

## ***Presentation Materials from the August 28 Outreach Summer Forum***

### **Five Pillars of Islam**

***Shahada* or the profession of faith** and is the first pillar of Islam. Muslims bear witness to the Oneness of God by reciting the creed "There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God." This simple statement expresses a Muslim's complete acceptance of and total commitment to Islam.

***Salah* or prayer** is the second pillar. The Islamic faith is based on the belief that individuals have a direct relationship with God. Muslims turn their bodies, individually and collectively, facing towards Makkah, Saudi Arabia, to offer five daily prayers at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and late evening. Friday congregational prayers are obligatory for men though women may attend if they choose. Prayers can be performed alone or in a congregation, in a Masjid (Mosque), at home, or even outdoors.

***Zakat* or almsgiving** is the third pillar. Social responsibility is considered part of one's service to God; the **obligatory** act of ***zakat*** giving enshrines this duty. ***Zakat*** prescribes payment of fixed proportions of a Muslim's annual savings on a yearly basis, which is distributed to its neediest members. It is equal to 2.5 percent of an individual's annual net savings, excluding obligations and family expenses.

***Sawm* or fasting** during the holy month of **Ramadan**, is the fourth pillar of Islam. Fasting is an exercise in self-control on many levels whereby one's sensitivity is heightened to the sufferings of the poor and one is in a constant state of thankfulness to God. It also requires abstention from eating, drinking, smoking and intercourse during those specific hours. Fasting starts at dawn and ends with sunset every day, during this entire month of **Ramadan (28-29 days)**. The end of **Ramadan** is observed by three days of celebration called **Eid Al-Fitr**, the feast of the breaking of the fast.

***Hajj* or the pilgrimage to Makkah**, is the fifth pillar and the most significant manifestation of Islamic faith and unity in the world. For those Muslims who are

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physically and financially able to make the journey to Makkah, the **Hajj** is a once in a lifetime duty that is the peak of their religious life.

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### **The Six Articles of Faith (The basis of a Muslim's belief system)**

**Belief in one God/Monotheism:** Islam emphasizes that God is The One without partner. God is Unique in every way. Only God, The Most Benevolent, has the right to be worshiped. God is gender neutral and not anthropomorphic.

**Belief in Angels:** God created angels which are made from light and are not male or female. They do precisely as they are commanded by God because they have no free will unlike humans (made from earth) and jinn (made from fire). A Muslim must believe in the existence of angels. God has revealed to us the names of some of the angels. Gabriel and Michael are among the angels mentioned in the Qur'an.

**Belief in Divine Books:** Muslims believe that Divine Books or scriptures were revealed by God to His Messengers. A Muslim must believe in every original scripture mentioned by God in the Qur'an. The scriptures God mentions in the Qur'an are as follows:

1. The original Scrolls as revealed to Abraham
2. The original Torah as revealed to Moses
3. The original Psalms as revealed to David
4. The original Injeel (Gospel of Jesus) as revealed to Jesus
5. The Qur'an as revealed to Muhammad (which is still available in its original form, completely unchanged)

**Belief in Prophets/Messengers:** Throughout the ages, God, in His infinite wisdom has sent Prophets to people all over the world. A Muslim must believe in all of the Prophets and Messengers sent by God. The Qur'an mentions 25 Prophets and among those mentioned by name are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, David, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. (Peace be upon them all). Prophets were infallible in that they did not commit major sins though they are very human and still have certain weaknesses (thus the differences in the stories between the Qur'an and the Bible). They are meant to be role models for all of humanity.

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**Belief in Last Day (Day of Judgment):** Muslims must believe, in the Day of Judgment and the physical resurrection when the soul will be reunited with the same body by God's unlimited power. On the Day of Judgment, all deeds will be revealed and God will judge everyone fairly. We will not enter Paradise because of our deeds alone, but by God's mercy.

**Belief in the Divine Decree:** God, in His Infinite wisdom, knows everything that goes on in His creation. The Ever-Watching, knows everything that happened in the past, everything that is taking place now, and everything that will happen in the future. God's divine knowledge is perfect and He is truly All Knowing. Nothing happens in His creation except by His power, His will, and His knowledge.

There is however another opinion that this sixth article is about God's Infinite Justice which is repeatedly mentioned in the Quran. God is the Pinnacle of Justice. Muslims must strive for this supreme virtue as it stands next in order of priority, after the belief in God's exclusive right to be worshipped.

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### **List of Resources for Learning more about Islam**

#### **FILMS:**

1. When the Moors Ruled Europe (with Bettany Hughes)
2. Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet
3. Inside Mecca
4. A Prince among Slaves
5. Wham! bam! Islam!

For more films: <http://www.upf.tv/films/>

#### **AUTHORS: (Just a few)**

1. John Esposito
2. Karen Armstrong
3. Khaled Abou El Fadl
4. Sylviane Diouf
5. Robin Wright

#### **INTERNET:**

1. Facebook Page: Positive Muslim News
2. There is a multi faith news and information site called Patheos.com that is great for all kinds of articles on religions of all kinds.
3. Recent statistical information from American Muslim Poll:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPJOMz68TVU>
4. Here are some great articles on Ramadan that you can read on their site:  
<http://www.patheos.com/search/jsp/templates/primaryJSP/fullview.jsp?Submit=Search&keyword=ramadan&advancedmatchselect=none>
5. [www.1001inventions.com](http://www.1001inventions.com) and other relevant articles on Islam's contribution:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/08/donald-trump-famous-muslims-us-history>  
<https://themuslimtimes.info/2015/09/02/cnn-muslim-inventions-that-shaped-the-modern-world-tmt-extensive-collection-about-muslim-heritage/>
6. Apostasy/Blasphemy issues:  
<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/blasphemy-the-untold-story-pakistans-law>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1d37rKqrNr0> (Panel Discussion on Religious Freedom)

### **RECOMMENDED ARTICLES ON JIHAD:**

<http://islamicsupremecouncil.org/understanding-islam/legal-rulings/5-jihad-a-misunderstood-concept-from-islam.html> (very useful albeit lengthy from the Supreme Council of America)

[http://www.quran-islam.org/articles/part\\_3/the\\_concept\\_of\\_jihad\\_%28P1360%29.html](http://www.quran-islam.org/articles/part_3/the_concept_of_jihad_%28P1360%29.html)

Open Letter to ISIS from Muslim leaders:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/24/muslim-scholars-islamic-state\\_n\\_5878038.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/24/muslim-scholars-islamic-state_n_5878038.html)

<http://www.lettertobaghdadi.com/>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/qasim-rashid/prophet-muhammads-rules-o\\_b\\_2169309.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/qasim-rashid/prophet-muhammads-rules-o_b_2169309.html) (on Muhammad's rules of warfare)

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/qasim-rashid/prophet-muhammads-example\\_b\\_6467386.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/qasim-rashid/prophet-muhammads-example_b_6467386.html) (more recently regarding terrorism)