

Faith

The **Shahadah** is the first pillar of Islam. It is a declaration of faith spoken by all Muslims. The Shahadah must be spoken publicly before a person can be considered a Muslim. The Qur'an states that the Shahadah must be "*spoken by the tongue and with the full assent of the heart*". This means that is not simply enough to speak these words; you must also believe them.

The Shahadah is so important we whisper it into a baby's ear when they are born so it is the first thing they hear. It is also heard in the call to prayer.

Prayer

Salat is the second pillar of Islam. 'Salat' means 'prayer'. It is every Muslim's duty to pray to Allah five times a day. Muslims believe that, through prayer, they become closer to Allah. Muslims often stand shoulder to shoulder when praying as a sign of the equality of humans before Allah.

Charity

Zakat is the third pillar of Islam. It is the amount of money that every Muslim who is financially able must pay to support people who are poor and needy. Zakat should be given once a year; however, a Muslim can choose when in this year they wish to pay it.

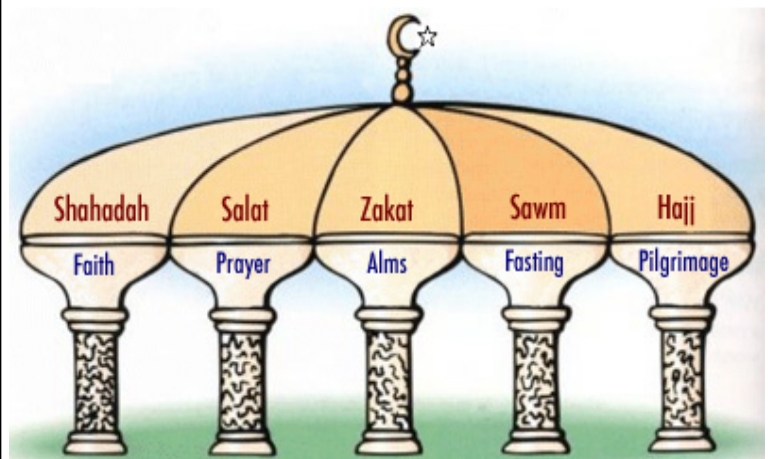
Zakat can be paid to a mosque or to Zakat organisations such as Islamic Relief or Muslim Hands.

Traders must give 2.5% of the value of their goods to Zakat. Farmers must give 5% of their crops and livestock to Zakat. Everyone else must give 2.5% of their surplus money.

Pilgrimage

The Hajj is the fifth and final pillar of Islam. It is the journey to Makkah that every adult Muslim should undertake at least once in their life. The Hajj promotes the bonds of Islamic brotherhood and sisterhood by showing that everyone is equal in the eyes of Allah.

The Five Pillars of Islam



Fasting

Sawm is the fourth pillar of Islam. It means fasting. When fasting, Muslims do not eat, drink or have sex.

Muslims practise Sawm by fasting every year in the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset.

By practising Sawm, a Muslim develops sympathy for suffering. It also demonstrates discipline and obedience to Allah.

Muslims do not have to fast if they are under 12, too old, pregnant, breastfeeding, travelling or sick.