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The Fourth Pillar : fasting in Ramadan

✿ Fasting in Ramadan means abstaining from food, drink and sexual intercourse every day from dawn to sunset during one month in the year, which is the lunar month of Ramadan.

✿ Indeed, fasting trains one to observe their Lord at all times, carrying out His commandments and abandoning what He has forbidden, even when they are alone and no one can see them. For this reason, we find that a Muslim carries out his/her obligations sincerely even when there are no surveillance cameras to monitor their every move.

✿ Fasting gives a person mental strength and provides them with the ability to control their whims and desires. It accustoms them to giving up addiction to lawful foods and drinks during the fast. In this way, they demonstrate their servitude to Allah and not to the worldly life and its pleasures.

✿ Fasting instils in those who observe it patience and willpower. A person who goes without food or water for about fourteen hours in extreme heat, patiently resisting the temptation to take not even a single sip of water or a morsel of food, is undoubtedly a person with a steely inner resolve and great patience.

✿ Fasting nurtures social solidarity. When the rich suffer the pains of hunger while fasting, this reminds them of the condition and distress of the poor, which, in turn, prompts them to assist them with money and food, as fasting makes them realise what it is like to be hungry.

✿ Fasting has great health benefits, as it affords the fasting person the opportunity to relax his digestive system and help balance fluid levels in his body.



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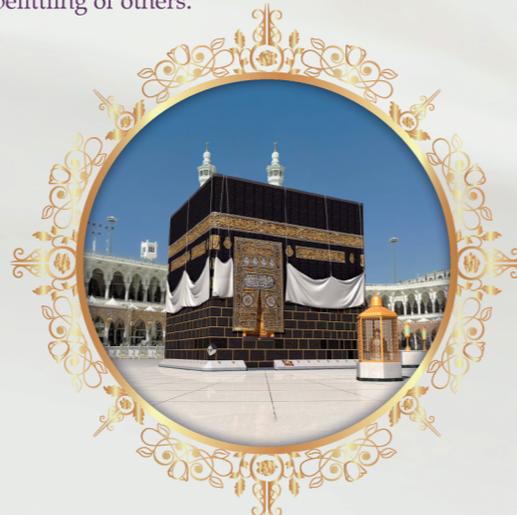
The fifth pillar : Making the Pilgrimage to the Sacred House

✿ The pilgrimage, or hajj, is the journey of a lifetime. Muslims are required to perform the pilgrimage only once in a lifetime if they are physically and financially able. During the five-day pilgrimage period, pilgrims cut themselves off from worldly concerns and devote themselves completely to the worship of Allah. They remember their Lord very often and frequently call upon Him and ask Him for everything they want among the affairs of this world and the hereafter.

✿ Hajj demonstrates the unity of Muslims with millions of them from many different nationalities, countries and languages joining together in one single place, all dressed in the same garment.

✿ Hajj teaches them order, unity, harmony and affection among one another. All worldly differences are eliminated: there is no difference whatsoever between rich and poor, ruler and ruled and weak and strong. They all stand equal before Allah when performing the pilgrimage rituals.

It is a practical and annual demonstration of one of the great Islamic principles: A white person has no superiority over a black person, nor does a black person have any superiority over a white person; an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab except in piety. In this way, Islam has combatted racism and belittling of others.



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Learn about Islam in 5 minutes



English

You may have been wondering why this religion is spreading rapidly everywhere? What is the real truth about it? What makes people embrace it with sheer love and utter conviction?

Well, the answer is that it is Allah's religion which is in perfect harmony with the pure innate human nature and satisfies its spiritual and physical needs.

Islam is to fully submit yourself to Allah, the Lord of the universe, by worshipping Him alone without any partners and obeying what He commands and avoiding what He forbids. It is the religion that Allah has approved and chosen for all kinds of people, regardless of their race, colour and language. It is the very religion that was practiced by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, may Allah praise them all and protect them.

Islam is a great religion which incorporates a pure belief, high lofty morals, sincere acts of worship and refined dealings that regulate one's relationship with their Lord, with their family, with members of their community and with the rest of mankind.

Islam is based on five essential pillars without which it will neither be valid nor accepted. Islam is like a building, and these five pillars are firm pillars upon which this great structure is founded.

The five pillars of Islam are:
1- Testifying that there is no true deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, 2- establishing the prayers, 3- paying zakat, 4- fasting in Ramadan and 5- making the pilgrimage to the Sacred House).

