Islamic Studies: A Progressive Guide

Islamic Studies is the academic study of Islam. It covers various aspects of the religion, including its history, beliefs, practices, ethics, and laws, drawing from primary sources like the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Akhlaq (Qur'an, Hadith & Sunnah) & Fiqh (Qur'an and Hadith)

This term reinforces ethical principles and introduces the practical application of Islamic law.

1. Akhlaq (Islamic Ethics and Morals)

- **Review and Deeper Dive:** Revisit selected virtues from previous terms, emphasizing their practical implementation and the spiritual benefits.
    - **Purity of Intention (Niyyah):**
        - **Hadith:** "Actions are but by intentions, and every person will have what he intended." (Bukhari, Muslim)
        - **Importance:** Emphasize that good deeds are only rewarded if performed with a sincere intention for Allah's sake.
    - **Brotherhood/Sisterhood in Islam:**
        - **Qur'an:** "The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion)..." (Qur'an 49:10)
        - **Hadith:** "A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He does not wrong him, nor does he forsake him." (Muslim)
        - **Application:** Mutual love, support, advising each other, avoiding backbiting, slander, and suspicion.
    - **Seeking Knowledge:**
        - **Hadith:** "Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim." (Ibn Majah)
        - **Importance:** Encourages continuous learning, both religious and secular.
    - **Avoiding Major Sins:** Briefly discuss the major sins emphasized in Qur'an and Sunnah (e.g., Shirk, murder, disobedience to parents, consuming interest, false witness, backbiting, slander).

2. Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence/Law)

- **Review:** Reiterate Fiqh as the practical application of Islamic law.
- **Sources of Fiqh:**
    - **Qur'an:** The primary source.
    - **Sunnah (Hadith):** Explains and supplements the Qur'an.

- **Major Acts of Worship (Ibadah):** Explain the practical rules and requirements for these fundamental practices.
    - **Taharah (Purity):**
        - **Importance:** A prerequisite for prayer and Qur'an recitation.
        - **Types:**
            - **Wudu (Ablution):** Minor ritual purification (washing face, hands, arms, wiping head, washing feet) before prayer or touching the Qur'an.
            - **Ghusl (Full Ritual Bath):** Major ritual purification required after certain states (e.g., post-sex, menstruation).
            - **Tayammum (Dry Ablution):** Permitted with clean earth/dust when water is unavailable or harmful.
            - **Najasah (Impurity):** Different types of impurities (e.g., urine, blood, stool) and how to purify from them.
    - **Salat (Prayer):**
        - **Importance:** Second pillar of Islam, direct connection with Allah, purifies sins.
        - **Types:** Five daily obligatory prayers (Fajr, Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Isha), voluntary prayers (Sunnah, Nafl).
        - **Conditions for Salat:** Purity (Taharah), covering Awrah (modesty), facing Qibla (Kaaba in Makkah), prescribed time, pure place.
        - **How to Perform:** Detailed steps (Takbir, recitation of Fatiha and another surah, Ruku, Sujud, Tashahhud, Tasleem).
        - **Congregational Prayer (Jama'ah):** Importance and benefits.
        - **Jumu'ah Prayer:** Friday congregational prayer and its significance.
    - **Sawm (Fasting):**
        - **Importance:** Third pillar of Islam, spiritual discipline, gratitude, empathy for the poor.
        - **Fasting in Ramadan:** Obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan (abstaining from food, drink, sexual relations from dawn to sunset).
        - **Conditions:** Intention, eligibility (adult, sane, healthy, not traveling).
        - **Exemptions:** Sick, travelers, pregnant/nursing women (with make-up or fidyah).
        - **Things that break Fast:** Eating/drinking intentionally, sexual intercourse, vomiting intentionally.
        - **Voluntary Fasts:** Mondays and Thursdays, Day of Arafah, Ashura.
    - **Zakat (Charity/Almsgiving):**
        - **Importance:** Fourth pillar of Islam, purification of wealth, social justice, helping the needy.
        - **Definition:** Obligatory annual charity paid on specific types of wealth (e.g., gold, silver, money, livestock, agricultural produce) that reach a certain threshold (nisab) and have been held for a year (hawl).
        - **Recipients:** The poor, the needy, those in debt, new converts, etc. (as specified in Qur'an 9:60).
    - **Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah):**
        - **Importance:** Fifth pillar of Islam, spiritual journey, unity of Muslims.
        - **Conditions:** Ability (physical and financial), mental soundness, reaching puberty.

        - **Rituals (briefly):** Ihram (sacred state), Tawaf (circumambulating the Kaaba), Sa'i (running between Safa and Marwah), standing at Arafah, spending night at Muzdalifah, stoning the Jamarat, sacrificing, shaving/trimming hair.
    - **Umrah (Minor Pilgrimage):** Similar to Hajj but can be performed at any time of the year and with fewer rituals.