

PILLARS OF ISLAM

The religion of Islam requires accepting some main Articles of Faith. These are the core beliefs - without any one of these, one would not be accepted as a believer.

The acceptance of these Articles leads to the practical five Pillars of Islam.

The Five Pillars of Islam are the Fundamental duties in a Muslims life, which lead to living a good and responsible life according to Islam.

The Five Pillars Consist of:

•Shahaadah (Testimony): Declaration of Faith

Muslims declare their faith by saying: "Laa ilaaha il-IAllaah, Muhammadur rasoolul-laah" which means "There is none worthy of worship besides God (Allah) and Muhammad, peace be upon him, is His Messenger". The declaration signifies belief in the purpose of life as fulfilling the commands of Allah (God), as shown by the Messenger. Also by reciting the Shahaadah with sincerity and conviction, one can enter the Islamic faith and become a Muslim.

•Salaat (Prayer): Five Compulsory Daily Prayers

A physical and mental means of worship prescribed five times a day. This is a direct link between the worshipper and Allah (God). The worshipper's body and clothing must be clean before they start their Salaat (Prayer). Muslims can pray anywhere which is clean, ensuring they face the Holy Ka'ba in Makkaah, Saudi Arabia. Salaat (Prayer) is performed at set times: before sunrise, at midday, in the afternoon, in the evening after the sunsets and at nightfall.

•Zakaat (Purity or Charity): Almsgiving

The Arabic word Zakaat means to purify. Muslims give 2.5% of their surplus wealth to charity annually. This shows obedience to God and prevents greed. Zakaat is given to the poor and those that are less fortunate than ourselves. It is believed that by giving charity, the possessions you keep are made pure.

•Sawm (Fasting): Fasting During the Month of Ramadhaan

For one month of the Year, Muslims refrain from food, drink and sexual relations with their spouses from dawn till dusk. Fasting during this time is obligatory upon every Muslim adult if they are mentally and physically able, and not on a journey. Women are given exemption during menstruation, child birth or whilst nursing a baby. Although fasting is beneficial to health, Muslims fast in order to develop self-control, self-purification, discipline and to engender gratitude for the bounties they have been given by Allah (God).

•Hajj (Pilgrimage): Pilgrimage to the Holy Sites in Makkah

Hajj is the journey to the holy sites in Makkah to perform various rituals. It is only obligatory once in a life time upon those who have the financial means and are physically able. The pilgrims adorn simple garment that strip away any distinctions of class and culture, so they all stand equal before Allah (God). The final part of the pilgrimage is at the Holy Ka'bah (cube) in the centre of the Great Mosque in Makkaah. The Ka'bah is important because the foundations were laid down by Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and the structure completed by Prophet Ibraheem (Abraham), peace be upon him, under the guidance from Allah (God).