1 The Two: Testimonies of Faith

You believe with your heart and proclaim with your tongue, by saying: Ash-hadu allaa ilaaha illallaah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadar-rasoolullaah. This translates as "I bear witness that there is no true deity worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

The first part of this testimony of faith means: I worship none but Allah, for He is the only true God deserving of worship, while all other deities that humans worship are false and do not deserve to be worshiped

It is Allah who sends down rain for us from the sky, with which He brings forth for us all types of crops from the ground, while false gods who are worshipped besides Him cannot do such things at all. Allah Almighty says: (This is Allah's creation. Show me, then, what those [gods] other than Him have created! The wrongdoers are clearly misguided.) *The Qur'an, 31:11*



Have you reflected on yourself? Have you pondered on your internal and external organs, on your brain, heart, nervous system and all the systems in your body? Can anyone in the entire universe claim to be the one who has created all that? No one can do that but Allah Almighty.

Allah Almighty alone is worthy of worship; therefore, we ought to love Him with all our hearts, obey His commands, draw closer to Him with all types of acts of worship and keep away from everything that He does not like and is not pleased with.

The second part of the statement is to bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah Allah chose him from among all human beings, revealed to him the religion and the Qur'an, which He commanded him to convey to all of mankind and jinn.

He was the epitome of moral perfection and integrity and was the dearest of all people to Allah. He was known by everyone, his friends and foes alike, for his honesty and sincerity, which earned him the nickname Al-Ameen, which means "the truthful and trustworthy one."

Therefore, we ought to believe everything he said, as he only conveyed whatever Allah Almighty revealed to him. We must also obey his commands and avoid what he forbids, for indeed, obeying him is obeying Allah.

2 The Second Pillar: Establishing the Prayers

The prayer is a permanent connection the slave has with his/her Creator, the Mighty and Majestic. It consists of specific words and actions which the slave carries out, five times a day in order to draw closer to his/her Lord.

Indeed, mankind are slaves of their Lord. They are always in great destitute of turning to Him in humility, calling upon Him, complaining to Him about their pains and asking Him to grant them their wishes.

Before one begins the prayer, they must purify themselves by washing the body parts that are part of the ablution in preparation for the prayer. Then, they must face the qiblah (the direction of prayer, which is the Ka'bah in Makkah), and say Allaahu akbar (which means "Allah is the Greatest").

Then, they read some verses of the Qur'an and bow and rise back up and then prostrate. After that, they get back up and repeat the previous and carry out the remaining acts of the prayer and recite its supplications.

We perform the prayer five times a day:

(1) at dawn (fajr), (2) at about midday (dhuhr), (3) in the late afternoon ('asr), (4) at sunset (maghrib) and (5) in the late evening ('ishaa')



The prayer has numerous benefits. Among other things, it serves to bring the slave closer to their Lord and makes them constantly aware of Allah's presence, knowing that He is constantly watching over them. In this way, they worship Him as though they see Him. Even though they cannot see Him, they know for sure that He sees him.

The prayer provides the believer with spiritual strength and helps him/her stand resolutely in the face of life's troubles and challenges. Thus, whenever Allah's Messenger, Muhammad ﷺ, experienced any form of distress or run into any difficulty, he would hasten to the prayer.

3 The Third Pillar: Paying Zakat

Zakat is an effective system of social solidarity. It consists of a specific percentage of wealth, approximately 2.5%, that the rich pay to the poor and the needy as a form of assistance.

The poor are entitled to a portion of the wealth of the rich. The rich must not use the wealth Allah given them just for themselves and deprive the needy who are unable to earn a living.

Zakat purifies the rich from greed, selfishness and excessive concern with accumulating wealth. It also makes them fall into the habit of giving generously to others. Such acts of kindness are bound to make them happy.

When they give the needy and see smiles on their faces, they themselves feel the pleasing emotions of joy and elation as a result of making others happy.

Likewise, the Zakat rids the poor of envy and malice. For indeed, when the poor see that the rich provide for them and take care of them, they will not have envious thoughts towards them nor feel the need to transgress against their wealth. Rather, they would wish for them more and more prosperity, because they themselves benefit from such wealth.

Zakat frees the poor from feelings of humiliation before the rich and guarantees them a decent life; in fact, when they receive zakat, they feel that they are only claiming the right that Allah has granted them, and so they do not feel they are subjected to humiliation when they receive it. Allah Almighty says: (Those in whose wealth there is a recognized right (a fixed share) for beggars and the destitute.) *The Qur'an, 70:24-25*

