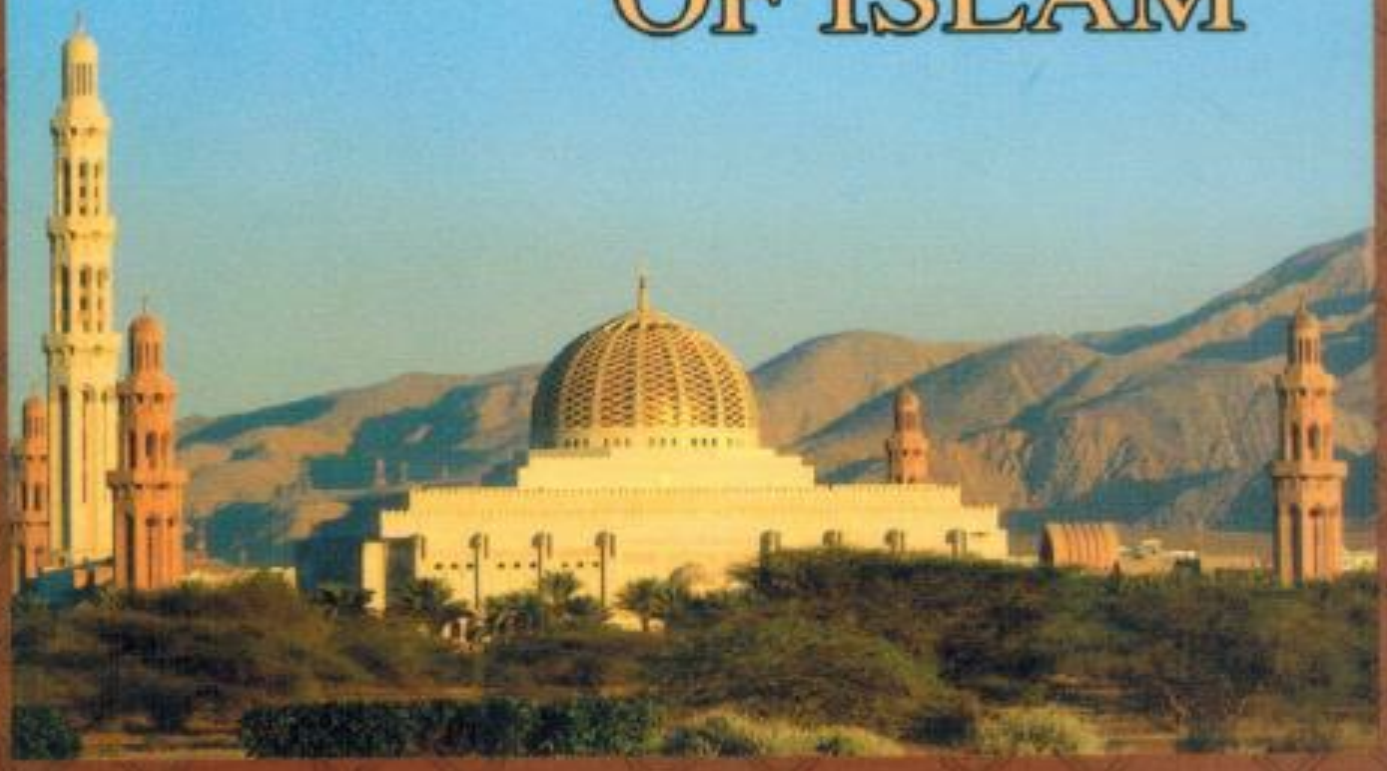
Diwan of Royal Court
Sultan Qaboos Centre for islamic Culture

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM





ديوان البلاط السلطانى
مركز السلطان قابوس للثقافة الإسلامية

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM



Islamic Information Centre

Pillar 1: Shahadah - Declaration of Faith

«Laa ilaha illa Allah; Muhammad Rasuul Allah». No deity is worthy or has the right of being worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.

The first part of the declaration attests to the immortal, Everlasting Oneness and Uniqueness of Almighty Allah. The second part refers to the mortal Muhammad as the messenger of Allah who received revelation (Qur>an - Koran) through the Archangel Gabriel, in stages over a period of 23 years. Muhammad then lived the life of the Qur>an and taught it to mankind.

