<u> 5 Pillars Of Islam</u>

<u>Shahaadah</u>

What is meant by the first pillar of Islam, the Declaration of Faith (kalimah)?

Shahaadah is from the verb shadida meaning to witness. According to Islamic terminology Shahaadah means to witness, to know or to believe without any doubt that there is no god except Allah (la ilaaha illallah) and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah (Muhammadur rasoolullah).

At the outset, the Kalimah (Laa ilaaha Illallah Muhammadur Rasoulullah) is the basic essence of Islam. Everything resides in these words. Our whole existence is based on Allah and our guidance is through His prophet. Moreover, it is also known as the kalimah tayyabah meaning purity. As such when a person utters these words he is bound to become purified from disbelief and he enters the fold of Islam. Thirdly, it is also said that the whole Qur'an is an explanation of this one statement, meaning that if we want to know what is meant by Tawheed in the first part of the Kalimah and what is implied by Risaalah in the second part, then we just have to study the Qur'an elaborating on Allah, prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) and mankind. Furthermore, when we utter these words of faith, we accept Allah with all His words from His book known as the Holy Qur'an and we must accept the holy prophet (s.a.w) with all his teachings from his hadith (sayings) and sunnah (deeds). Fifthly, by this declaration of faith we are engaging ourselves to bear witness to the truth it conveys and it must be with total submission and sincerity. We can't be firm believers of this Kalimah and at the same time not sincere to it.

Added to the above, the first part of this kalimah is the belief in the Oneness of Allah that is tawhid which is the fundamental teaching of Islam. By believing in Allah this implies to believe in His uniqueness in being, attributes and action. No one can equal Him or be better than Him. Seventhly, the second part deals with the Risalah of the holy Prophet (s.a.w) and this is vital to accept him. Accepting the prophet as Allah's prophet implies accepting his uniqueness also through him as being the best and the last of prophets, the universal prophet with the universal book as Qur'an and as a mercy for all worlds. Besides, this kalimah describes the relationship between Allah the Creator and the created. When we say that there is no god except Allah this means among others that there is no Creator other than Allah. He is our Creator, Lord, Cherisher and Sustainer among other of His qualities. Ninthly, it symbolises an active statement which is repeated by Muslims many times in formal worship that is Swalaat in the position of Qa'dah before the prayer ends and it is present in the call to prayer (adhan) five times daily. Last but not least, all Muslims need to profess this belief while acting and living their lives in accordance with its requirements. It will not serve its purpose if we don't act upon it.

In fact a true Muslim is one who is completely aware of the meaning of the kalimah and proclaims it with sincerity and devotion. According to the prophet (s.a.w) it serves as purifying the heart and brings the soul to a return journey to Allah in the best way.

<u>Swalaat</u>

What are the requirements for Swalaat or describe how Muslims perform the ritual of preparing for prayer?

The second pillar of Islam is Swalaat. Also known as prayer or namaz, swalaat is obligatory on all Muslims throughout their life time. There is no place or instance where swalaat can be abandoned. We have been gifted by Allah with five daily swalaat such as Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha. Moreover they are divided into Fard, Wajib, Sunnah and Nafil. However, to perform swalaat there are many conditions that must be considered.

At the outset, for someone to perform swalaat and for swalaat to be fard on him, he must be a Muslim who has already attained the age of puberty. A non Muslim is not allowed to enter the mosque and it is not a sin for someone who has not attained the age of puberty to miss swalaat. **Moreover**, the place to perform the swalaat must be clean and tidy. Cleanliness is an essential part of faith (Iman). **Thirdly**, the clothes used by the Muslims must be clean and not covered or imprinted with any impurity as Allah addresses to the children of Adam (as) in the Qur'an to look to our adornment at every place of worship. We must be appropriately dressed and our private parts must be well covered. **Furthermore**, in order to perform swalaat a Muslim must perform his ablution washing his hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, head and feet. However, in the absence of water, the symbolic washing known as tayyammum must be done. **Fifthly**, the Muslim must face the Qiblah which is the direction towards the Ka'bah. If another direction is taken voluntarily then the swalaat will not be accepted.

