

## Core Curriculum

### 3 Foundations of Islam - Obligatory Acts

#### 3.1 **Accepting Islam: Putting Faith into Action**

**Question :** Can I be punished in the after life if I don't perform my religious obligations?

**Answer :** Yes

**Question :** What is one of the prime distinguishers between someone who is a real Muslim and someone who is not?

**Answer :** Putting belief into action.

**Question :** Can I still be a Muslim if I don't believe in religious obligations?

**Answer :** No

**Question :** What is Islam?

**Answer :** Islam is a verb, and action; it means submission.

**Question :** Is belief enough for salvation in Islam?

**Answer :** Belief must always translate into action. Without action, a person has no Islam.

#### 3.2 **Jihād in Islamic Law and Spirituality**

**Question :** What is the best way to struggle against my evil nafs?

**Answer :** Develop the habit of saying "no" to it.

**Question :** What is al-Nafs al-Ammārah?

**Answer :** It is the self or ego which commands us to do evil. It is what Muslims must struggle against.

**Question :** What is Jihad al-Asghar?

**Answer :** It is the minor Jihad, it is defending oneself or one's community against warring aggressors.

**Question :** What is Jihad al-Akbar?

**Answer :** It is the greater Jihad, it is the jihad against one's evil desires.

**Question :** What is Jihad?

**Answer :** Jihad is struggle against evil

#### 3.3

## Salāt: Obligatory Ritual Prayers in Islam

**Question :** What is the difference between du‘ā and the five daily salāt?

**Answer :** Du‘ā is a supplication and not obligatory on its own, salāt is a ritual prayer and is obligatory.

**Question :** How many daily obligatory prayers/salāt do we have?

**Answer :** Five

**Question :** Is salāt performed at the same time every day?

**Answer :** Not exactly, the daily prayers follow the movement of the sun.

**Question :** Can I be a Muslim and not pray?

**Answer :** If you dismiss it entirely, no you cannot.

**Question :** Is it ok that I perform salāt on my own time if I’m too busy?

**Answer :** No, you must pray on God’s time. The various times can be found in Muslim prayer calendars.

### 3.4 Ritual Purity in Islamic Law: Understanding Tahāra and Najāsa

**Question :** What is tahāra?

**Answer :** Tahara is ritual purity. Tahāra is necessary for ritual practices like prayer.

**Question :** What is najāsa?

**Answer :** Najasa is ritual impurity. Excrement, blood or semen are considered najis or ritually impure in Islam.

**Question :** What is tayammum?

**Answer :** Tayammum is a form of ritual purification with the same effects of ghusl. It is performed when one does not, for example, have water.

**Question :** If I perform ghusl, do I have to perform wudū as well?

**Answer :** Generally no. There are cases which it may be needed, but this is subject to disagreement among Muslim scholars.

**Question :** Does najāsa or janāba mean dirty?

**Answer :** No, it means ritual impurity. Something may be ritually impure, but be considered clean in the conventional sense. The same applies to tahāra.

### 3.5 The Five Categories of Islamic Law

**Question :** What is the difference between wajib and fard?

**Answer :** Fard is a subcategory of wajib, it is a Quranic obligation, i.e. an obligation explicitly found in the Quran.

**Question :** What is mustahab?

**Answer :** Mustahab is a recommended act in Islam which one gains a lot of reward for doing, but no sin for not doing it.

**Question :** What is Makruh?

**Answer :** Makruh is a hated act in Islam, but one gains no sin in doing it, but gains rewards from God for desisting from it.

**Question :** Can something mubah become wajib?

**Answer :** Yes, regularly drinking water is mubāh. However, if regularly drinking water means saving your life because of some condition you have, mubāh becomes wājib.

**Question :** How many categories of law do we have in Islamic practice?

**Answer :** Five. They are wājib, mustahab, mubāh, makrūh and haram.

### 3.6 Tawalla and Tabarra, its Basics and Purpose

**Question :** What is Tawalla?

**Answer :** Love for the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as).

**Question :** What is Tabarra?

**Answer :** Disassociating from the enemies of the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (as)

**Question :** What is wrong with associating with the enemies of the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt (as)?

**Answer :** It is not pleasing to Allah, and associating oneself with bad people will have a negative influence on us. The Prophet (s) said: “a person follows the religion of his friends.” If one has enough learning in Islam, one may try to change them, but one cannot befriend them.

**Question :** What role does Tabarra play in the world?

**Answer :** It forces us to speak out against evil in this world and not be complacent to it.

**Question :** What's the connection between tawalla and tabarra and amr bi al-ma'rūf and nahī 'an al-munkar?

**Answer :** Tawalla and tabarra are inner dispositions, they guide the actions of amr bi al-ma'rūf and nahī 'an al-munkar.

### 3.7 The Purpose of Zakat and Khums in Islamic Law

**Question :** What is Khums?

**Answer :** Khums is the 1/5th tax one must pay on one's final sitting income after one's total expenses.

**Question :** What is Zakat?

**Answer :** Zakat is a 2.5% tax one pays from one's tangible income (like gold and silver) and it is generally meant to help the poor

**Question :** What is khums money usually used for?

**Answer :** Khums is usually used to fund Muslim organizations and institutions like Mosques, religious programs or seminaries.

