



Pillars of Islam and Articles of Faith

Five Pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam are the five basic acts in Islam, considered obligatory by Muslims. These are summarized in the famous Hadith of Gabriel. The Quran presents them as a framework for worship and a sign of commitment to the faith. They are

1. Shahadah (Creed)
2. Daily prayers (Salat)
3. Fasting during Ramadan (Sawm)
4. Almsgiving (Zakāt) and
5. Pilgrimage to Makka (Hajj) at least once in a lifetime

1. Shahadah

Shahadah is a saying and confessing monotheism and accepting Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) as God's Messenger. The shahadah is a set statement normally recited in Arabic, which is translated as

I testify and bear witness that there is no god except Allah (SWT), and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is the last and final messenger of Allah (SWT).

Also, it is said that when dying one should recite this declaration of faith. In Azaan (call to prayer) it is recited. When a person wishes to convert his religion, he should recite this affirmation and believe in it.

2. Salat

Salat is the Islamic prayer. As per Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) the difference between a Muslim and a non-believer is Salat. Now, if you say that you are a Muslim, it is obligatory for you to offer prayers.

Salat consists of five daily prayers: Fajr, Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha'a. Fajr is performed at dawn, Dhuhr is a noon prayer, Asr is performed in the afternoon, Maghrib is the sunset prayer, and Isha'a is the evening prayer. Each prayer consists of a certain amount of raka'āt. A prayer either consists of two, three, or four raka'āt. All of these prayers are recited while facing the Ka'bah in Makkah. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) told us that the first question on the Day of Judgement will be asked regarding Salat.

3. Sawm

Three types of fasting (Sawm) are recognized by the Quran: ritual fasting, fasting as compensation for repentance (both from Surah Al-Baqarah), and ascetic fasting (from Surah Al-Ahzab).

Ritual fasting is an obligatory act during the month of Ramadan. Muslims must abstain from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from dawn to dusk during this month, and are to be especially mindful of other sins. Fasting is necessary for every Muslim that has reached puberty. The fast is meant to allow Muslims to seek nearness to Allah (SWT), to express their gratitude towards Allah (SWT) and dependence on Him, atone for their past sins, and to remind them of the needy.

During Ramadan, Muslims are also expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Islam by refraining from violence, anger, envy, greed, lust, profane language, gossip and to try to get along with fellow Muslims better. In addition, all obscene and irreligious sights and sounds are to be avoided.

Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory, but it is forbidden for several groups for whom it would be very dangerous and excessively problematic. These include pre-pubescent children, those with a medical condition such as diabetes, elderly people, and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Other individuals for whom it is considered acceptable not to fast are those who are ill or traveling. Missing fasts usually must be made up for soon afterward, although the exact requirements vary according to circumstance.

Fasting other than Ramadan can be called as 'nafli fasting' for which one can get extra reward.

4. Zakāt

The word zakat is originated from "**zaka**" which means "**to purify**". The purpose of zakat is to purify one's wealth. Zakat or alms-giving is the practice of charitable giving by Muslims based on accumulated wealth, and is obligatory for all who are able to do so. It is considered to be a personal responsibility for Muslims to ease economic hardship for others and eliminate inequality.

Zakat consists of spending 2.5% of one's wealth for the benefit of the poor or needy, including slaves, debtors and travelers. A Muslim may also donate more as an act of voluntary charity (sadaqah), to achieve additional divine reward. Zakat on wealth covers money made in business, savings, income, and so on. In current usage Zakat is treated as a 2.5% collection on most valuables and savings held for a full lunar year, as long as the total value is more than a basic minimum known as nisab.

5. Hajj

This act of worship which must be done once in a lifetime if

1. You have wealth to do so
2. You have health to do so

Once the conditions met, then one should not delay this act of worship. The Hajj is a pilgrimage that occurs during the Islamic month of Dhu al-Hijjah to the holy city of Makkah, and derives from an ancient Arab practice. Every able-bodied Muslim is obliged to make the pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in their lifetime if he or she can afford it. When the pilgrim is around 10 km (6.2 mi) from Makkah, he must dress in Ihram clothing, which consists of two white sheets. Both men and women are required to make the pilgrimage to Makkah. The main rituals of the Hajj include walking seven times around the Kaaba, touching the Black Stone, traveling seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwaha, and symbolically stoning the Devil in Mina.

