

How to become a Muslim

It is easy to become a Muslim. To become a Muslim one must simply pronounce the Shahaadatayn (Declaration of Faith) with sincerity and conviction.

The Shahadah is the following :

" Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha illaallaah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan- Abduhu Wa Rasooluhoo " (In Arabic)

"I bear witness that there is no God worthy to be worshiped but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and Messenger of Allah." (Translation IN English)

Pronouncing the testimony of faith is sufficient to make one a convert to Muslim. There are however, seven conditions that must be observed before it can effectively make one a Muslim. Let us look at what these conditions are before we describe the procedure for taking the shahadah .

They are as follows:

- 1 Knowledge (Al-ilm)
- 2 Certainty (Al-Yaqeen)
- 3 Sincerity (Al-Ikhlaas)
- 4 Truthfulness (As-Sidq)
- 5 Love and affection (Al-Mahabbah)
- 6 Submission (Al-Inqiyaad) internally and externally
- 7 Acceptance and conformity (Al-Qubool)

1 Knowledge (Al-ilm)

Knowledge (al-ilm) of its meaning, what it negates and affirms. If a person says it without knowing its meaning, nor what its requirements are, then he will not benefit by it, because he has not believed in what it requires. Rather, he is like someone who speaks in a language that he does not understand.

The Shahadah is the dividing line between unbelief (kufr) and Islam. It is also called the kalimah (word). Whoever says it with truthfulness will enter the Gardens of Paradise

It is a kalimah that Allah Himself has testified to, as have the angels and those who possess knowledge from amongst His creation. Allah the Most High said:

"Allah bears witness that none has the right to be worshiped except Him; as do the angels and those who possess knowledge. He maintains His creation upon justice. None has the right to be worshiped except Him, the All-Mighty, All-Wise."

[Soorah Aal-Imraan 3:18]

It is a concise declaration that contains few letters; light upon the tongue, yet heavy in the scales.

Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam, who said: "A person from my Ummah (nation) will be summoned in front of everyone on the Day of Resurrection. Ninety-nine scrolls will be unfurled for him, each scroll extending as far as the eye can see. Then it will be said: Do you deny any of this [i.e. your bad deeds]? So the man will reply: No, O Lord. Then it will be said: Do you have any excuse or any good deed? The man, in a state of terror, will answer: No. It will then be said: Rather, you do have some good deeds and no injustice will befall you this Day. So a parchment will be taken out for him, upon which there will be the testification of laa ilaaha illallaah and the testification that Muhammad is the Slave and Messenger of Allah. The man will say: Oh Lord, what is this parchment in comparison to those scrolls! It will be said to him: No injustice shall befall you. The scrolls will then be placed in one of the scales and the parchment in the other; the scrolls will be light in weight, whereas the parchment will be heavy." (Reported by at-Tirmidhee (no.2641), from Abdullaah ibn Amr radihyallahu anhu. It was declared to be saheeh by Shaykh al-Albaanee in as-Saheehah (no.135).

The first part of the Shahadah is **laa ilaaha illallaah (none has the right to be worshiped except Allah)** and the first part of the Shahadah has two pillars:

The first pillar is the pillar of negation (nafee), whilst the second is the pillar of affirmation (ithbaat).

What is meant by negation is to negate divinity and worship (ilaahiyyah) for anything except Allah, the Most High.

What is meant by affirmation is to affirm divinity and that worship is only for Allah the Most Perfect; for it is He alone that is the true Deity. So whatever else is taken by the unbelievers as deities to be worshiped are in fact all false and futile: That is because Allah is the true Deity to be worshiped, and whatever else they invoke besides Him is vain falsehood.

[Soorah al-Hajj 22:62]

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim said: The significance of laa ilaaha illallaah in affirming divinity and worship for only Allah is far greater than just saying that Allah is an ilaah (God). This is because the saying that Allah is an ilaah (God) does not negate divinity and worship to other than Allah. This is different to the saying: laa ilaaha illallaah; which obligates restricting divinity and worship to only Allah.

All the messengers of Allah told their people none has the right to be worshiped except Allah

Allah said: "We did not send any Messenger before you, except that We revealed to him that none has the right to be worshiped except Me; so worship Me."