Added to the above, the person performing swalaat must be sane of mind and not lunatic. He must be able to concentrate on whatever he is saying and doing through swalaat. Seventhly, swalaat can't be performed in advance. We must wait for the appropriate time and for the prayer call that is the adhan. Besides, when is iqamah that is the announcement for the swalaat to be done in jama'ah that is congregation, the Muslim must be ready in a standing position, in a straightened line and standing close by the side of his brother in Islam. Ninthly, the Muslim must be ready physically and mentally to follow the Imam that is the leader of the prayer at any cost. He will not be allowed to start the prayer before the Imam or to do any action before the Imam in course of the swalaat or to end the prayer before the Imam. He must be prepared to follow the Imam. Last but not least, when standing in swalaat the Muslim must know and declare the intention to pray and to perform such and such swalaat. Niyyat that is intention is important.

How do Muslims perform daily prayers (swalaat)?

Swalaat is one of the five pillars of Islam and it is obligatory on all Muslims. It is fard on us to perform the five daily prayers such as Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha. However, there are steps that must be respected when performing swalaat.

At the outset, the Muslim must have his ritual purification known as tahaarat (purity) divided into wudu and Ghusal and in the absence of water the Tayyamum is done. Alongside with purity, his cloth must be clean and deprived of any impurity and it must be covering his private parts. Moreover, it is allowed to pray anywhere as long as it is clean because the earth of Allah is wide as it is told in the Qur'an. Once the place is spotted, the Muslims must face the direction of the Ka'bah as Qiblah before the swalaat. Thirdly, the Muslim must be aware of the intention of what swalaat he will offer. Furthermore, the Muslim must pronounce the Takbir by saying Allahou Akbar at the beginning of the prayer. For men, both hands will be lifted till both thumbs touch the lobes of the ears. For women the hands will be elevated till the shoulders. Fifthly, there is the position of the Qiyam where Thana, surah Faatiha and other verses are recited. For men the right hand must be tied over the left hand supporting it below the navel. For women, both hands are tied on the breast.

Added to the above, there is the rukuh where we praise Allah. For men, they must bend till the back makes a 90 degree with the leg. However, for women, as soon as their hands are placed on their knees, they stopped bending. Seventh, there is the sajdah where the toes, knees, the hands, the nose and the forehead touch the ground. For men the elbows are spread apart and their hips are upraised. However, for women, the elbows are squeezed to the sides of their bodies and the hips are levelled to the thighs. Besides, there is the Jalsa and the Qa'dah where verses from hadith are recited. For men, the right foot is elevated on the toes and the left foot is turned to the right side. But for women both feet are turned to the right. Ninthly, there is the salaam which is composed of turning the head to the right and then to the left to complete the swalaat. Both men and women act likewise. Last but not least, there is the du'a (personal invocation) which can be said the Muslims. According to the prophet (s.a.w) the du'a after the swalaat is accepted by Allah.

Why prayer (salat) is considered the foundation of religion? What is its importance / significance?

There are different reasons why prayer is considered the foundation of religion. At the outset, being the second pillar of Islam, Muslims believe that they will be questioned about this on the Day of Judgement. Both the quality and sincerity of ibaadah will be asked. Moreover, it is an institution which gives a structure to the day enabling Muslims to remember Allah. It marks the whole day with spiritual stamp and blessings from Allah. Thirdly, it is important to Muslims as the prophet (s.a.w) said that Prayer is the key to Paradise. It aims at encouraging the Muslims to strive harder. Furthermore, it is an occasion given by Allah to Mankind to thank Allah for all His blessings and favours as it provides inner peace and comfort to the soul. Fifthly, it strengthens our belief and relationship with Allah as it is direct communication with Him purifying the heart and gives spiritual strength to become a better person.

Added to the above, the congregational prayers strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among Muslims. There is a sense of solidarity and it also increases awareness of the plight of less fortunate Muslims and a desire to help. Seventhly, Allah reminds Muslims to do more and to strive harder in order to cultivate true piety in the love of Allah through Swalaat. Besides, it cultivates a sense of belonging to a specific community under a common Imam as leader. It thus serves its purpose. Ninthly, it creates a sense of discipline in the habits of Muslims. We are bound to five daily prayers which are performed at specific time. They are not done as per our wish by through the wish of Allah. Last but not least, when we perform swalaat we approach Allah to such an extent that we obtain the beauty of the Swalih (the pious) and the Swabir (the patient). Allah will love us and we will be blessed in this world, Qabr and Aakhirah.