The pilgrim, or the haji, is honored in their community. Hajj should be an expression of devotion to God, not a mean to gain social standing. The believer should be self-aware and examine their intentions in performing the pilgrimage. This should lead to constant striving for self-improvement. A pilgrimage made at any time other than the Hajj season is called an Umrah, and while not mandatory is strongly recommended.

Six Articles of Faith

In Islam, Muslim doctrine is often summarized in "Six Articles of Faith." These are the fundamental beliefs which every Muslim must ascribe to.

1. One God (Allah)

The central belief in Islam, and arguably the most important theme of Islam, is that there is one God. A Muslim can't do shirk, it is considered a great crime (Zulm-e-Azeem). We know from the ayah of the Quran that Allah (SWT) can forgive any sin, but cannot forgive the person who associates partners with Allah (SWT) because of it the direct negation of Kalima.

2. Belief in Angels

Belief in angels is fundamental to the faith of Islam. According to the Quran, angels do not possess free will, and therefore worship and obey God in total obedience. Angels' duties include communicating revelations from God, glorifying God, recording every person's actions, and taking a person's soul at the time of death. They are made of light and they are numerous in number.

According to the correct opinion, there are 4 angels with every human being all the time. Two angels are at left & right, writing our bad and virtuous deeds and two at the front and back, protecting ourselves. As per Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib (RA) that when a person has to meet his death, these angels move away.

3. Prophets (AS)

Muslims identify the Prophets (AS) of Islam as those humans chosen by Allah (SWT) to be Allah's Messengers.

Allah (SWT) says that we have sent upon every nation, a Rasool, who said Worship one Allah and don't worship false Gods.

They believe that Prophets (AS) are human and not divine, though some are able to perform miracles to prove their claim. Islam teaches that all of Allah's (SWT) Messengers preached the message of Islam; i.e. submission to the will of Allah (SWT).

The Quran mentions Prophet Adam (AS), Prophet Noah (Nuh) (AS), Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) (AS), Prophet Moses (Musa) (AS) and Prophet Jesus (Isa) (AS) among others, as being Prophets (AS) of Islam. Muslims believe that God finally sent Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) as the last Prophet (Seal of the Prophets) to convey the final summation of all divine revelations to the whole of humanity. This final revelation is believed to be contained in the Quran as well as being exemplified in the life, words, actions and personal characteristics of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) called the Sunnah ("the trodden path"). The collections of sayings and actions of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) are known as the Hadith.

4. Revelations

Muslims believe that God dictated His revelations to the various Prophets. Islam teaches that parts of the previously revealed scriptures, the Tawrat (Torah of Moses), the Zabur (Psalms of David) and the Injil (Gospel of Jesus), had become distorted, either in interpretation and/or in content.

The Quran is viewed by Muslims as the final revelation and literal word of God. For Muslims, all earlier revelations through Adam (AS), Moses (Musa (AS)), David (Dawud (AS)), Jesus (Isa (AS)) and others are clearly and unambiguously restated in the Quran, it, for them, being the fulfillment of all Divine revelation. Muslims believe that the Quran was revealed to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) by Allah (SWT) through the angel Gabriel (Jibril (AS)) on many occasions. Muslims usually regard only the original scripture, revealed in Arabic, as being the true Quran. Translations of the Quran into English or any other languages are regarded as being deficient and are referred to as being mere commentaries on the Quran.

5. Resurrection and Judgment

Muslims believe in the "Day of Resurrection" and the Quran emphasizes the resurrection of the body, which is a distinct break with the pre-Islamic Arabian understanding of death. Muslims believe that on 'The Day of Resurrection' all humankind will be judged according to their good and bad deeds.

The Quran describes this as,

"Whoever does an atom's weight of good, will see it; and whoever does an atom's weight of evil, will see it" [Surah Al-Zalzalah: 7-8]

The Quran mentions certain sins that are punishable by hell, such as disbelief in God and dishonesty. However, the Quran also teaches that God will forgive the sins of those who

sincerely repent and that one's good deeds, such as charity, prayer and compassion will be rewarded with entry to heaven.

6. Qadr (Divine Decree)

Muslims believe that Allah (SWT) has full knowledge and control over all that occurs. Everything in the world that occurs, good or bad, has been pre-ordained and nothing can happen unless permitted by Allah (SWT). According to Muslim theologians, although events are pre-ordained, humans possess free will in that each of us has the faculty to choose between right and wrong, and so each of us is responsible for her/his own actions.