[Soorah al-Anbiyaa 21:25]

Allah the Exalted also said: "He sends down the angels with the revelation of His commands to whosoever of His slaves that He wills, saying: Warn mankind that none has the right to be worshiped except Me. So fear Me [by keeping away from sin and disobedience]."

[Soorah an-Nahl 16:2]

It is a concise declaration that contains few letters; light upon the tongue, yet heavy in the scales.

Allah's Messenger Peace be upon him said: "Moses said: Oh my Lord! Teach me something by which I can remember You and supplicate to You. Allah said: Oh Moses! say laa ilaaha ilallaah. Moses said: Oh my Lord! All Your slaves say this. Allah said: Oh Moses! If the seven heavens and all that they contain, other than Me, and the seven earths were placed in one scale, and laa ilaaha ilallaah were put in the other, then laa ilaaha illallaah would outweigh them all." (Reported by Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh (no.2324) and al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak (1/528).

Ibn Uyaynah, (radhiyallahu anhu) said: "Allah has not bestowed any favour upon His slaves greater than the favour of them realizing laa ilaaha ilallaah. Indeed laa ilaaha illallaah is to the people of Paradise, what cool water is to the people of this world." (Related by Ibn Rajab in Kalimatul-Ikhlaas (p.53)

The **second part of the "Shahadah"** i.e. "Wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan-ar-rasool ullaah " means that the Prophet Muhammad is the servant and chosen messenger of Allah. No one should be in any doubt about this matter.

In fact, the Muslim has to obey the commands of the Prophet , to believe in what he has said, to follow his Teachings, to avoid what he has forbidden, and to worship Allah alone according to the message revealed to him.

Allah says:

Indeed Allah conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (the Quran), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (the Quran) and AlHikmah [the wisdom and the Sunnah of the Prophet i.e. Prophet's legal ways, statements, acts of worship, etc.], while before that they had been in manifest error.(Quran 3:164)

Allah says to His Messenger:

Say (O Muhammad to mankind): "If you (really) love Allah then follow me , Allah will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (Quran 3:31)

Allah again tells his Messenger

Say (O Muhammad): "Obey Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad)." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbeliever's (Quran 3:32)

Allah says:

But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.(Quran 4:65)

What is the meaning of worship? It simply means rendering sincere service; showing reverence for Allah. In a deeper shade of meaning, it implies total submission and complete obedience to Allah's Commandments both in utterances and actions, whether explicit or implicit and in private or public.

Worship falls into two categories:

1. Visible (manifest or outward)

Visible worship includes acts such as uttering the two parts of the "shahadah", performing prayers, giving Zakat (obligatory charity), observing the fast in the month of Ramadan, performing Hajj, recitation of the Holy Quran, supplication, adoring Allah by praising Him, purifying our bodies before prayers, etc.

This type of worship is associated with the movement of the parts of human body, [actions].

2. Invisible (concealed or inward)

Invisible worship is to believe in Allah, in the Day of Judgment, in the Hereafter, in the Angels, in the Books of Allah, in the Divine Decree of destiny (that good and bad are determined by Allah alone)

This type of worship does not involve movements of parts of the body but it surely has a bearing on one's heart which, subsequently, affects one's way of life (beliefs).

It should be borne in mind that worship not dedicated to Allah alone, will be rejected as one form of polytheism or "shirk", which amounts to apostasy, from the Islamic point of view.

2 Certainty (Al-Yaqeen)

The heart must be firmly certain of the meaning of Shahadah without a blemish of doubt.

Allah the Exalted says:" Verily, the believers are only those who truly believe in Allah and His Messenger, and then doubt not. (Quran 49:15).

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I am the Messenger of Allah. No slave meets Allah with this testimony, having no doubt in it but shall enter Jannah."(Muslim) :

3 Sincerity (Al-Ikhlaas)

Exclusively worshiping Allah, which is contrary to shirk. This is what laa ilaaha illallaah points towards.

Allah, the Exalted, said: " And they were not commanded but to worship Allah, being sincere in devoting religion to Him." (Quran 98:5).