How far is the mosque (Masjid) a focal point in the lives of Muslim?

In Islam the mosque is the symbol of Islamic architecture. It is not a mere building but it is a focal point in the lives of Muslims through different ways. At the outset, it is a space provided for the congregational Friday (jum'ah) prayers and individual prayer which can be offered at any time. Moreover, the mosque is vital for both men and women, though predominantly men, to perform the five daily swalaat in congregation. Thirdly, the mosque is also used twice a year for both 'id that is 'id-ul-fitr and 'id-ul-adha. Furthermore, the mosque through its loudspeaker and its minaret is a means to notify Muslims concerning the various daily times for prayer. Fifthly, the mosque is used especially for tarawih prayers in the evening where both men and women can attend.

Added to the above, the mosque is used as a place for teaching and learning. Usually a Madrasah is attached to the mosque to teach Qur'an, Hadith, Islamiat and many other fields. Seventhly, the mosque is vital for those who use it as a place of retreat for I'tikaaf during the month of Ramadan. Usually this is applied to men. Besides, the mosque can be used for both Nikah and Janaza prayers. It is a blessed place where blessings are sent upon mankind. Ninthly, the mosque can also be used as a centre for the community whenever there is any topic of discussion or sharing of ideas or organising of any religious or civil programmes. Last but not least, the mosque can be used by Muslims to read the Qur'an, Hadith, books of Fiqh, relax, and to sleep between prayers. This can be seen in Macca and Madina where families group with small children.

<u>Swam</u>

What are the main observances followed by Muslims during the month of Ramadan?

Sawm is another institution found among the five pillars of Islam and has been instituted in the second year of Hijri. It is the keeping of fast for a period of 29 to 30 days during the month of Ramadhan. Before the time of the prophet of Islam (s.a.w), the number of days was 40 for all prophets (as) from Hazrat Adam (as) till the time of Hazrat Isa (as). It is fard in Islam on all Muslims and not abiding to it without any proper reason, renders the Muslims sinners. During that month there are many observances that are followed by the Muslims.

At the outset, it is recommended to all Muslims to wake up early in the morning for the swalaat-ul-Tahajjud and to fast from before dawn (fajr) till sunset during Ramadan. Moreover, it is sunnah of the prophet (s.a.w) when beginning the fast to eat suboor (Sehri) and to make the niyat (intention) that the fast is for Allah and done in His obedience. Thirdly, as from the time of Fajr where the muslims will be gathered in the mosque for swalaat, it is vital to abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and having sex till the time of sunset. Furthermore, as usual it is recommended for a validated fasting to abstain from all evil thoughts, careless chatter, and undesirable actions respectively with our thought, tongue and limbs. Fifthly, it is recommended on Muslims to exert their utmost in patience and humility. This will help them to face the evil in this world.

Added to the above, as swalaat is already and always fard on Muslims, the latter are recommended to perform all swalaat on time with jama'ah till the breaking of fast (iftar) at sunset (maghrib) usually with dates and followed by a light meal depending on people taste and habit. Seventhly, it is recommended to read the qur'an and much of Darood Shareef especially before maghrib swalaat and then to invoke Allah through sincere du'a. During that month after swalaatul Isha, we have the tarawih prayers which are recommended with the lecture of one part of the Qur'an in each night to complete the whole recitation by the end of the month. Besides, it is recommended to read the Qur'an individually during this month which is also beneficial and after its completion to at least learn by heart a few verses. Ninthly, it is sunnah for some Muslim men to spend the last ten days in I'tikaf in the mosque giving up all worldly occupations for the sake of Allah. Last but not least, it is recommended to spend the night of Lailat-ul-qadr in ibaadah. According to the Qur'an this night is worth more than one thousand months.

Give reasons why this month is special? What is the significance / importance of Ramadhan?

