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Pillars of Islam

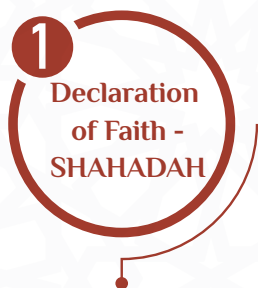


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Introduction

Every sound structure must have a solid foundation in order to remain strong. Islam's foundation is the five pillars it is built upon, forming the basis of Islamic teaching as taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), wherein he said: “Islam is built upon five pillars”



first corner



second corner



third corner



Fourth corner



Fifth corner

These five pillars are the most important cornerstone of a Muslim's life.



The declaration of faith is bearing witness (testifying) that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah, and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Worshiper and Messenger. It must be based on a sincere and firm belief in the heart, and verbally uttered. Also, one must know its meaning and act upon it.

The first part of this declaration indicates that:

No person, object or being has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone. The Arabic word “Allah” refers to the One True God of all mankind and all creation.

Allah alone is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, and He has power over all things.

Allah alone has perfect attributes and is free from all deficiencies.

Allah has no partner, equal, father, mother or son.

Allah the Exalted is the true God, and everything other than Him is falsely worshipped.

The second part of this declaration is that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Allah’s Worshiper and final Messenger. He is the final Prophet in a long chain of Prophets sent to call all people to the obedience and worship of Allah alone. Some of these Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon them all).

first corner

Declaration of Faith - SHAHADAH

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent with the Qur'an (the final revelation sent to earth), in order to teach people the message, and serve as an example for all to follow.

Some benefits of the Declaration of Faith:

- Complete surrender to Allah and becoming His true servant and subject.
- Produces a high degree of self-respect and confidence in Allah, while also remaining humble and modest.
- Produces strong determination, patience and perseverance, making a person brave and courageous, as well as dutiful and upright in religion.
- Makes a person obey and observe Allah's commands.

second corner

The Prayer - SALAH

The five daily prayers form the most important acts of worship in a Muslim's life, and their times are: one each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “The root of this matter (foundation) is Islam, its pillar (mainstay) is As-Salat (the prayer).”

Prayer establishes a personal and spiritual connection between the Muslim and his Creator, based on faith, love, hope and reverence. When prayer is performed correctly with complete concentration, humility and sincerity, it will have an enduring effect on the person, filling his heart with contentment, peace and closeness to Allah.

Allah said “Indeed, I am Allah! There is none worthy of worship but I, so worship Me and offer the prayer for My remembrance.” Qur'an.

Prayer is the centre of a Muslim's life and the best and shortest way to achieve submission to Allah. It can be performed at any pure place: such as in fields, offices, factories or universities, and takes only a few minutes to perform. It consists of recitation from the Holy Qur'an, supplicating to and praising Allah, with various body postures such as standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting. Through prayer, a Muslim remembers the greatness of his Creator and supplicates to Him for his needs and wishes. Repeatedly humbling oneself before Allah prevents a person from falling into sin, and is a type of purification for one's soul, as mentioned in the Qur'an: "Verily, the prayer prevents one from the shameful and evil deeds." Qur'an . Prayer is also an opportunity for repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) asked his companions one day: "If one of you had a river by his door in which he bathed five times a day, would any filth remain on him?" They replied, "No." Then the Prophet added, "Likewise, Allah wipes away sins with the five daily prayers." Narrated by Al-Bukhari.

third corner

The Prescribed Charity - ZAKAH

All things belong to Allah, including wealth, which is considered as a trust. The prescribed charity (zakah) is an obligation on every Muslim who meets certain criteria. A small annual portion of wealth must be given to those who are eligible, as prescribed in the Qur'an (e.g. the poor and needy).

Allah the Exalted Said “Take Sadaqah (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it” (Al-Tawba: 1۰۳).