Why:

Islam is a complete and practical way of life. The declaration is its foundation and most important pillar on which stand all other beliefs and practices. After declaring the Shahadah, a Muslim must put into practice what he or she declares by the tongue (word) by fulfilling the other pillars and by following the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Shahadah is declared in Arabic, in the presence of Muslim witnesses.

Benefits:

Foundation of one becoming, being known and being treated with the rights and responsibilities of a Muslim by Allah, oneself and others (Muslims and non-Muslims).

Furthermore:

The declaration of faith means that a Muslim believes in the six pillars of faith:

Belief in Allah - Affirming that Allah is the One and Only, Eternal and Absolute, All-Powerful, Perfect and Complete, that He has neither partner, nor son. He is high above any imperfections. No deficiencies or flaws can be attributed to Him. None is like Him. Muslims must love Allah more than anything or anybody, fear Him and put their trust in Him.

Belief in His Angels - Perfect beings who always worship Allah and never disobey Him. They are different from people and genies, do not eat or excrete, and have no gender.

Belief in His Books - many, including Scrolls, Psalms, Torah, Gospel and Qur>an)

Belief in His Messengers - no society was left without a messenger, from Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon, Ishmael, to Muhammad, the last messenger)

Belief in The Day of Judgment - every being will die and will be resurrected on this day and be accountable for all their good and bad deeds while living on earth, for which they will either receive reward (Jannah - Heaven) or punishment (Jahannam- Hellfire).

Belief in Destiny and Fate - Muslims have to put their trust in Allah and that everything happens by His will and for their own good, even though by

mortal limitations, they may not understand or perceive the wisdom as to why things happen as they do.

Pillar 2: Prayers (Salaah)

What

This transforms the 1st pillar, declaration of faith by word, into practice by the physical worship of Allah with 5 prayers daily. The prayers and number of raka>a (cycles) are: Fajr (dawn) - 2 cycles; Dhuhr (soon after noon) - 4 cycles; <Asr (afternoon) - 4 cycles; Maghreb (sunset) - 3 cycles; <Ishaa> (early night) - 4 cycles.

To physically worship and glorify Allah; maintain a consciousness of Allah (taqwa); and have a continuous direct link to Allah without intermediary. It is a means to purify the body and soul resulting in Allah>s protection, peace with Allah and inner peace and tranquillity. It is the first right of Allah from a believer that differentiates Muslims from non-Muslims.

Obligatory prayers are performed in Arabic, the language of revelation, individually or in congregation. It is preferable for women to pray at home but mandatory for men to pray in congregation in a mosque otherwise one can pray at any clean place: office, field or school.

Proper dress code and cleanliness of body, clothes and place of prayer are prerequisites. Obligatory prayers must be on time and take priority over everything else. Congregational prayers are led by an Imam, normally chosen by the congregation. While praying, Muslims must face Qiblah, the direction of Ka>bah in Makkah. The prayer is conducted in Arabic with recitations from the Qur>an. Each prayer cycle consists of standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting. If one cannot pray while standing, one must pray while seated, and if unable to sit, then while resting on the bed.

Benefits:

When performed properly and sincerely, prayers:
Teach a Muslim to be humble before his Creator, especially during prostration.
Maintain a continuous direct link (hotline) to Allah without intermediary.
Cleanse the body and soul of indecency.
Protect believers from bad deeds/sins and guide them to good deeds.
Promote discipline, consciousness and fear of Allah (taqwa), and trust in Allah.
Promote sense of belonging, equality and brotherhood in the community.
Determine the rhythm of the day with work then a break for prayers.
Short meditation/de-stressor sessions promote inner self tranquillity

Like other physical exercises, prayers increase blood circulation and body flexibility.
Bowing and prostration increase blood supply to the brain, improving brain function and memory; and promotes spine suppleness.
Electrostatic charges from the atmosphere accumulate in the central nervous system and when over saturated, may cause neck/headaches and muscle spasms. Prostration gets rid of electrostatic charges by discharging and dissipating them out of the body (the way electric appliances require earthing), thus promoting tranquillity, peace of mind and soul, and overall muscle relaxation.

Further

Optional prayers are prescribed before and after obligatory prayers and at other times. These aid the believers to build taqwa and thus bringing them closer to Allah. Voluntary prayers in the darkness of night, especially the last third, carry the biggest merits of optional prayers. Muslims can supplicate in any language and anywhere, except in the toilet.

