

The Pillars of Islam: Syahadah

Al Hadith narrated by al Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of ‘Umar ibn al Khattab:

.....The Messenger of Allah s.a.w. said: Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to perform the *salat* (prayers), to pay the *zakat* (welfare-due), to fast in *Ramadan*, and to make the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to the House (*Baitullah – Ka’ba*) if you are able to do so....

The Profession of Faith

The *syahadah* is the first pillar of Islam and it is uttered in the words of two phrases :

Ash hadu al la ilaha illallah, wa ash hadu anna muhammadar rasulullah

“ I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger”

Syahadah is the testimony or the profession of faith through verbal pronouncement, affirmation of the heart and the conscious self in accepting Allah being the One and Only God and the truth of His Messenger Muhammad s.a.w. as the last Prophet bringing mercy to the worlds. It involves our whole being physical, mental and spiritual.

Syahadah consists of *tawhid* – professing the Unity or Oneness of God; for God is Absolute and possesses the whole universe. The whole universe is created by God; all systems and laws, life and its necessities are provided by Him. Mankind has to submit and worship Allah alone, to ask and seek His help directly without any intercession or medium.

This is *tawhid* the first basis of Islam and this is the message and the mission of the Prophets and Messengers of God.

Syahadah is the starting point or is the right and proper basis for all of our actions in life, to show us the right direction and to provide us the correct perspective.

After professing that Allah is the only God to be worshipped, we testify that Muhammad is his Messenger and he is the receiver of the revelations and God’s teachings. We accept and intend to obey all of Allah’s Laws and guidance as taught and explained to us by the Prophet s.a.w.

The profession of faith has to be testified by actions and deeds in accordance with the commandments of the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

Implications of the Shahadah

Everytime we make this proclamation of *syahadah*, we remind, renew our true faith . to be constantly aware of Allah the Almighty and our true purpose of life. It keeps us away from the deviations and temptations from the straight path.

We remind ourselves and renew our *syahadah* everytime we perform the *salah* – daily prayers.

We remind by gentle urging the dying , those close to death to utter the *syahadah* to help the person find comfort , hope and patience by remembering Allah.

We are reminded of the unbreakable bond between Allah and human beings, for Allah out of His love for us sent the Prophets to guide mankind, the final Messenger being Muhammad s.a.w.

Example from the Past:

An example of the clear understanding and proclamation of the profession of faith in Islam is the example of the famous Muslim emissary, Rabai'e ibn Amir who was sent to the Persian commander, Rostam, Persia being one of the great powers of the time.

When asked of the Muslim's purpose and mission:

Rabai'e said, "Allah ordered us to set out and reach out in order to save humanity from the worship of creatures and bring it to the worship of Allah alone, to save it from the narrowness of this life so that it may look forward to the broadness of the life hereafter, and from the oppression of other religions so that they may enjoy the justice of Islam."

References:

Forty Hadith, Imam Al Nawawi
Islam Worldview and Way of Life, Animah Ferrar
In the Shade of the Qur'an, Sayyid Qutb.