

“Islam for Christians”

John W. Herbst, PhD

**“The Pillars of Islam, and
Jihad: What Muslims are
Supposed to Do”**

September 28, 2017

Pillars of Muslim *Practice*: Listed in Order of *Importance*

- 1) Reciting the *Shahada* - “There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his prophet”
- 2) *Salat* - Ritual Prayer
- 3) *Zakat* - Annual Payment of 2.5% of ***Wealth***
- 4) *Sawm* - Fasting during Ramadan
- 5) *Hajj* - Pilgrimage to Mecca

First Pillar - the *Shahada*

- *Shahada* must be *spoken*
 - First words spoken to a newborn
 - Last words spoken to the dying
 - Words spoken to become Muslim
 - Incorporated in the “Call to Prayer”
- Continual reminder to Muslims that they are Muslim

Second Pillar of Muslim Practice

Salat = Ritual Prayer

- “Ritual” prayer = words and motions are defined
- Separate from “petitionary” prayer

Second Pillar of Muslim Practice

Salat = Ritual Prayer

- Five prescribed times of day (dawn, morning, early afternoon, dusk, night)
- We pause our temporal activities to redirect our focus to God

Second Pillar of Muslim Practice

Salat = Ritual Prayer

- Preceded by *adhan* (call to prayer)
- Preceded by ritual washing
 - Reminds us of all the body parts which may be involved in sin

Adhan (Call to Prayer) - words

God is most great (4x)

I testify that there is no god but God (2x)

I testify that Muhammad is God's messenger (2x)

Come to prayer (2x)

Come to flourishing (2x)

God is the Greatest (2x)

There is no god but God

Second Pillar of Muslim Practice

Salat = Ritual Prayer

- Group prayer (at mosque) is encouraged, not required
- Group prayer stresses equality of all

Islamic “non-ritual” prayer (aka “petitionary prayer”) = *du’a*

- *Salat* is required; *du’a* is optional (although encouraged)
- Any Muslim may recite *du’a* at any time
- Typically said at the start of Muslim gatherings which do not incorporate *salat*
- Typically incorporates phrases from the Qur’an

Third Pillar of Practice: *Zakat* = Giving

- Annual “Property Tax”
- 2.5% of value of all possessions
- Charity (which is optional and encouraged) is separate from *zakat*

Third Pillar of Practice: *Zakat* = Giving

- Goes to those in need (poor, widows, orphans) and to support the spread of Islam
- Fosters equality of all by reducing the gap between rich and poor

Fourth Pillar of Practice: *Sawm* = Fasting during *Ramadan*

- No eating, drinking, or sexual relations between dawn and dusk.
- We do not “need” to constantly surrender to physical wants
 - Maybe similar to lent?

Fourth Pillar of Practice: *Sawm* = Fasting during *Ramadan*

- Extensive list of exceptions to rule:
 - Physically infirm
 - Elderly
 - Those who work at hard labor
- *Sawm* may be delayed for individual issues
 - Pregnant women
 - Suffering from illnesses

Fifth Pillar of Practice: *Hajj* = Pilgrimage to Mecca

- Mecca = place where Muhammad first met God
- Location of the *kaba*, a shrine set up by Abraham and Ishmael

Hajj Ritual - Equality of All

- Men dress the same (no way to tell who is wealthier or more important)
 - Women have some flexibility
- Everyone eats the same food
- Everyone stays in tents (equal accommodations)

Jihad (“Striving”) - the “Sixth Pillar”

Two types

- *Jihad-e-Akbar* - “Greatest Jihad”
- *Jihad-e-Kabeer* - “Noble Jihad”

A popular *hadith*...

- Upon his return from battle Muhammad said, “We have returned from the lesser (“noble”) *jihad* to the greater (“greatest”) *jihad*.”

Jihad-e-Akbar - “Greatest Jihad”

- Personal struggle to improve one’s character.
- Purify oneself by fighting evil tendencies and by curbing immoral behavior.

Jihad-e-Kabeer - “Noble Jihad” (“lesser jihad” according to Muhammad)

- Spread message of Islam
 - Use logic and reason to persuade
- Defend Islam and the community
 - Answer verbal attacks against Muhammad and Islam
 - Defend community against physical attack

Does Islam permit Muslims to attack others?

- **“There shall be no compulsion in religion; the right way has become distinct from the wrong way. Whoever renounces evil and believes in God has grasped the most trustworthy handle; which does not break. God is Hearing and Knowing.” (Qur’an 2:256)**

Jihad and Violence

- *“Any action that harms innocent civilians is reprehensible. Dialogue and diplomacy ought to be the way to overcome conflicts.”*
- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) website
- Mainstream Muslims insist that harming innocent people is not in accordance with Islam

A Christian Dilemma... (See Matt 7:1-2, 12)

- ▶ “Why are so many people bent on promoting race-mixing and racial equality? Because, it is Satan’s goal to have us violate our Heavenly Father’s law on mixing our seed with the other people of the world.” - www.wckkkk.org
- ▶ “We require for our members to profess a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.” - www.kkk.com

A Christian Dilemma... (See Matt 7:1-2, 12)

- ▶ Can someone who promotes White Supremacy also be a Christian?
 - ▶ Are White Supremacists eligible to receive communion?
- ▶ If “yes,” then we must accept the Ku Klux Klan as a “Christian” organization
- ▶ If “no,” then we must permit mainstream Muslims to decide who is and is not Muslim

John W. Herbst, PhD

www.ChristianGuidetoIslam.com

herbstot13@gmail.com