

Dear Friends,

Islam today has been made to appear difficult and complicated and this image unfortunately discourages and scares many people away from the actual simplicity of this beautiful religion.

The foundations of Islam rest on Five Pillars, duties which adult Muslims adhere to in their daily life. In terms of their inward faith, Muslims are required to believe in six main tenets, known as the Six Pillars of Iman (Faith). Both of these concepts are explained in separate pages.

Testament to the simplicity and beauty of this faith is the fact that within fifty years of its birth, Islam had spread to over half of the world. Had the religion been introduced as it exists today in many parts of the world, it would have been far more difficult to spread.

What made Islam unique was that it embraced the various cultures it came into contact with, in the Arab world, across Asia, Africa and even into Europe, allowing Muslims to retain the local flavour of their lives (wherever it was compatible with the religion), whilst all adhering to the same beliefs and principles. Today however, particularly in the case of those embracing Islam, one must be careful to identify which practices amongst Muslims are part of the core teachings, and which are merely cultural elements, since many Muslims confuse the two.

Islam Made Easy for New Muslims

Written by Administrator

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It is also important to remember that Islam was established over a period of twenty-three years. It did not happen overnight. It took this long for the Qur'an and the rulings and regulations of Islam to be revealed to mankind.

As an experienced Da'i (a person who spreads the message of Islam), who has been active in propagating Islam for many years, I find that many people are reluctant to enter Islam due to the complications they believe they will be faced with.

For example, many believe that they will be required to wear Arab or Asian clothing. Some believe they will have to follow an imam who cannot even speak English, and will have to learn a new language and speak in a foreign tongue.

But in actual fact, these are examples of cultural influences on the religion, no one is required to give up their identity, nationality or culture by becoming a Muslim.

If all these old traditions and cultural additions to Islam were stripped away, subtracted and set aside, the true simplicity and clarity of Islam will shine forth for all to see.

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This section is intended to provide the reader with a sense of reassurance and information about the basic essentials of Islam. We have, in a sense, stripped it down to the bones to provide a skeleton model for new Muslims to follow. All basic aspects have been covered and many common questions and concerns have been addressed.

Step 1- Embracing Islam

Firstly, I shall demonstrate how easy it is to enter Islam and become a Muslim. All a person needs to do to become a Muslim is to believe sincerely that: "Almighty God is the God of the universe and that the Prophet Muhammad was His last and final Prophet and Messenger".

Then you need to say the following words in Arabic, which confirm this:

"La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasool Allah" which means:

"There is no God except Almighty God and Muhammad is His last Messenger".

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This is the Declaration of Faith, known in Arabic as the Shahadah. This is the first pillar of Islam.

The Declaration of the Faith is said in Arabic but if a person finds it too difficult to pronounce it can be said in any language. All are equally acceptable in the eyes of Almighty God, who made all languages, and can perfectly understand your language and your intention. Therefore there is no need to worry about what language you use.

Note:

It is important to remember that the intention is very important and without the sincere intention to become a Muslim, the Shahadah is not accepted. To ensure that you have the right intention, you need to truly believe in your heart that there is One God and to believe that the Prophet Muhammad was His last and final Prophet.

The Shahadah can be said at any time and in any place. It is a contract between you and your Creator and it has nothing to do with any other person. It is recommended to declare the Shahadah in front of two Muslim who can witness your declaration, though this is not obligatory, and your Shahadah is still valid if said alone.

If you wish to take your Shahadah in a mosque or with an Imam, this is of course encouraged, however it does not make one a better Muslim than one who has said their Shahadah, for example, over the internet, over the phone or by themselves.

Once you have taken your Shahadah, it is recommended to take a full shower with the intention to purify yourself, to symbolize a fresh start to your new faith.

Step 2 – After your Declaration

Now you have made the declaration of the faith with true sincerity, you have entered Islam. Congratulations! May Allah accept your faith and fill your heart with His light and guidance. You have now entered a new chapter of your life and are starting afresh.

Islam holds that all previous wrong doings are wiped clean and forgiven and any good deeds that you performed before becoming a Muslim will be brought forward to your new account. It is now up to you to keep this chapter and the chapters to come clean and pure.

Taking this first step guarantees you a place in paradise if you retain the sincerity and belief in Allah in your heart. (God knows best). No matter what you do from this point forward, the most important thing is to preserve your faith.

Remember this verse of the Quran in which Allah declares:

"Inna Allaha la yaghfiru an yushraka bihi wayaghfiru ma doona thalika liman yasha'u waman yushrikbi Allahi faqadi iftara ithman 'atheema"

"I do not forgive anyone who associates partners with me, but I forgive whoever I please after that" Chapter 4: Verse 48

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This verse above shows that Allah is prepared to forgive anyone who believes only in Him, no matter what they have done. The only sin He does not forgive is ascribing partners to Him.

When attempting to live your life as a Muslim, I would advise you to do what you can and do not over stretch yourself. Do not rush to learn everything at once. Islam a religion was revealed step by step and this is the approach you should take.

Always remember that everyone is different and everyone has their own requirements and limits. Although all Muslims are the same in that they all adhere to the religion of Islam, each travels along the path at a different pace.

The next step along the path as a Muslim is to learn to pray, since the prayer, Salah, is the second Pillar of Islam. So, my dear brother or sister, if you wish to know more about Islam and how to perform a simple prayer, please proceed to the next section.