

The Five Pillars of Islam

Into The Light @ <http://islam.itl.org.uk>

In a conversation a Muslim friend said, "The foundation of Islam is the five pillars: *Shahada* (the creed), *Salat* (prayer), *Zakat* (almsgiving), *Saum* (fasting), *Hajj* (pilgrimage). How would you, as a Christian, relate to such terms?" My response to this question was to say that I could find a Christian alternative to the five pillars of Islam in the Christian Scriptures.

Shahada

A Christian Shahada, or creed, can be found in John 17:3: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

As the Shahada can be seen as a brief summary of the Islamic faith, this verse is a summary of the gospel, which states that to know God is to know Jesus Christ, whom God sent in to this world, as his word to us, through whom he revealed himself and enabled us to receive the gift of eternal life.

Salat

Although there are no set prayers prescribed in the Christian scriptures, Christians are called to devout prayer (Col.4:2) and to pray continually (1 Thess

5:17). Jesus himself, by giving examples, has shown us that we should always pray and not give up (Luke 18:1ff). He said: "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (Matthew 6:5-6)

Zakat

As Christians we believe that everything we have is a gift from God and that we should share it with others and give back to God as much as we can. It was in line with this understanding that we find the following instruction in the Scripture:

"On the first day of every week, each of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

At another place we read:

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Saum

Christians do fast but they have not been instructed to fast the way Muslims do for

a whole month. (More information Fasting is available on the website). Jesus said:

“When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:16-18).

Hajj

Some of my Muslim friends think that Christians perhaps go for pilgrimage to Jerusalem. However, such a pilgrimage is not part of the Christian faith. Before Jesus came, believers used to go to the house of the Lord, the temple for sacrifices and offerings, however it is no longer necessary, having been fulfilled in Christ. For us God is everywhere, and he can be worshipped anywhere (Isaiah 66:1-2). In answer to the question of where we should worship, Jesus declared:

“Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is

coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.” (John 4:21-23).

A Christian Jihad

We have been given this instruction:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 6:10-12)

A Christian's Hadith and the Qur'an

God has spoken to us through Jesus. In the past he spoke through various ways but now he has sent his Word to be incarnated not as a scripture but as Jesus, a living, walking and talking example. The scriptures we have are the record of his actions and sayings. We have the life, testimony and faith of those faithful witnesses to the Lord who went before us (Hebrew 11). (Eph 2:19-22).



PO Box 112, OLDHAM
OL1 3FQ, UK
UK Reg. Charity No. 1082032