

W The 5 Pillars of Worship

The foundation of a Muslim's life

1. The Declaration of Faith

The declaration of faith is bearing witness there is no God worthy of worship but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger. It must be uttered verbally and based on a sincere and firm belief in the heart, followed by action. With this declaration, a person rejects all false deities, asserts that Allah is the only One worthy of worship, and accepts His messenger, hence becoming a Muslim.

2. The 5 Daily Prayers

The 5 daily prayers form the second pillar of Islam. Prayer establishes a personal and spiritual connection between the Muslim and their Creator, and is a constant and practical reminder of a person's duty to surrender to God. They are prescribed once each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. Each prayer takes a few minutes to perform, consisting of recitation of the Qur'an, supplications, praising Allah, and various body postures. In preparation for prayer, Muslims wash certain parts of their body, such as the face and hands, to ensure spiritual and physical purity.

3. The Annual Charity

The annual charity is an obligation on every Muslim who meets certain criteria (e.g. has wealth above a certain threshold). A mere 2.5% of one's annual wealth is donated to those who are eligible, such as the poor, the needy or travellers. It purifies one's wealth and carries many benefits for both the giver and the receiver. One benefit is that it reduces the gap between the rich and the poor, ensuring that everyone has their basic needs met.

4. The Annual Fasting

Every year during the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food, drink and sexual relations. It serves as a spiritual purification, nurtures patience and self-restraint, and provides many health benefits. Fasting is obligatory upon every physically and mentally capable mature Muslim. Children, the sick, the mentally unfit, the elderly, menstruating women and travellers are exempt. Pregnant or breastfeeding women are also exempt, if fasting would bring harm to themselves or the child.

Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic Calendar

5. The Pilgrimage

All pilgrims wear simple and similar clothing, which strip away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before God.

Pilgrimage to the holy cities in Saudi Arabia must be performed once in a person's life, if they are physically and financially able. It occurs annually in the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, unifying people of every colour, race, status and age, as they join in worship of the One True God.

This great journey consists of many components, including sacrifices, travelling and praying at various sites. Such an experience is life altering and humbles a person, making them more patient and thankful, as they realise all of life's bounties they have taken for granted.

W The Concept of Worship

Any action that Allah is pleased with

Islam's concept of worship is not restricted to the above mentioned rituals. Worship is an all-inclusive term for those actions that are pleasing to Allah. Everyday activities can become acts of worship by purifying one's intention and ensuring one's actions are in line with God's guidelines. Examples include smiling, being good to one's neighbours, supporting one's family, honesty, and even removing rubbish from the road. It should be noted that Allah is not in need of anyone's worship, rather, we are in need of Him and our worship is for our benefit.

Conclusion

The above mentioned aspects of faith and acts of worship make up the essence of Islam. When practised, Islam fulfils the spiritual, physical, psychological and social needs of all people, and is a practical and rational way of life. Furthermore, it is the only way of life which is accepted by God Almighty, and the only path that leads to Paradise.

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about Islam

a brief introduction

learn the basics

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about Islam

Muslims constitute approximately one fifth of the world's population, making Islam one of the largest religions. Belief in and worship of the One True God (Allah) is the purpose of life and cornerstone of Islam.

The Arabic word "Islam" literally means "submission" to the one true God (Allah) alone. Success is only attained in this life and the hereafter through Islam – the only religion accepted by God. Unlike some other religions, it is not named after a person or tribe. One who voluntarily surrenders their will to God is called a Muslim, who can be from any racial or ethnic background.

In a short pamphlet as this, space does not permit to cover all the intricacies of Islam: Islam as a complete way of life; the brotherhood and sisterhood that spans all races and nations; the importance of family and society; the universality of the message and its applicability to all nations and time. As such, this pamphlet focuses on the six main aspects of belief and five main acts of worship in Islam.

The 6 Aspects (Articles) of Belief

Allah is the personal name of the One True God.