Abu Hurairah said: " I asked the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him: Messenger of Allah! Who will be most fortunate to enjoy your shafa'ah (intercession) on the Day of Resurrection? The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: I was certain that no one else would ask me about this other than you, because I have noticed your keenness for hadeeth. The most fortunate of men who will enjoy my shafa'ah on the Day of Resurrection is the one who says: (La Ilaha Illa Allah) "None has the right to be worshiped except Allah", sincerely from his heart.."(Musnad al-Imam Ahmad.)

4 Truthfulness (As-Sidq)

Truthfulness (as-sidq), which prevents hypocrisy (nifaaq). Indeed, the hypocrites uttered it with their tongues, but did not inwardly believe in what it signified.

The Messenger of Allah said: "Anyone testifies that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, truthfully from his heart, Allah would forbid his admittance to the Fire."(Muslim)

5 Love and affection (Al-Mahabbah)

Love (al-mahabbah) for this kalimah and having love and pleasure for whatever it necessitates. This is contrary to the [state of the] hypocrites.

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "There are three (qualities), whoever possesses them, will taste the sweetness of Iman (belief): to love Allah and His Messenger more than anyone else, to love the Muslim only for the sake of Allah, and to dread returning to kufr (apostasy) as he dreads being thrown in fire." (Bukhari and Muslim.)

Allah says to His Messenger (peace be upon him)

Say (O Muhammad SAW to mankind): "If you (really) love Allah then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Quran and the Sunnah), Allah will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (3:31)

Allah says: "Allah shall bring forth a people whom He loves and they love Him." (Quran 5:54)

The Prophet, peace be upon him, also said: "None of you shall (really) believe until I become dearer to him than his own father, and son and all mankind." (Bukhari and Muslim.)

6 Submission (Al-Inqiyaad) internally and externally

Submissive compliance (al-inqiyaad), by fulfilling its rights - which are the obligatory actions - with sincerity to Allah and seeking His good pleasure. This is its requirement.

Allah, the Exalted, says: "And he who submits himself to Allah, and does good, he has surely grasped a strong handle." (Quran 31:22).

Allah also says: " And turn you to your Rabb, and submit yourselves to Him." (:Quran 39:54)

7 Acceptance and conformity (Al-Qubool)

Acceptance (al-qabool), which prevents rejection.

This is achieved by acting upon what Allah has commanded and abandoning whatever He has prohibited.

Abu Musa al-Ash'aree reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him said: "The parable of guidance and knowledge which Allah has sent me with is like a rain which fell on a land. A patch of that land received the water and produced much herbage and grass. And a patch which was barren. The latter retained water wherewith Allah extended benefits to men: they drank from it, irrigated and planted their vegetation. And a patch which was a sandy plain, it neither retained water nor produced herbage. This is parallel to the person who conceived the religion of Allah and benefited from the Message with which Allah has sent me, whereby he learns and taught others. The other person turned away from it (from my Message), and rejected the guidance of Allah with which I am sent.." Bukhari and Muslim.)

Allah says "Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad peace be upon him) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much."(33:21)

And Allah also says in Surah Al-Hashr

...And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it) , and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment. (59:7)

Again Allah says:

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him), if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.(4:59)

And Allah says:

But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.

In the next verse Allah again tells his Messenger

Say (O Muhammad peace be upon him): "Obey Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him)." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbeliever's (3:32)

Islam unites together people of different colours, languages, races. and nationalities into one brotherhood.

Allah says: "Indeed the Believers are but brothers." [Quran 4 9:10]

Before Islam people in Arabia were divided into different tribes. Some of them were at constant war with each other, Islam came and Allah put peace and love in their hearts for each other.

Allah the Most High said: "And remember the favor of Allah upon you, for you were once enemies to one another but He joined your hearts together in love, so that by His Grace you became brothers." [Soorah Aal-Imraan 3:103]

And Allah the Most High said: "He it is that has strengthened you with His help and with the Believers. And moreover, He has united their hearts with love and affection. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts with love and affection. However, Allah has united them. Indeed Allah is the All-Mighty, All-Wise." [Soorah al-Anfaal 8:62- 63].

Allah has stated in the Holy Quran:

"... whoever disbelieves in false deities and believes in Allah, hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that will never break..." (2:256)