The meaning of the word “zakah”, is both ‘purification’ and ‘growth’. By fulfilling this obligation, Muslims worship their Lord, purify their remaining wealth, as well as ensure both financial and spiritual growth.

third corner

The Prescribed Charity - ZAKAH

Some benefits of zakah:

- Purifies one from heart sickening habits, such as selfishness and greediness.
- Trains one to be sympathetic and compassionate towards the poor and needy.
- Reminds one of the blessings of Allah and encourages one to be grateful.
- Bridges the gap between different socio-economic classes and groups which contributes to social security.
- Reduces poverty and ensures equality by making it obligatory upon the rich to share some of their wealth with the less fortunate. Allah says “...so that this (wealth) may not circulate solely among the rich from among you.”

Qur'an 09:0

A person may also give as much as he pleases as additional voluntary charity.

“Those who establish the prayer (salah) and give the charity (zakah) ... these are the ones who will prosper.” Qur'an 31:ξ-0

Fourth corner

Fasting - SAWM

Allah said "Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain piety." Qur'an.

As with any act of worship, fasting requires obedience and submission to Allah's commands through the highest degree of commitment and sincerity. Every year during the month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the lunar calendar), Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from three key human needs - food, drink and sexual relations. One should also abstain from all sinful actions through the year and especially in this month.

Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory on every physically and mentally capable adult Muslim. Children, the sick, the mentally unfit, the elderly, menstruating women, and travellers are exempt.

Fourth corner

Fasting - SAWM

Some benefits of fasting:

- Promotes spiritual self-purification and growth.
- Scientifically proven health benefits.
- Sympathy for those less fortunate, prompting more charity.
- A means of learning self-restraint and patience.
- Purifies the soul, helps it acquire the habit of obeying Allah by restraining desires, and promotes steadfastness.
- Creates an increased feeling of unity and collective identity amongst those fasting.
- Creates an increased awareness about the state of affairs across the globe and the hardships endured.
- Forgiveness of sins. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “He who fasts Ramadan, with faith and hoping for reward (from Allah), then his past sins are forgiven.”

Fifth corner

Pilgrimage - HAJJ

Allah said “And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka’bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, for those who can afford the expenses (for one’s transportation, provision and residence).”Qur’an .

Pilgrimage to the Holy city of Makkah (in Saudi Arabia) must be performed at least once in a person’s life, if they are physically and financially capable.

Performing the pilgrimage is considered as a time of increased bounty from Allah. Therefore, one should show complete servitude and actively seek the forgiveness of Allah and being close to Him.

The Pilgrimage is an annual event in the 12th month of the lunar calendar (Dhul-Hijjah in Arabic), which unifies people of every colour, race, status and age, as they join in worship of the One True God. All pilgrims wear simple and similar clothing, which strips away all kinds of distinctions and discrimination between people, so that all stand equal before Allah.

Fifth corner

Pilgrimage - HAJJ

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “Whoever performs Hajj and does not utter obscenities or commit sin, will come back just like the day when his mother bore him (i.e. pure of sins).”

Hajj involves following in the footsteps of our Prophet Abraham, as taught to us by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them). This great act of worship consists of many acts of worship including sacrificing an animal, supplicating, visiting and praying at various sites, circling the Ka’bah, walking between two mountains, as well as many other rituals, all of which are performed over the days of Hajj.

Such an act of worship is life-altering and it humbles a person, making them more patient and thankful to Allah. Brotherhood is increased, as is the sense that all Muslims, regardless of their differences, are one nation.

The five pillars of Islam have been prescribed by Allah. And a Muslim is required to believe and act according to them. They are practical as well as easy, and the blessings and wisdom behind them are manifold. When put into perspective, they contribute to the well being of both the individual and society: enhancing the character and manners of the individuals of society, making them more responsible towards one another, and bringing them closer to Allah

These noble pillars of Islam are purely for the benefit of His creation, as Allah (Glory be to Him!) is free of all needs. These five pillars provide the solid structure and 'training programme' for the betterment and success of all humanity

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