

How to become a Muslim

The Cooperative Office for Call and Guidance – Riyadh

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise be to Allaah, the Lord of the universe. May peace and blessings of Allaah be upon Mohammad, His last messenger.

The purpose of this hand-out is to correct a false idea spread among those willing to adopt Islam as their faith. Some people have a wrong notion that entering into the Islamic fold requires an announcement from the concerned person in the presence of high ranking scholars or Shaykhs or reporting this act to courts of justice 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 these conditions or obligations are required. For Allaah, Almighty, is above all comprehension and knows well the secrets of all hearts. Nevertheless, those who are going to adopt Islam as their religion are advised to register themselves as Muslims with the concerned governmental agency, as this procedure may facilitate for them many matters including the possibility of performing Hajj (Pilgrimage) and Umrah.

If anyone has a real desire to be a Muslim and has full conviction and strong belief that Islam is the true religion ordained by Allaah for all human-beings, then, one should pronounce the “Shahadah”, the testimony of faith, without further delay.

The Holy Qur’aan is explicit on this regard as Allaah states:

[The Religion in the sight of Allaah is Islam]¹

In another verse of the Holy Qur’aan, Allaah states:

[If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (Submission to Allaah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (their selves in the hell fire).]²

In addition, Islam is the only religion prevailing over all other religions. Allaah states in the Holy Qur’aan:

¹ The Noble Qur’aan [chapter 3 verse 19]

² The Noble Qur’aan [chapter 3 verse 85]

How to become a Muslim

[To you We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety:...]³

Narrated Ibn 'Umar: Allaah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم)⁴ said: Islam is based on (the following) five (principles):

1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah and Muhammad is Allaah's Apostle.
2. To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly.
3. To pay Zakaat (i.e. obligatory charity).
4. To perform Hajj. (I.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca)
5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan.

The Shahahdah can be declared as follows:

“ASH-HADU ANLA ELAHA ILLA-Allaah WA ASH-HADU ANNA MOHAMMADAN RASUL-Allaah”.

The English translation is:

“I bear witness that there is no deity (none truly to be worshipped) but, Allaah, and I bear witness that Mohammad is the messenger of Allaah”

However, it would not be sufficient for anyone to only utter this testimony orally either in private or in public; but rather, he should believe in it by heart with a firm conviction and unshakeable faith. If one is truly sincere and complies with the teachings of Islam in all his life, he will find himself a new born 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 would be next after declaring oneself a Muslim? One should then know the real concept underlying this testimony which means the oneness of Allaah and meet its requirements. One must behave accordingly, applying this true faith to everything one speaks or does.

What do the words of the “Shahahdah” signify? The significant point which every Muslim must know very well is the truth that there is no God (deity) to be worshipped other than

³ The Noble Qur'aan [chapter 5 verse 48]

⁴ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

How to become a Muslim

Allaah. He – glory be to Him – 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 Allaah, Who alone is worthy of worship.

The second part of the Shahahdah (i.e., Wa ash-hadu anna Mohammadan rasul-Allaah) means that Prophet Mohammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is the servant and chosen messenger of Allaah. No one must have two opinions about this matter. In fact the Muslim has to obey the commands of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), to believe him in what he has said, to practice his teachings, to avoid what he has forbidden, and to worship Allaah alone according to the message revealed to him, for all the teachings of the Prophet were in fact revelations and inspirations conveyed to him by Allaah.

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

Worship falls into two categories:

- Visible (manifest or outward)
- Invisible (concealed or inward)

Visible worship includes acts such as uttering the two parts of the "Shahahdah", performing prayers, giving Zakaah (the poor-due), recitation of the Holy Qur'aan, supplication, adoring Allaah by praising Him, purifying our bodies before prayers, etc.

This type of worship is associated with movement of the parts of the human body.

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

This type of worship does not involve movement of parts of the body but it surely has bearing on one's heart which subsequently affects one's way of life.

It should be borne in mind that any worship not dedicated to Allaah alone will be rejected as one form of polytheism and this causes apostasy from the Islamic fold.

The next step for a newly revert to Islam is to purify himself by taking a complete bath. He should then resolve to comply with the principles and rules of Islam in their entirety. He should disown 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, Laa Ilaha IllAllaah.

How to become a Muslim

Allaah states in the Holy Qur'aan:

[... whoever rejects evil and believes in Allaah hath grasped the most trustworthy Hand-hold, that never breaks...]⁵

We have to consider that when we declare from our heart that “there is no god (deity) worthy to be worshiped but Allaah”, it implies on our part love, devotion, faith and obedience to the rules of Islamic legislations which are legally binding on all Muslims. It is a requirement of “there is no god worthy to be worshipped but Allaah” to love for the sake of Allaah and to reject for the sake of Allaah.

This is the firmest anchor of belief which materialise 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 unbelievers and refuse to be influenced by them, both in worldly and religious matters.

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

⁵ The Noble Qur'aan [chapter 2 verse 256]