The month of Ramadhan is special in various ways. At the outset, fasting (sawm) during Ramadan is a pillar of Islam hence it is by itself obligatory on every responsible and fit Muslim. Its importance lies in its being vital to accept to be considered as a complete Muslim with the remaining pillars. Moreover, Allah says in the Qur'an that Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an as a guide to mankind and it acts as a training period for Muslims to apply in the remaining months of a whole year. Thirdly, it is special as in this month Allah forgives us and purifies us from our sins and this leads to obedience to Him, and by exercising self control, patience and humility in all matters, fasting gives Muslims a sense of hope in the mercy of Allah. Furthermore, this month is special as in it the Muslims increase their study of their faith and the recitation of the Qur'an. It is a way towards the return to Allah or to approach Him nearer. Fifthly, this month helps Muslims to unite as a community in acts of worship, especially for last ten days in I'tikaaf and the night of power or destiny known as Lailatul Qadr.

Added to the above, the mere fact of not able to eat and drink for specific hours makes Muslims more aware of the suffering of the poor and needy. This will lead to being more generous during Ramadan ending with the annual zakat to be given to the poor. Seventhly, a big part of this month symbolises the celebrating the idea of brotherhood and sharing especially during the breaking of the fast at the time of Iftar. There is sharing of sweets or meals among neighbours or in the mosque. Besides, it is a month allowing Muslims the opportunity to purify their egos, their hearts and their deeds. It is a spiritual month leading to the elevation of Muslims in the eyes of Allah. Ninthly, that month which is headed by abstinence helps Muslims to stop and abstain from common evils such as telling lies, backbiting, quarrelling, eating haraam item, earning through unlawful means and any act which may harm or cause grief to a person. Last but not least, it has been proven scientifically that a person who does not eat or reduce eating for a few days on monthly basis will be benefited physically. As such the month of Ramadhan is for both physical and spiritual benefits.

<u>Zakaat</u>

What does Islam teach about Zakaat and who are the people entitled to be recipients of zakat?

Among the various pillars of Islam, Zakaat also known as the poor due is obligatory on Muslims. It has been instituted for the community of our prophet (s.a.w) since the second year of Hijri. Zakaat is the amount of money taken from the better off or the rich and to be given to those in need. Allah says in the Qur'an to spend in His way as in surah 36 verse 47 it is mentioned to spend on others out of what Allah has provided you. Zakaat is taken from different sources like money, gold, silver, mines and land tax. Normally it is $2\frac{1}{2}$ % of our money or wealth that is given as Zakaat. If the Nisab; the minimum amount on which zakaat is taken, equals or exceeds 598.40 gm on silver and 85.5 gm on gold, then zakaat must be paid. Zakaat must be taken from mines as 1/5 of the produce and on land tax as 1/10 if the land is watered by a lack or a river or 1/20 if not watered naturally.

There are many people entitled to be recipients of zakaat. At the outset, all Muslim poor people who are not able to support themselves or their families are liable to take zakaat. These people are in need of our help to face life. Moreover, all new Muslim converts who are not able to settle into their new life are in need of Zakaat money. They need a help to start over their life as they left everything behind them. Thirdly, if there is the necessity to pay the ransom of any prisoner of war and to give them their freedom, then zakaat can be taken. It is the responsibility of the Muslim state to safeguard the interest of the people. Furthermore, any Muslim in need due to huge amount of dept and who is under persistent pressure can take zakaat. He is still responsible towards his families and has to need their expenses. Fifthly, zakaat can be taken by any Muslim traveller who is in difficulty abroad. It is the responsibility of the Islamic state to ensure the return of the traveller.

Added to the above, Zakaat can be taken by those who are engaged by the state or government to collect zakaat. They are employed by the Muslim ruler. Seventhly, zakaat can be given to cover the expenses of Muslims in the service of Allah. They are those who spend their time and energy in inviting others to Islam. Besides, zakaat can be given to those who beg and those who out of humility don't beg. These people need our help. Ninthly, zakaat can be given to those women who lost their husbands or those who divorced but are still in need of money for the survival of their children. Last but not least, zakaat can be distributed to madrasah, dar-ul-uloom or any Islamic centre to help the students in their studies and to spread Islam. Allah says in surah 57 verse 7 to spend on others out of that of which He has made you trustees for those of you who have attained faith and who spend freely in Allah's cause Will have a great reward.'

