13529 - A British boy is asking why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) chose the five pillars

the question

Why did Muhammed choose the five pillars ?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This question caught our attention, because it indicates that you have an interest in the religion of Islam and in the Prophet of Islam. We congratulate you for this interest and your keenness to find out about these things from trustworthy sources. Perhaps this question will open the way for you to reach the path of truth, for Allaah is the Guide to the Straight Path. Here is the answer :

Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is the Prophet whom Allaah sent to all of mankind, to bring them forth from the darkness of polytheism and disbelief to the light of guidance and Islam. Allaah commanded him to call people to worship Allaah alone, with no partner or associate, and to enjoin good characteristics upon them, such as generosity, courage, honouring one’s guest, treating neighbours kindly, obeying one’s parents, respecting the old and being compassionate towards the young, guiding those who are misguided, showing mercy to the poor and needy, helping those who are in need, helping those who are troubled, relieving those who are in distress, and other kinds of good characteristics… and to forbid polytheism, disbelief and evil characteristics and actions such as adultery, lying, treachery, deceit, disobedience to parents, wrongdoing, etc. See question # 219.

With regard to the pillars of Islam, it should be noted – may Allaah guide you – that the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was commanded to convey that which Allaah revealed to him, without adding anything or taking anything away. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is only a Revelation revealed”

[al-Najm 53:4].

It is impossible for the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to tell lies about Allaah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And if he (Muhammad) had forged a false saying concerning Us (Allaah),

We surely would have seized him by his right hand (or with power and might),

And then We certainly would have cut off his life artery (aorta),

And none of you could have withheld Us from (punishing) him”

[al-Haaqqah :44-47]

If we examine the five pillars of Islam, we will see that they vary. The first pillar – the Shahaadatayn or twin testimony of faith – combines action of the heart (belief) with action of the tongue (words). The second pillar – prayer – means doing a physical action which connects a person to his Lord at various times of the night and day. The third pillar, fasting, is an act of worship which involves refraining from food, drink, intercourse and all actions that break the fast, from dawn till sunset. So the Muslim fasts to worship Allaah, and also to feel how his poor brothers feel. The fourth pillar is zakaah, which is a financial action, whereby the Muslim who is able to do so gives part of his wealth to his poor and needy brothers. The fifth pillar is Hajj (pilgrimage), which is an action that combines spending money and physical effort. If you think about these five pillars, you will see great wisdom behind them. Islam is based on submission to Allaah alone, and giving up associating anything or anyone else with Him. It also teaches that Allaah should not be worshipped in any way other than the ways that He has prescribed. There are some people for whom it is easy to do physical actions but it is hard for them to spend money, so zakaah is a test for such people. Some people find it easy to spend a lot of money but it is difficult for them to make physical efforts, so prayer is a test for them. Some people find it easy to pray and pay zakaah, but it is hard for them to give up the food, drink and physical pleasures that they enjoy, so

fasting is a test for them. And Hajj may combine spending money with physical effort… and other praiseworthy reasons behind these acts of worship.

These pillars were revealed from Allaah, and conveyed to us by the trustworthy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The Muslims accept them and carry them out. We ask Allaah to guide us all.