**Question :** Who do I pay khums to?

**Answer :** A Muslim center that has been approved for khums collection by a Marja'

**Question :** Can I pay zakat in dollars?

**Answer :** No

### 3.8 The Hajj Pilgrimage

**Question :** What is the Ka'ba?

**Answer :** Cube shaped building which is the direction for Muslim prayers. It is also the building around which Muslims circumambulate during the Hajj pilgrimage.

**Question :** Did the Hajj rituals begin with the Prophet Muhammad? (s)

**Answer :** No, they began with the Prophet Abraham (as).

**Question :** How many times do Muslims have to walk around the Ka'ba for?

**Answer :** Seven

**Question :** What is the tawāf?

**Answer :** Circumambulation around the Ka'ba seven times in counter-clock wise fashion.

**Question :** What is the Hajj?

**Answer :** Pilgrimage to Mecca that all Muslims must perform at least once in their lifetime.

### 3.9 The Furū' al-Dīn: The Fundamental Practices of Islam

**Question :** What is the furū al-dīn?

**Answer :** The most fundamental core practices of Islam

**Question :** Telling the truth is not part of the 10 furū' al-dīn, does this mean it's not important?

**Answer :** Telling the truth is part of the 7th furū' al-dīn, i.e. commanding the good. The furū' al-dīn are umbrella practices, they are general points that cover most Islamic practices.

**Question :** What's the difference between usūl al-dīn and furū' al-dīn?

**Answer :** The former are the fundamental core beliefs of Islam, the latter are its fundamental core practices.

**Question :** If I don't believe in practicing the furū' al-dīn, can I still be a Muslim?

**Answer :** If you do so knowing that Islam makes it obligatory, then no, you cannot be considered a Muslim.

**Question :** Are the furū' al-dīn obligatory or recommended?

**Answer :** Obligatory.

### 3.10 Fasting in Islam, its Purpose, Dos and Don'ts

**Question :** Is fasting during the month of Ramadan obligatory?

**Answer :** It is obligatory for all eligible Muslims.

**Question :** Can I choose which month I want to fast for the 30-day obligatory fast instead of the month of Ramadan?

**Answer :** No, it must be during the month of Ramadan.

**Question :** Can I fast half of the month of Ramadan, take a break and fast some other time during the year?

**Answer :** You cannot do that without a valid reason.

**Question :** What is the purpose of fasting during the month of Ramadan?

**Answer :** It is to produce God consciousness by helping your mind and will detach itself from your daily desires that are often compulsive.

**Question :** Can I fast if I am sick?

**Answer :** As long as it does not pose a health danger

### 3.11 Other Obligatory and Forbidden Acts in Islam

**Question :** If an Islamic obligation or prohibition is not part of the furū' al-dīn, does it mean it is less important?

**Answer :** Not necessarily. The furū' al-dīn are the basic platform of Islamic law. Other things are its details. They can be just as important.

**Question :** How many laws and commandments are there in Islam?

**Answer :** Perhaps infinite! As many situations and conditions humans have, there are Islamic rulings pertinent to them!

**Question :** If I stay single but don't sin, or am not tempted to sin, is marriage still obligatory?

**Answer :** No, but it is still highly recommended.

**Question :** Can I yell at my parents if I'm angry?

**Answer :** No, Islam forbids disrespect to one's parents.

**Question :** Can I force my wife to get a job and pay the bills in Islam?

**Answer :** No, you are not allowed. Only the husband is obligated to work and provide for his family

### 3.12 Niyya: Religious Intention as the Foundation of Islamic Practice

**Question :** What is niyya?

**Answer :** Niyya is the proper intention of reaching closeness to God that one must make

before most religious practices are undertaken.

**Question :** What is good niyya?

**Answer :** Good niyya is qurbatan ila-Allāh, wanting to reach closeness to God and nothing else.

**Question :** What is bad niyya?

**Answer :** Performing a religious action or duty for the sake of something or someone other than Allah.

**Question :** Is niyya outward or supposed to be from the heart?

**Answer :** Heart

**Question :** What is one way of learning how to have good niyya?

**Answer :** Gaining Islamic knowledge, learning what is truly right and truly wrong in Islam.

### 3.13 Commanding the Good and Forbidding Evil in Islam

**Question :** What is Commanding the Good?

**Answer :** It is encouraging in ourselves and others what Allah has deemed as good in Islam, like prayer or fasting.

**Question :** What is Forbidding Evil?

**Answer :** It is discouraging ourselves and others from committing what Allah has deemed as evil, like lying or gossiping.

**Question :** Is Commanding the Good and Forbidding Evil obligatory?

**Answer :** Yes, as long as there is a possibility of an effect. There are some cases where it is obligatory in any case, please refer to your Marja'.

**Question :** If I see someone not praying, and I know me telling them to do it won't do any good, do I still have to Command what is Good?

**Answer :** If you are certain he or she won't change, it is not obligatory to do it in most cases.

**Question :** What is the difference between Jihad and Commanding the Good & Forbidding Evil?

**Answer :** The latter is the direction, the former is the effort or struggle.