Pillar 3: Obligatory Alms (Zakaah)

The Arabic word Zakaah means both purification and growth. It is the worship of Allah involving wealth. It is the right of the destitute on the wealthy in society. 2.5% is paid from wealth one has owned for a whole lunar year if it reaches the nisaab , (the

minimum amount on which alms are pay¬able - equivalent to the price of 85 grams of gold), or it is paid at the time of harvest for agricultural produce. Zakaah is used to take care of the following needy categories in society:

The poor, those who earn less than half of their daily needs.

The needy or destitute - those who can>t work or earn next to nothing.

Those employed to collect and distribute Zakaah.

Wayfarers who have hit hard times though they may be wealthy back home.

Muslim prisoners of war or slaves who want to buy freedom.

New Muslims and non-Muslims who are being encouraged to join Islam and whose services will help Islam.

Muslims with debt acquired for lawful needs.

Supporting welfare organizations looking after the needy.

Every Muslim, male or female, must pay 2.5% of their wealth - such as gold, silver, money in hand or investments, real estate for sale, or merchandise - in their possession for a whole lunar year, if it exceeds the nisaab. Zakaah is also payable on certain kinds of livestock and agricultural produce with different mode of payment. To be valid, Zakaah must be paid when due; must come from the good portion (not cast-offs); with spirit of compassion

Those who are not eligible to pay the obligatory Zakaah are encouraged to offer voluntary charity (sadaqah), which is also applicable for those who have to pay Zakaah. Sadaqah is not necessarily monetary but any charitable deed such as a smile, visiting the sick or clearing obstructions on a path.

Pillar 4: Fasting (Sawm)

The Arabic word sawm means abstention. During Ramadhan, the 9th month of the Muslim calendar (Hijrah), Muslims fast from just before dawn to just after sunset.

It is in the month of Ramadhan that the Qur'an was brought down from the 7th to the 1st Heaven, after which the angel Gabriel (Jibril) revealed it to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) step by step. Fasting is a mental, physical and spiritual worship of Allah, an exercise in self-restraint and purification. By abstaining from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting Muslim focuses on the pur¬pose of life by being ever conscious of Allah.

In the month of Ramadhan, Muslims make an intention to fast for the sake of Allah, and then ab¬stain from food, drink, sexual relations with spouses, smoking and all other prohibited behaviour like backbiting, gossip, adultery, oppression etc., from dawn to sunset. The sick, travellers, as well as pregnant, nursing and menstruating women can break the fast and make up equal number of days later in the year when they are healthy and able.

The aged and the terminally ill are exempted from fasting but if they can, they have to feed the poor. Fasting is validated by paying Zakaatul-Fitr (charity of breaking the fast) before the <Eidul-Fitr prayers, the festival marking the end of Ramadhan fasting.
Abstaining from worldly comforts focuses Muslims on their purpose in life, being constantly aware and conscious of Allah>s presence (taqwa).
Spiritually, fasting promotes patience, gratitude, self-purification and self-restraint. It makes a Muslim appreciate Allah>s bounties, depress pride and maintain humility. It promotes sympathy and generosity towards the poor.
Allah is pleased and appreciates that His servant is abstaining from worldly comforts for Him, the reward of which is admission to Heaven through a special gate, Rayyan. Allah rewards every good deed tenfold, but He is much more generous with regards to fasting be¬cause only He knows if the Muslim has truly observed the fast. A fasting Muslim rejoices twice: while breaking the fast and on the Day of Judgment. The bad-smelling breath of a fasting Muslim is more pleasant to Allah than the fragrance of musk Gates of hell are closed while gates of Heaven are open, and Satan is chained. When a Muslim fasts sincerely for Allah expecting His reward, Allah will forgive him all his past sins; similarly for one who wakes up to sincerely worship Allah on the Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr), which falls in the last ten days of Ramadhan.
If a Muslim goes for lesser Hajj (Umrah) during Ra-

madhan, it is equivalent to going for Hajj. Voluntary worship like voluntary prayers and charity is equivalent to obligatory worship. When fasting is combined with proper nutrition, it promotes health in various ways: Enzymes enter the bloodstream to wash out bacteria, pollutants, damaged and dead cells and metabolic waste; the digestive system gets a rest; cells and tissues are repaired and purified; immune function is en¬hanced; levels of cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure drop, enabling respite to those who suffer these chronic conditions and may improve long-term health; many people are able to perma¬nently break bad habits like smoking and overeating.

