

ARTICLE

A Day in the Life of a Muslim Woman

Normal, every day activities become acts of worship if they are done for the sake of pleasing Allah. And among these deeds, the regular, consistent deeds are best. Aisha (Radhiallaahu Anha) said that Allah's Messenger, sallallahu alayhe wasallam, said, "The deeds most loved by Allah are those done regularly, even if they are small." (Bukhari and Muslim). This means that we do not need to do anything spectacular in our day to obtain rewards from Allah, but we should establish some type of routine that incorporates not only salah, but reading Qur'an, duaa, thikr, and other good deeds. This will increase the serenity, patience, and enthusiasm of the believer.

EARLY MORNING

This article is aimed at bringing the spiritual side in the everyday life of married Muslim woman:

Wake at night to perform Tahajjud.

The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wasallam, said, "The best (most rewarding) salah after the obligatory salah is tahajjud, night salah." (Ahmad and Muslim). It is best to do this toward the last one third of the night as the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wasallam, said, "When the last one third of the night remains, our Lord, the Glorious One, descends towards the earth and proclaims, "Who is there who supplicates me, so that I may grant his supplication? Who is there who begs of Me, so that I may grant it to him? And who is there who seeks My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?" (Bukhari and Muslim). It is even better if the husband and wife perform the tahajjud together. The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said, "When a man wakes his wife up at night and they perform two rak'at together, they are written down among the men and women who remember Allah." (Abu Dawud). After this salah one can return to bed until the fajr.

Upon awakening in the morning: say this duaa, "Al-Hamdulillah, praise be to Allah who brought me to life after giving me death, and to Him is the resurrection." (Bukhari). One should also greet the other members of the household who are awake. The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said, "O my son (to Anas), when you enter to where your family is, say salam. It is a blessing on you and on the people of your house." (Tirmithi).

When getting dressed, say this duaa, "Al-Hamdulillah, praise be to Allah, who clothed me with this, and who provided me with it, without any power or might of mine." (Abu Dawud).

Make wudhu or ghusl (except for menstruating or postnatal women)

Duaa when entering the bathroom, "In the name of Allah. O Allah, I seek refuge in you from the evil and evil things." (Abu Dawud).

Be sure to use the left hand in the bathroom: "Aisha (Radhiallaahu Anhu)said that the right hand was used by Allah's Messenger for his ablution and for taking food, and his left hand was used in the toilet and the like." (Abu Dawud).

Say "Bismillah" and make the miswak or toothbrush:

It is also encouraged to use the miswak or toothbrush although it is not an obligatory aspect of wudhu. The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said, "If I had not found it difficult for my followers, I would have ordered them to clean their teeth with miswak for every salah." (Bukhari and Muslim).

Duaa after finishing wudu: "I testify that there is no god but Allah, alone, having no partner; and I testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. O Allah, make me of those who continually repent and purify themselves." (Tirmithi).

Duaa when leaving the bathroom: "(I ask for) Your forgiveness." (Abu Dawud).

Perform Fajr salah: 2 rak'at of sunnah and the two obligatory rak'at (except for menstruating or post-natal women). It is important to remember that the salah should be completed soon after the time has begun. Abdullah said that he asked the Prophet which deed was loved most by Allah, the Exalted. He, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said, "Salah which is performed at its time." (Bukhari). Even if a woman is busy with another task, she should interrupt this and perform her salah. A woman should try to develop khushoo (sincere submission) in salah since this will be the first thing that she will be accountable for on Judgment Day. The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said, "When you stand up for your salah, make it as if it was your last salah; do not say a word for which you will have to make an excuse the coming day; and build no hope on what is in the hands of men." (Ahmad).

It is often asked if women need to make the adhan and iqamah if they are leading the salah or praying by themselves. This is not required for women, although they may do it if they wish. In terms of the manner of performing salah, a woman's salah is no different from that of a man's.

Read the Qur'an: Early morning is often a good time to read Qur'an, especially if the children are still sleeping and the house is quiet. This allows one to fully concentrate and obtain the most benefit. The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wasallam, said, 'The recital of the Qur'an at dawn is always witnessed - the angels of the night and the angels of the day witness it.' (Tirmithi). If one's spouse is available, this would be the ideal time to strengthen the marriage by reading Qur'an together and praising Allah for His blessings. A woman cannot recite the Qur'aan during menses. She may listen to tapes.

Work on a project that will benefit the Muslim community in some way: Before the children awake and after reading Qur'an, it would be a good time to put energy into some project of interest to which one is committed. This may include such things as acquiring more Islamic knowledge by reading or listening to tapes, writing articles, preparing for halaqas, developing some type of program (such as a Children's halaqa, Muslim scouting program, etc.), keeping in touch with other sisters through e-mail, social service projects, etc. There are many opportunities for sisters to benefit themselves (through Allah's rewards) and the community.

MID AND LATE MORNING

Prepare a healthy breakfast for the family

It is important to remember that the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wasallam, used to eat very healthy foods such as dates, cucumbers, bread, meats, milk. Much of the unhealthy food that we have now was obviously not available at the time of the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wasallam. It is best to avoid processed foods and to use items that are the most natural. Allah knows what is best for his creation and He has provided us with all that we need. We should take care of our children's physical needs in the best manner possible. Cleanliness is also an important element of the Islamic faith and should be observed in

all matters, especially in food preparation and eating.

Duaa when beginning the meal: "O Allah! Bless whatever You provided for us and save us from the punishment of the hellfire. Bismillah." The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, told a boy who was attending a meal with him "... Mention the name of Allah, and eat with your right hand and eat of the food that is nearer to you." (Bukhari) Spend some time in conversation during the meal since this was encouraged by the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wasallam.

Duaa after finishing the meal: "Praise be to Allah, who gave us to eat and to drink and made us Muslims." (Abu Dawud, Tirmithi). It is important to remember not to overeat due to the unhealthiness of this behavior for physical and spiritual reasons. The Messenger of Allah, sallallahu alayhe wasallam, said, "The son of Adam fills no vessel more displeasing to Allah than his stomach. A few morsels should be enough for him to preserve his strength. If he must fill it, then he should allow a third for his food, a third for his drink and leave a third empty for easy breathing." (Tirmithi). Overeating can lead to laziness and lethargy, and make acts of worship seem laborious, making it more likely that one will delay or avoid them.

Spend quality time with the children: Older children may need to be sent off to school, while younger children will continue to require the attention of their mother. Raising children is the most important and most honorable role for a woman. It is essential to include quality time with the children in a busy daily schedule. This should be given priority over household chores and other activities, although it should not interfere with obligatory acts of worship. Quality time may include such things as reading books about Islam, teaching Arabic, reading Qur'an together, playing games, going to the park, and much more. The emphasis should be on the children's spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical development. Doing this early in the day also makes it more likely that children will be content to play with themselves later on, freeing time for other activities.

Perform salat ad-Dhuha: Abu Hurairah said, "My friend (the Prophet) advised me to observe three things, not to abandon them till I die; to fast three days a month, to perform two rak'at of Duha (forenoon) salah, and to make witr before sleeping." (Bukhari and Muslim). This is one of the forgotten sunnah of the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wasallam, that needs to be revived. Two or more rak'a should be prayed some time after the sun rises until a few moments before noon. The preferred time is when the sun is extremely hot, which usually occurs around the hour before noon. A mother has a wonderful opportunity to renew this Sunnah by teaching her children from a very young age. Have a peaceful and blessed morning!