Why is zakat important in Muslim life? What is the significance / importance of Zakaat?

Zakaat is important for Muslims in different ways. At the outset, it is a pillar of faith and it is an act of worship. It has been enjoined by Allah in the Qur'an and undertaken by Muslims in the interest of society as a whole. Moreover, we are also responsible towards our fellow Muslims and by giving in kind or money to the rightful beneficiaries we are fulfilling our Islamic duties. This will create the sense of sharing and thinking of others. Thirdly, when we give zakaat generously, such actions will purify the heart of selfishness and greed and we will be blessed by Allah in doing so. This will remove the love of wealth and money from our heart. Furthermore, when we give Zakaat this will minimise the suffering of the needy and the poor members of society. At the same time we will know the worthiness and value of money. Fifthly, this will foster goodwill and gratitude in the hearts of the recipients towards the giver and hence this will create unity in the society benefits.

Added to the above, there will be a manifestation of spiritual and humanitarian interactions between individual Muslims and the society he lives in. This will bridge the link between materialism and spirituality. Seventhly, when we give zakaat with love from our heart this in fact symbolises our gratitude towards Allah. He is the One who has given us wealth and we in return are being kind towards the poor. Besides, giving zakaat will help us to keep a flow of money in the society. The poor will not forever be poor or poorer. This will also lead to the prevention of monopolies in the society. Ninthly, giving zakaat

will lead to the purification of our money. Once zakaat is paid, our money becomes pure and goes under the assurance of Allah. Indeed we will never be deprived of blessings in our life. **Last but not least**, when we give zakaat the moral degradation of society lowers and ultimately finishes because the frustration of people and their depression lowers down. There will be fewer thieves for instance.

Zakaat has been granted to mankind as a means to purify both our materialistic and spiritual dealings. At the same time it aims at helping those in need and creating a better society.

<u>Hajj</u>

Describe the rites performed during the Hajj. How is the hajj performed?

Hajj is the fifth and last pillar of Islam. It has been given to the prophet (s.a.w) during the Madinan phase and it is obligatory on all Muslims having the means to make it to Macca in Saudi Arabia. The hajj is obligatory on each Muslim and must be accomplished at least once during our lifetime. This institution englobes a few acts of different great personalities of Islam. There are some requirements and steps that are important in Hajj.

At the outset, when performing the Hajj, Muslims must be in the state of purification (wudu/Ghusal) done at boundary (miqat) and must wear the pilgrim dress known as ihram. It is a two pieces of unstitched cloth for men and for women it can be any appropriate dress or jilbab. Moreover, each Muslim must know the different stages and what must be read or intended when going through each one of them. As such, the Niyyat or intention for Hajj is done with a two rakat (unit) prayers before entering the boundary of the Haram shareef. Thirdly, there is the continuous repetition of the talbiyah loudly ('Here I am O Lord' – Labbaik Allaahoummah Labbaik) when proceeding to Macca. This can be done either individually or in group. Furthermore, when entering Macca Muslims must do the tawaf 7 times which is known as tawaf-e-qudoom starting at the corner of hajr aswad (the Black Stone). Then this is followed by the Hastening (sai) of 7 times between the hills of Safa and Marwa and the shaving of the head for men and clipping of the hair for women. Fifthly, on the 8th of Dhu'l Hijjah Muslims proceed from Mecca to Mina before noon where they have to pray zuhr, asr, maghrib and Isha swalaat. They spend that night at Mina.

Added to the above, on the 9th of Dhul Hijjah they proceed to Arafa after swalaatul fair reaching there before Zawaal (zenith). This is the location of Mount of Mercy (Jabal al Rahmah). This is the main day of Hajj and if someone misses that day, he has missed Hajj. On that day, Muslims will combine swalaat zuhr and asr in the manner of the travellers, they will listen to the sermon, they will pray and supplicate for forgiveness and success in this world and the next. This is known as the Standing (wuquf). Seventhly, after sunset without performing swalaat maghrib, Muslims proceed to Muzdalifah where they will pray swalaat maghrib and isha together. They will spend the night there praying and gather 49 pebbles for rami, that is the beating of Shaitaan. Besides, on the 10th of Dhul Hijjah the Muslims will leave Muzdalifa after swalaat fair returning to Mina to beat the first Shaitaan. Then they will return to Macca to perform the tawaf known as tawaf Ziyarah. The pilgrims will offer the sacrifice, individually or collectively, in memory of Hazrat Ibrahim (as) after which the men will shave their hair and women may clip a small lock of hair and change out of ihram. Ninthly, on the same day the pilgrims will return to Mina where they will beat the three Shaitaan on the 11th and 12th of the same month. They may engage in any kind of ibaadah. Last but not least, the pilgrims will return from Mina to Mecca to perform tawaf al wida before leaving for home or madina. Muslims will pray at magam Ibrahim, kiss hajr al aswad, drink water from Zamzam and engage in ibaadah of their choice.