Furthermore:

Apart from the obligatory fasting during Ramadhan, there are voluntary fasts that have been pre¬scribed weekly (Monday and Thursday), monthly (13, 14, and 15 of every lunar month), and annu¬ally: 2 days of the 1st month of the Hijrah calendar; 6 days of the 10th month of Hijrah, and the first 9 days of the last month of Hijrah. The best voluntary fast for those who can, is the fast of Prophet David: on alternate days. Fasting is prohibited on <Eid days and lone Fridays.

Pillar 5: Pilgrimage (Hajj)

Hajj is pilgrimage to the Holy places in Makkah and its environs, which is an obligation only for adult Muslims who have the physical and financial ability to make the journey once in a lifetime. It is a form of worship in which a set period of time is devoted, by the pilgrims> ritual and performance, to the task of freeing minds and hearts from all worldly concerns. Pilgrims seek to pursue a unique form of universal collective worship of Allah and seek closeness to Him in the one and only location and at the only time chosen by Him.

Hajj is a physical, ritual worship which requires money to be fulfilled. Every step of Hajj is a remind¬er, a sign of submission to Allah, an instructive tool for self-discipline and piety. It serves to cleanse the soul of the pilgrims so that they return home as pure as the day they were born. Behind every aspect of the Hajj is some reflection signifying the Hereafter.

There are variations to the performance of Hajj depending on whether one first performs <Umrah (lesser pilgrimage), rests and then performs Hajj; combines <Umrah and Hajj, or having performed Umrah before, is performing just Hajj, which is done only from 8th - 13th of the last month of the Hijrah calendar, called Dhul-Hijjah (month of Hajj).

Hajj involves many steps and regulations too numerous to list here, including, but not limited to, intention, wearing special garment (ihram), chanting the talbiyah, moving between Makkah and its

environs of Mina, Arafaat and Muzdalifah while performing different prescribed rituals, prayers and supplications, shaving hair for men and a little trim for women, and circumambulation of the Ka>bah. Some aspects of the Hajj commemorate Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), the Father of all later Prophets. They signify his obedience to Allah in abandoning his wife and baby Ishmael in the desert, and later his ready obedience to sacrifice Ishmael who also submitted in a matchless obedience to his Creator. These are the rituals of stoning the devil, slaughtering a sacrificial animal, drinking zamzam water and the walk (sa>yi) between the hills of Safa and Marwa.

Benefits:

Hajj is probably the most physically, emotionally and spiritually demanding journey a Muslim will ever make in a lifetime, but when done properly has great rewards on all levels.

Pilgrims experience real Muslim brotherhood in the spirit of unity of purpose.

They experience real Muslim equality in spite of their racial and social diversity.

