

Introduction

The Pillars of Faith (*Arkān al Ēmān*)

This book is about the beliefs of Muslims. It is about the *Arkān al Ēmān*, the Pillars of Faith. The *Pillars of Faith* are the primary beliefs that a Muslim must hold in their hearts.

Why are these actions called *Arkān al Ēmān*? What does the word 'Arkān' mean?

Arkān is derived from the root word '*rukn*' which implies support for a building. Such a support could be a pillar or a corner as in the four corners of a room. In this particular context, *arkān* means 'pillars.' *Ēmān* means *faith* or *belief*. *Arkān al Ēmān* are the 'Pillars of Faith.'



So, what are those main beliefs of a Muslim?

The following is an extract from a hadīth, (saying of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم)¹. It relates to the angel Jibrīl's عليه السلام (Gabriel) questioning of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and identifies the main beliefs a Muslim must hold:

Related by Abdullāh Ibn Omar Bin Al Khattāb رضي الله عنه³

"He (the inquirer) said: Inform me about *ēman*" (faith). He (the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied: "That you affirm your faith in Allāh, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Judgement, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil". He (the inquirer) said: "You have told the truth".

Muslim



I counted six things there.

Yes. These six beliefs are known as the *arkān al ēmān*, the pillars of faith. They are, to believe in:

1. Allāh;
2. His Angels;
3. His Books;
4. His Messengers;
5. The Last Day;
6. Preordination i.e. the fact that all good and bad comes only from Allāh.



So, if I merely believe in those six things, is that enough to consider myself a Muslim?

As well as belief, there must be action. According to one hadith,

Narrated Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه, Allāh's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

Islām is built on (the following) five (pillars):

¹ *Ṣallallāhu 'alayhe wassallam*: Appears in Arabic as صلى الله عليه وسلم and reads as 'may Allāh send blessings and peace upon him'. This is an honourific used exclusively for the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم

² *alayhis salām, alayha salām, alayhum salām*: Appears in Arabic as عليهم السلام, عليها السلام, عليه السلام and reads as 'peace be upon him/her/them'. This is an honourific used for the Angels and Prophets of Islām.

³ *RadhiAllāhu anho/anha/anhuma/anhum*: Appears in Arabic as هم / هما / ها / رضي الله عنه and reads as may Allāh be pleased with him/her/them both/them: This is an honourific used for the Companions of the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم

1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh (*Shahādah*) صلى الله عليه وسلم
 2. To offer the *salāh* (obligatory prayers) dutifully and perfectly.
 3. To pay *zakāh* (obligatory charity).
 4. To perform *Hajj* (Pilgrimage to Makkah if one is financially and physically able to do so).
 5. To observe fasts during the month of Ramadhān (*Sawm Ramadhān*).
- Bukhāri

As well as believing in the six basic beliefs, without question, we must also undertake the above actions, the *arkān al Islām* – the Pillars of Islām. For Muslims, belief and action, must go hand in hand.

This book is devoted to the subject of Arkān al Ēman, the Pillars of Faith

Photo gallery: Islām around the world

Insha'Allah, each chapter of this book will end with a photograph from somewhere in the world. These are selected images to give you a sense of the global nature of Islām.

For the vast majority of Muslims around the world, Islām is not just a 'religion.' Many of them take great comfort in the knowledge that they are part of a global community of believers. Although, they are different in so many ways, they all share the same love of a faith that started with simple beginnings in Makkah, but, with Allah's Help, rapidly reached all four corners of the globe.

So, let's start in Malaysia:



Malay Muslim lady selling vegetables, Kota Bharu, Malaysia