



## Five Pillars Of Islam

Islam is built on five pillars, the first of which is a state of faith, the other four are major exercises of faith of which some are daily, some weekly, some monthly, some annually and some are required as a minimum once in a lifetime. These exercises of faith are to serve man's spiritual purposes, satisfy his human needs and to mark his whole life with a Divine touch. The five pillars of Islam are:

### 1. FAITH (AQIDAH)

**"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger"**. There is no God worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad (Peace be upon Him "Pbuh") is His messenger. This declaration of faith is called the Shahada, a simple formula that all the faithful pronounce. In Arabic, the first part is "there is no God but Allah (Arabic word for God) " and it refers to anything which we may be tempted to put in place of Allah -- wealth, power, and the like. Then comes but Allah, the source of all creation. The second part of the Shahada is "Muhammad (Pbuh) is the messenger of Allah". A message of guidance has come through a man like us to convey Allah's message of Islam to all humanity and to deliver it from the darkness of ignorance into the light of belief in, and knowledge of, the Creator

### 2. PRAYER (SALAT)

Salat is the word for the obligatory prayers that are performed five times a day, and are a direct link between the worshipper and Allah. Praying to the Creator on a daily basis is the best way to cultivate in a man a sound personality and to actualize his aspiration. Allah does not need man's prayer because He is free of all needs. Prayer is for our

immeasurable benefit, and the blessings are beyond imagination. In prayer, every muscle of the body joins the soul and the mind in the worship and glory of Allah. Prayer is an act of worship. It is a matchless and unprecedented formula of intellectual meditation and spiritual devotion, of moral elevation and physical exercise, all combined.

There is no hierarchical authority in Islam, and no priests, so any learned person who knows the Quran, chosen by the congregation, leads the prayers. These five prayers contain verses from the Quran, and are said in Arabic, the language of the Revelation, but personal supplication can be offered in one's own language.

Prayers are said at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall, and thus determine the rhythm of the entire day. Although it is preferable to worship together in a mosque, a Muslim may pray almost anywhere, such as in fields, offices, factories and universities. Visitors to the Muslim world are struck by the centrality of prayers in daily lives.



Requirements of prayer: performing of ablution (Wudu), purity of the whole body, clothes and ground used for prayer, dressing properly and having the intention and facing the Kiblah (the direction of the Kabah at Mecca).

Prayer should be offered in its due time, unless there is a reasonable excuse. Delayed obligatory prayers must be made up. In addition to the prescribed prayer, a Muslim expresses gratitude to Allah and appreciation of His favors and asks for His mercy all the time. Especially at times of, for example, childbirth, marriage, going to or rising from bed, leaving and returning to his home, starting a journey or entering a city, riding or driving, before or after eating or drinking, harvesting, visiting graveyards and at times of distress and sickness.

The prayer is the single action a Muslim cannot drop no matter what one's condition is. If one cannot stand, one can pray sitting. If one cannot sit nor stand, one can pray lying down and imagine performing the actions. Menstruating women do not pray while menstruating. If one misses a prayer, one should perform it as soon as one can.

Muslims are ordered in the Quran to pray the noon prayer of Friday in a group in mosques. The prayer is different than a normal noon prayer in that the Imam gives a speech before the prayer and the group prayer is only two Rakas and not four. A Muslim should not miss the Friday prayer but if one has to, one should not miss more than three consecutive ones

### 3. ZAKAH

One of the most important principles of Islam is that all things belong to Allah, and that wealth is therefore held by human beings in trust. The word zakat means both "purification" and "growth". Our possessions are purified by setting aside a portion for those in need, and, like the pruning of plants, this cutting back balances and encourages new growth.

Each Muslim calculates his or her own zakat individually. For most purposes this involves the payment each year of two and a half percent of one's capital.

A pious person may also give as much as he or she pleases as Sadaqa, and does so preferably in secret. Although this word can be translated as "voluntary charity" it has a wider meaning. The Prophet said, "Even meeting your brother with a cheerful face is charity".

The Prophet (peace be upon Him) said: "Charity is a necessity for every Muslim." Zakah has a deep humanitarian and social-political value; for example, it frees society from class welfare, from ill feelings and distrust and from corruption. Although Islam does not hinder private enterprise or condemn private possession, it does not tolerate selfishness and greediness. Islam adopts a moderate but

positive and effective course between individual and society, between the citizen and the state, between capitalism and socialism, between materialism and spiritualism.

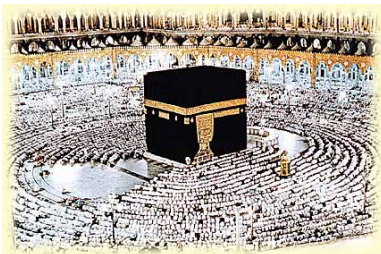
#### 4. FASTING (SAWM)

Every year, in the month of Ramadan, all Muslims fast from first light until sundown, abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations. Those who are sick, elderly, or on a journey, and women who are pregnant or nursing are permitted to break the fast and make up an equal number of days later in the year. If they are physically unable to do that, they must feed a needy person for every day missed. Children begin to fast (and to observe the prayer) from puberty, although many start earlier.

Although the fast is most beneficial to the health, it is regarded principally as a method of self-purification. By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person gains true sympathy with those who go hungry as well as growth in one's spiritual life.

Recommended fasting includes every Monday and Thursday of every week, three days in the middle of each Islamic month, six days after Ramadan following the Feast Day and a few days of the two months before Ramadan.

#### 5. PILGRIMAGE (HAJJ)



The pilgrimage to Makkah -- the Hajj -- is an obligation only for those who are physically and

financially able to perform it. Nevertheless, about two million people go to Makkah each year from every corner of the globe, providing a unique opportunity for those of different nations to meet one another. Although Makkah is always filled with visitors, the annual Hajj begins in the twelfth month of the Islamic year (which is lunar, not solar, so that Hajj and Ramadan fall sometimes in summer, sometimes in winter).

Pilgrims wear special clothes: simple garments that strip away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before Allah.

The rites of the Hajj, which are of Abrahamic origin, is to commemorate the Divine rituals observed by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael, who were the first pilgrims to the house of Allah on earth; the Kabah. It is also to remember the great assembly of the Day of Judgment when people will stand equal before Allah. Rituals include circling the Kaaba seven times, and going seven times between the hills of Safa and Marwa, as did Hagar during her search for water. Then the pilgrims stand together on the wide plain of Arafat and join in prayers for Allah's forgiveness, in what is often thought of as a preview of the Last Judgment.

In previous centuries the Hajj was an arduous undertaking. Today, however, Saudi Arabia provides millions of people with water, modern transport, and the most up-to-date health facilities.

The close of the Hajj is marked by a festival, the Eid al-Adha, which is celebrated with prayers and the exchange of gifts in Muslim communities everywhere.

Worship is everything one says or does for the pleasure of Allah. This, of course, includes rituals as well as beliefs, social activities, and personal contributions to the welfare of one's fellow human beings. Islam looks at the individual as a whole. He is required to submit himself completely to Allah, as the Quran instructed the Prophet Muhammad to do:

"Say (O Muhammad) my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death belong to Allah; He has no partner and

I am ordered to be among those who submit, i.e.; Muslims."

The natural result of this submission is that all one's activities should conform to the instructions of the one to whom the person is submitting. Islam, being a way of life, requires that its followers model their life according to its teachings in every aspect, religious or otherwise. This might sound strange to some people who think of religion as a personal relation between the individual and God, having no impact on one's activities outside rituals. As a matter of fact Islam does not think much of mere rituals when they are performed mechanically and have no influence on one's inner life.

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