freeing oneself from the love of possessions and greed
* Freeing oneself from the love of money
* Freeing oneself from love of oneself
* Behaving honestly

The 2.5% rate only applies to cash, gold and silver, and commercial items. There are other rates for farm and mining produce, and for animals.

**Fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawm)**

**Sawm**

Sawm is fasting. It's the fourth of the [**Five Pillars of Islam**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/practices/fivepillars.shtml).

Muslims are required to fast during [**Ramadan**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/practices/ramadan_1.shtml), the ninth month of the Islamic calendar.

During the 29/30 days of Ramadan all adult Muslims must give up the following things during the hours of daylight:

* Food or drink of any sort
* Smoking, including passive smoking
* Sexual activity

Muslims who are physically or mentally unwell may be excused some of these, as may those who are under twelve years old, the very old, those who are pregnant, breast-feeding, menstruating, or travelling.

If an adult does not fast for the reasons above they should try to make up the fast at a later date, or make a donation to the poor instead.

Muslims do not only abstain from physical things during Ramadan. They are also expected to do their best to avoid evil thoughts and deeds as well.

There are many good reasons for this fast, including:

* Obeying God
* Learning self-discipline
* Becoming spiritually stronger
* Appreciating God's gifts to us
* Sharing the sufferings of the poor and developing sympathy for them Realising the value of charity and generosity
* Giving thanks for the Holy [**Qur'an**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/texts/quran_1.shtml), which was first revealed in the month of Ramadan
* Sharing fellowship with other Muslims

**Eating in Ramadan**

* During Ramadan many Muslims will try to eat a large meal called *suhur* just before dawn.
* When daylight is over, most Muslims will *break* or *open* the fast with dates or water, following the example of the [**Prophet Muhammad**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/history/muhammad_1.shtml), before having a proper meal later.
* The evening meals during Ramadan are occasions for family and community get-togethers.

**Eid ul-Fitr**

* The month of Ramadan ends with the festival of [**Eid ul-Fitr**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/holydays/eidulfitr.shtml). This is marked by dressing up and visiting the mosque for prayer, and with visits to family and friends for celebratory meals.

**Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)**

At least once in his or her lifetime, each Muslim is expected to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca, the sacred city of Islam. This holy journey is called the Hajj in Arabic. While a visit to Mecca is beneficial any time of the year, it must take place during the month of Dhu al-Hijja (the last month of the Islamic year) to fulfill the requirements of the Hajj.

Muslims travel to the mount of Arafat. Here they sleep under the stars in the open air.

The mountain is known as the mount of mercy – compassion.

**Sacrifice:** Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his only son. God saw how obedient Abraham was and therefore put a ram in his place.

Muslim men will shave their heads and a sacrifice is made – often the killing of a ram. The meet is given to the poor.