Explain how the Hajj unites the Muslim community. What is the significance / importance of Hajj?

There are different ways how the Hajj unites the Muslim community. At the outset, by wearing the 2 pieces of white unstitched cloth worn by all men as their pilgrim dress (ihram) this shows equality before Allah. It symbolises the burial shroud in which all Muslims are wrapped (all are equal before Allah on the Day of Judgement. Moreover, all believers forget their outward appearance concentrating on the rites required by Allah. There is no rich no poor no person from rich or poor countries. Thirdly, the recitation of the talbiyah ('Here I am O Lord') constantly said by all the pilgrims symbolises unity as it resonates everywhere. Furthermore, the tawaf of the Ka'bah is a symbol of unity for Muslims. Everyone is doing the same thing with the same intention to please Allah practically at the same time. Fifthly, there is a brotherhood which is created when Muslims come to perform Hajj from all over the world. It englobes people of all countries at the same place and time.

Added to the above, the mere standing at Arafa is the climax of Hajj where all people are equal before Allah. At the time of zawal (zenith) and before swalaat maghrib everyone is standing in the sun for supplication. It will be the same on the day of judgement. Seventhly, it symbolises no hierarchy in Islam or during Hajj as beliefs and actions unite the community in feelings of brotherhood and fraternity. Besides, there is sharing of meat or food and happiness on the day of sacrifice in the remembrance of Hazrat Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son. Ninthly, relationships and friendships are created among different people and countries through their meeting during the Hajj period. It is seen that after that period, the pilgrims will keep that relationship. Last but not least, the hajj unites Muslims under the same flag of Islam and under the same five pillars of Islam as hajj englobes the fundamental aspects of Islam and of how to be a Muslim.

Discuss the importance of ihram and wuquf.

Among the different elements of Hajj both the ihram and the wuquf are important for the pilgrims. The ihram is the cloth of the pilgrims during the period of hajj. For the men it consists of two unstitched pieces of white cloth. The upper one is known as the rida and the lower one is the izhar. At the outset, when someone wears the ihram, it signifies purification of his state. It symbolises purity where ghusl and wudu are important. Moreover, wearing the ihram signifies renouncing all the daily habits, wears and vanities. It signifies humility. Thirdly, there is an uniformity among all Muslims when performing the hajj. There is no difference. Furthermore, this will create a brotherhood and fraternity where pride no more exist when wearing the ihram. Fifthly, it reminds Muslims of the cloth covering at burial having the same colour with no trappings or wealth or status as help.

Another important aspect is the Wuquf. The wuquf (standing) of 'Arafat is the climax and is the most vital part of Hajj. At the outset, its importance lies in the fact that if we miss the wuquf, well, then there is no hajj. Our hajj is not accepted. Our presence is important. Moreover, it is important as when doing the wuquf sincerely, our sins will be forgiven by Allah and it is said that after the hajj we will be considered as the sinless people. Thirdly, it is important as it helps us to know the spot where the prophet (s.a.w) pronounced his last address with his last advices. It is also said that he received his last wahy – revelation there. It reminds us of the place and time Hazrat Adam (as) and Bibi Hawa (ra) met and the name came to be as 'Arafat. Furthermore, it is really the place where we go through the process of once again recognizing our Lord. We assess our past. We ask for His forgiveness, and resolve to worship only Allah (swt). Fifthly, it is not only physical but also spiritual. It must be done with the heart meaning that our hearts also must be present there and concentrating on what we are saying and benefit from the purification of the hearts.