1. Belief in Allah

"Allah" is the unique Arabic name of The One True God, Who is the only One worthy of worship, with no rivals, equals or partners. Allah is not like His creation, as nothing shares His divine essence and attributes, including: The Creator, The Provider, The Most Merciful, The All-Powerful, The Most Just, The All-Wise and The All-Knowing.

Allah is without partner in His authority and actions. The world was created by Allah's command alone, Who solely runs and controls it. Such a complex and balanced creation is not possible by any other than a superior being. It is therefore illogical to believe that the universe created itself, or was the result of random or coincidental events.

2. Belief in The Angels

Allah created angels from light, who never disobey His command. Details about some of the angels have been revealed, such as Gabriel, who delivers God's message to the Prophets, and the Angel of Death, who takes the souls of people.

3. Belief in The Revealed Books

Allah revealed divine books to His Messengers as a guidance and mercy to mankind. These include the Torah and Gospel as originally revealed to Moses and Jesus respectively, and the Qur'an as revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon them all). Apart from the Qur'an, these revelations do not exist in their original form, as they have been distorted, changed or lost.

Another miracle of the Qur'an is that it is free from any contradictions or errors.

The Qur'an is the literal word of God and the final revelation to all of mankind. Together with the authentic sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it is the primary source of Islamic knowledge.

4. Belief in The Prophets

Muslims believe that thousands of Prophets were sent by Allah, at least one to every nation, to convey God's revelation. These Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Joseph, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them all). Their mission was to return people to the worship of the One True God, to serve as practical examples of how to obey God, and to guide people to the path of salvation. As humans, it is forbidden to worship them or to use them as an intercessor to God. Any type of prayer or worship towards the Prophets, or to God through them, is strictly forbidden and considered a violation of God's right to be worshipped alone.

Prophets do not share in any part of God's divinity.

- Prophet Jesus

Muslims believe that Jesus is an honourable prophet of God, born miraculously through his virgin mother Mary. He performed many miracles with the permission of God, such as healing the sick, curing the blind and speaking as a newborn defending his mother from accusations. Although Muslims respect and love Jesus, they do not worship him. He is not considered the son of God, nor part of a trinity, nor does he share in any of God's perfect attributes.

God says: "It is not befitting for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When he decrees an affair, He only says, 'Be' and it is." Qur'an 19:35

- Prophet Muhammad

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the final Prophet sent to all of mankind. He came with the Qur'an to demonstrate how its teachings should be applied, and is a perfect example of an honest, just, merciful, compassionate, truthful and brave human being. As with Jesus, Muslim do not worship Muhammad.

Prophet Muhammad said:

"Do not exceed bounds in praising me as the Christians praised Jesus, the Son of Mary. I am only God's servant; so call me the Servant of God and His Messenger."

5. Belief in The Day of Judgement

The Day of Judgment is an event when each person will stand before The Creator and be questioned about their good and bad deeds. Deeds will be shown in vivid detail, regardless of their size, and everyone will be judged accordingly.

On this momentous Day, Allah, the All-Just, will settle all matters fairly and no person will be wronged. Everyone's rights will be returned. All will be treated justly, by either the reward of Paradise, or the punishment of the Hellfire.

Without a Day of Judgement, life would be grossly unfair, as not everyone receives justice in this world.

6. Belief in Divine Destiny

Allah knows everything from the past, the present, and everything that will happen in the future.

Every person has been given the free will to choose between right and wrong, and will be held to account accordingly. However, this excludes people unable to exercise their free will, such as the severely intellectually disabled.

Free will does not contradict the fact that events can only occur with God's knowledge and permission. Nor does it mean that

God's power over everything prevents or restricts people's free will. God's knowledge of people's decisions does not mean that they are being forced to make such decisions, and God is not necessarily pleased with everything that He allows to occur.

Allah has power over all things - nothing occurs without His knowledge and permission.