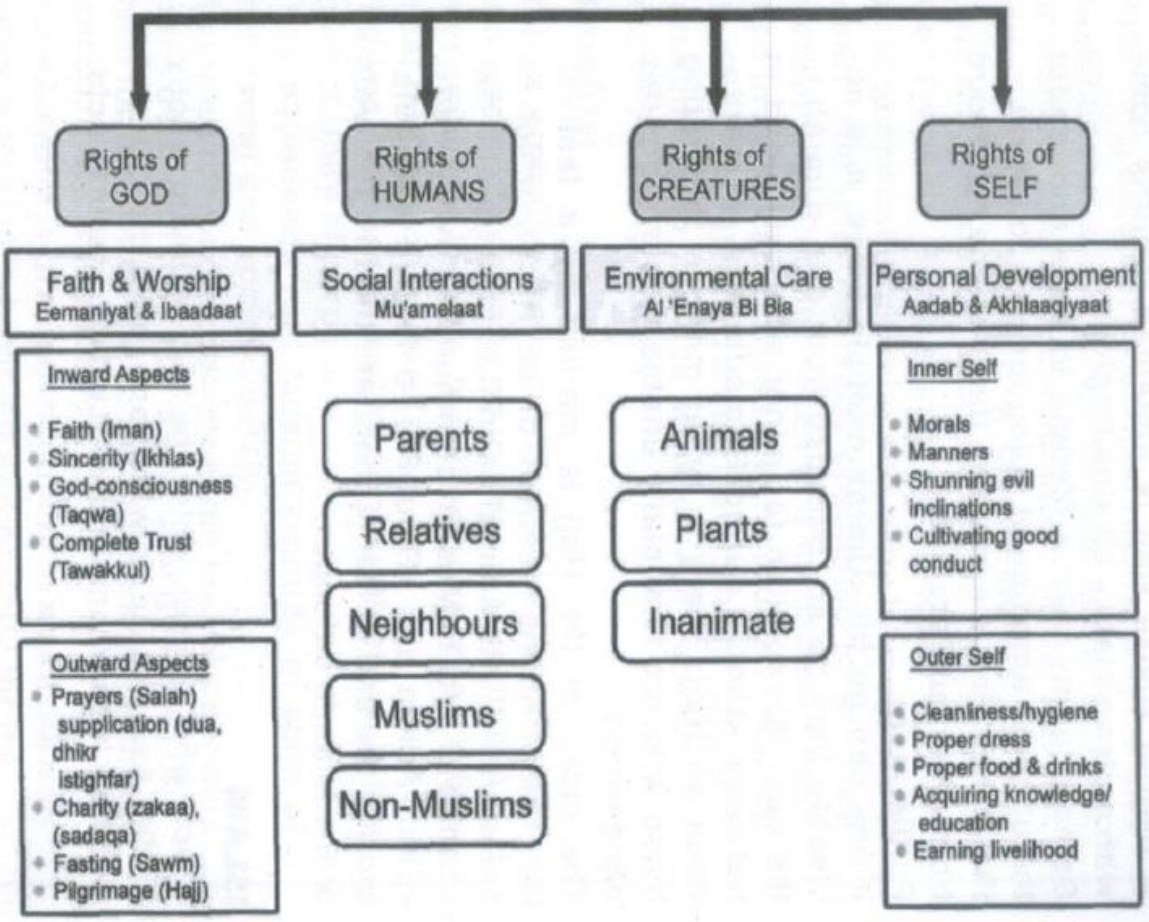
Hajj is a profound experience that touches pilgrims to the depths of their souls and changes most of them for the better due to the universal love, brotherhood, unity, and patience.

Not everyone is granted the ability to make the Hajj, hence a Muslim is humbled and grateful for the blessing of being one among the chosen few.

A pilgrim whose Hajj is accepted, returns home with a clean slate - all sins forgiven.
Some pilgrims take a lifetime to save enough for the ultimate ambition of going for Hajj, knowing that if their Hajj is accepted, there will be no reward from Allah but Paradise.
Furthermore:
If one can go for <Umrah multiple times, it is advisable they do so, because from one <Umrah to the next is expiation for minor sins committed in between. <Umrah during Ramadhan is as meritorious as Hajj. There is great merit in facilitating those who are financially unable to carry out this obliga¬tion.
The close of the Hajj is marked by a festival, the <Eidul-Adhha (festival of sacrifice), which is cel¬ebrated with animal sacrifice, prayers and exchange of gifts in Muslim communities everywhere. <Eidul-Adhha and <Eidul-Fitr, a festive day celebrating the end of Ramadhan, are the two festivals of the Islamic calendar.

ISLAM

O you who believe, enter the fold of Islam wholly (2:208) Away of life, in which one fulfils the rights of all those with whom, and with which, one interacts.


Rights of GOD
Rights of HUMANS
Rights of CREATURES
Rights of SELF
Faith & Worship
Eemaniyat & Ibaadaat
Social Interactions
Mu'amelaat
Environmental Care
Al 'Enaya Bi Bia
Personal Development
Aadab & Akhlaaqiyaat
Inward Aspects
Faith (Iman)
Sincerity (Ikhlas)
God-consciousness (Taqwa)
Complete Trust (Tawakkul)
Outward Aspects
Prayers (Salah) supplication (dua, dhikr istighfar)
Charity (zakaa), (sadaqa)
Fasting (Sawm)
Pilgrimage (Hajj)
Parents
Relatives
Neighbours
Muslims
Non-Muslims
Animals
Plants
Inanimate
Inner Self
Morals
Manners
Shunning evil inclinations
Cultivating good conduct
Outer Self
Cleanliness/hygiene
Proper dress
Proper food & drinks
Acquiring knowledge/ education
Earning livelihood