

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
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1402 - Starting-point for one who wants to enter Islam

the question

I want to know is there a starting point for a man who is interested in the true religion of Islam. I have been given many different answers.

Detailed answer

Yes, there is a very important starting-point, which is to pronounce the Shahaadatayn (Declaration of Faith). This is the only answer to your question. (For more details please see the questions and answers under the heading: 'Aqeedah (basic tenets of faith) - important matters for those who wish to enter Islam.

We extend the warmest of welcomes to you, and offer our congratulations for the new direction you are about to take. May Allaah protect you from all evil.

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All praises be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon Muhammad, His last messenger.

The objective of this handout is to correct a false idea spread among those willing to adopt Islam as their faith. Some people face difficulties on the basis of their mistaken belief that entering into the Islamic fold requires an announcement from the concerned person in the presence of high ranking scholars or sheikhs, or reporting this act to the courts or other authorities. It is also thought that the act of accepting Islam, should, as a condition, have a certificate issued by the authorities as evidence to that effect.

We wish to clarify that the whole matter is very easy and that none of the above conditions or

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obligations are required. For Allah, the Almighty is above all comprehension and knows well the secrets of all hearts. Nevertheless, those who wish to adopt Islam as their religion are advised to register themselves as Muslims with the concerned governmental agency, as this procedure may facilitate many matters for them including the possibility of performing Hajj and Umrah.

If anyone has a real desire to be a Muslim and has the full conviction and strong belief that Islam is the true religion ordained by Allah (SWT) for all human beings, he should pronounce the "Shahada" (testimony of faith) without further delay. The Holy Qur'an is explicit in this regard, as Allah (SWT) has stated.

"Truly, the Religion in the sight of Allah is Islam." (3:19)

In another verse of the Holy Qur'an, Allah (SWT) has stated:

"And whosoever desires a religion -other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who are lost." (3:85)

In addition, Islam is the only Religion prevailing over all other religions, Allah (SWT) has stated in the Holy Qur'an:

"And to thee We have sent the Book in truth, (This Qur'an) confirming the scripture that came before it, and a witness over it..." (5:48)

Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah (Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him), said:

"Islam is based on five pillars: testifying that there is no god worthy to be worshipped but Allah, that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and His servant; performing the prayer; paying the Zakat (obligatory charity); fasting the month of Ramadan; and performing Hajj."

The Shahada can be declared as follows:

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"ASH-HADU ANLAA ILAHA ILLA ALLAH WA ASH HADUANNAMUHAMMADANABDUHUWA RASUULUH."

The English translation is:

"I bear witness that there is no deity worthy to be worshipped but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

However, it would not be sufficient for anyone to utter only this testimony orally either in private or in public. One should believe in it from the heart with a firm conviction and unshakable faith. If he is truly sincere and complies with the teachings of Islam in his daily life he will find himself a newborn person.

This will move him to strive more and more to improve his character and draw nearer to perfection. The light of the living faith will fill his heart until he becomes the embodiment of that faith.

What should be next after declaring the testimony of faith (Shahada) and then becoming a Muslim? He should know the real concept underlying this testimony, which means accepting the Oneness of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as the last of the Prophets, and meeting its requirements. He must behave accordingly applying this true faith to everything he says or does. What do the words of "Shahada" signify.

The significant point which every Muslim must know is the truth that there is no god to be worshipped other than Allah, (Glory be to Him). He is the only true God, Who Alone deserves to be worshipped, since He is the Giver of life and Sustainer and Nourisher of mankind and all creation with His unlimited bounties. Man must worship Allah, Who Alone is worthy of worship.

The second part of the "Shahada" i.e. "Wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh" means that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) 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

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Prophet (PBUH), 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.

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) 2. Invisible (concealed or inward)

Visible worship includes acts such as uttering the two parts of the "shahada", performing prayers, giving Zakat (obligatory charity), observing the fast in the month of Ramadan, performing Hajj, recitation of the Holy Qur'an, 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].

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.

The next step for a devotee newly converted to Islam is to purify himself by taking a bath (total ablution). He should then resolve to comply with all the principles and rules of Islam in their

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entirety. He disowns all forms of polytheism and false beliefs. He should reject evil and be righteous. Such rejection of evil and being righteous is one of the requisites of the motto of Islam that is, Lailaha Illal Laah.

Allah has stated in the Holy Qur'an:

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

We have to consider that when we declare from our hearts, "there is no god worthy to be worshipped but Allah." It implies on our part of love, devotion, faith and obedience to the rules of Islamic legislation which are legally binding on all Muslims. It is a requirement of "there is no god worthy to be worshipped but Allah," to love for the sake of Allah and to reject for the sake of Allah. This is the finest anchor of belief which make material the meaning of "AL-WALA" and "AL-BARA". It means that a Muslim should love and be loyal to his Muslim brothers. He should, as a practice, dissociate himself completely from the practices of unbelievers and refuse to be influenced by them, both in worldly and religious matters.

We conclude with a humble prayer to Allah that He may cleanse the hearts and souls of those who are genuine seekers of truth and may He bless the community of believers. Ameen.