



# The Five Pillars of Islam



Muslims are the people who follow Islam. As a part of their belief, Muslims consider that there are five basic duties expected of them. These are the five pillars of faith. The five pillars underpin the beliefs of the Arabic faith. Muslims believe that in his last sermon, the Prophet Muhammad said these words to Muslims:

There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is his messenger.

## Shahadah

### Pillar 1: Shahadah ('declaration of faith')

- ❖ Muslims should recite the Shahadah as often as they can – it reads: Ashadu an la ilaha illa illa-ilah, wa ashadu anna muhammadan rasul ullah.
- ❖ This means: "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that the Prophet Muhammad is his messenger."
- ❖ This is a Muslim's pledge to live life in obedience to Allah. Muslims believe that their actions are judged by their intentions, rather than their consequences, so they believe that it is very important to live life with good intentions.



## Salah

### Pillar 2: Salah ('worship of Allah')

- ❖ Salah (worship of Allah) takes place five times a day. The mu'adin calls people to prayer from the top of the minaret. The words used are known as the adhan.
- ❖ Generally, Muslims are required to pray at fajr (dawn), suhr (midday), asr (late afternoon), maghrib (after sunset) and eisha (late evening).
- ❖ Before Muslims pray, they perform washing (wudu) following a ritual sequence. They also follow the Rak'at (a sequence of movements and words).
- ❖ Muslims can pray anywhere as long as it is clean. Their feet must face away from Mecca



## Key Vocabulary

Islam  
Muslim  
Mosque  
Shahadah  
Salah  
Zakah  
Sawm  
Hajj  
Ummah  
Ramadan  
Pilgrimage  
Ihram  
Ka'aba

## Zakah

### Pillar 3: Zakah ('poor due')

- ❖ Muslims are required to purify their wealth by giving to others who are less fortunate than themselves.
- ❖ Zakar is not a choice, but is strictly enforced by Islamic law. Muslims should give 2.5% of their annual wealth away, normally at the end of Ramadan.
- ❖ Zakah supports the 'Ummah' (the worldwide community of Muslims) by helping the poor and needy. Many Muslims also give to charities such as Red Crescent and Islamic Relief



## Sawn

### Pillar 4: Sawm ('fasting during Ramadan')

- ❖ Adult Muslims who are able are expected to follow the example of Prophet Muhammad and fast during the month of Ramadan.
- ❖ During Ramadan, Muslims should not eat, drink or smoke from just before dawn until sunset. After sunset, families gather to eat a good meal together, which is known as Iftar.
- ❖ By fasting, Muslims feel able to empathise with the poor and needy and control desires and cravings.



## Hajj

### Pillar 5: Hajj ('pilgrimage to Mecca')

- ❖ The Hajj is an annual pilgrimage made to Mecca by around 2-3 million Muslims during the month of Dhul Hijjah.
- ❖ All Muslims who are fit and able are expected to do this pilgrimage at least once in their lives. During pilgrimage, they must wear special clothes called ihram.
- ❖ When they reach Mecca, pilgrims should walk around the Ka'aba seven times, touching or saluting to the sacred black stone as they pass the south-eastern corner.

