

PILLAS OF IMAAN

Meaning of the term Iman

The literal meaning of *Imaan* is to belief in or to have faith in something. In Islamic theology the term imaan denotes a believer's faith in the metaphysical aspects of the six articles of faith.

The Islamic articles of faith

There are six pillars of Imaan and they are as follows:

1. Believe in Allah (S.W.T).
2. Believe Angels of Allah.
3. Believe the revealed Scriptures (books).
4. Believe Allah's Apostles (Prophets and Messengers).
5. Believe in the last day
6. Believe in the Divine Destiny (pre- measurement of good and evil)

BELIEVE IN ALLAH (S.W.T)

Meaning of tawheed (monotheism)

Literally *Tawheed* comes from the word *Wah-hada*, which means to make something one, unity or to consolidate. Technically Tawheed means attributing oneness to Allah and describing Him as being one and unique in His nature, power and work.

Categories of tawheed

The following are three main ways through which we can understand the oneness of Allah (S.W.T):

1. **Tawheedar-rubabiyah:** This concept of Tawheed is based on the belief of unifying Allah (SWT) as the sovereign **Lord (Rabbi)**. And that He is the sole Lord of the universe who creates, plans, protects, sustains and maintains all creation with any need as expected.
2. **Tawheedul-Uluhiyah/ Tawheedul-Ibaadah:** The word *ilaah* means "*one who is worshipped.*" This means to believe that Allah (Swat) the Most High is the only one

worth of true worship. Therefore, all acts of worship like Salat, working, fasting, among others should be dedicated to Allah alone.

3. Tawheed al-asma wasifat. (Names and attributes): This category helps us to understand who our creator is through His names and qualities through which we know that Allah (SWT) is beyond our imagination and bears no resemblance.

Significance of tawheed (Islamic monotheism)

The believing in the oneness of Allah (P.B.U.H) in his nature, power and work, has the following importance and relevance in the life of a Muslim:

- a) It is the first fundamental principal of the Islamic Faith.
- b) It assures the creatures that the creator is near them and ready to answer their request.
- c) It distances mankind from worshipping other than Allah and thus refrain from any form of shirk.
- d) It increases Taqwa since one is aware that Allah sees him wherever he may be and is aware of even what is hidden in one's heart and mind.
- e) It leads one to ensure his Self-respect, self-esteem and maintain his dignity as a respect to his Creator.
- f) It gives an attitude of peace and contentment in a person since he knows that Allah will take care of his needs if he is truly obedient and hardworking.
- g) It leads to unity and brotherhood amongst human beings.
- h) It makes a believer to be dutiful, responsible and upright, since he knows that Allah (S.W.T) will ask everybody of his responsibility on the day of the judgment. Therefore, he does his duties whole heartedly and this keeps him away from neglecting his duties and from sin.
- i) It removes the fear of people since one strongly believes that not only his life but everything is in the hands of Allah.
- j) It removes greedy and jealousy and the desire to achieve success through even evil means as one believes in the powers of Allah and not one's endeavor.
- k) It does not allow him to be proud or arrogant.

- l) It encourages the acceptance of Allah's order and commands without questioning, and therefore promotes obedience and submission to the will of Allah (S.W.T).
- m) It makes a believer brave and courageous.
- n) It makes a believer to be patient and preserving for he will know that whatever the problem Allah (S.W.T) will have to solve it for his gradually.

SHIRK (POLYTHEISM)

Meaning of the term shirk

The term **shirk** comes from the Arabic word **sharaka** which means to associate, sharing or form partners with. In the Islamic context shirk means ascribing a partner or rival to Allah (S.W.T) in worship or His names, nature, power, attributes as well as work.

Forms of shirk.

There are three forms of shirk as discussed below:

1. Shirk-akbar (major shirk): This is the major and most serious form of shirk.

Manifestations of major shirk

Shirk-Al-akbar is manifested in the following examples:

- *Shirkul-dua*: It implies invoking supplication or praying to others deities besides Allah (S.W.T) such as to supplicate to the dead in the grave or worship via the ancestors.
- *Shirka-niyaah wal-iraada wal-qasdi*: It means intention, determination or purpose in acts of worship not for Allah but towards other beings.
- *Shirkal-Taah*: This type means rendering obedience to any other authorities against the will Allah.
- *Shirk al-Mahaba*: This is showing much more love that is due to Allah to others other than Him.
- *Shirkul-khauf*: This is fearing other beings (objects) more than fearing Allah.
- *Shirkul-isti'annah*: This is depending on other beings instead of Allah.
- Believing in witchcraft, magicians, and seer and future tellers.

- Wearing of *talisman*: It is an act of putting an amulet around the neck or wrist of children believing that the amulet would save them from evils.
- Wearing of *tiwalah*: Tiwala is something done by people who claim that they can cause a person to deeply fall in love.

2.

hirk al-asghar (minor shirk): It is the minor type of associating Allah with other beings. The examples of this form of shirk include the following:

- *Ar-riya*: It is performing Ibaada to show off for example performing swalat so that you can be seen.
- Any act of worship or deed done in order to receive praise, fame or any other worldly gain.

3. Shirk al-khafi (Inconspicuous Shirk): This is having a feeling of dissatisfaction over something making someone to wish that he or she had better things than what Allah (S.W.T) has provided him/her with. It's hard to be seen and recognized. This type of Shirk manifested in the following ways:

- Being dissatisfied with the orders and destiny of Allah (S.W.T).
- Conscientiously lamenting over unapproachable status.

QURA'NIC CONDEMNATION OF SHIRK

Reasons why Muslims should avoid shirk (Effects of shirk)

The effects of shirk are clearly mentioned and discussed in the Holy Quran. To give some of them, consider the following points:

1. Shirk is the highest of the wrong doing according to the instructions given by Luqman to his son. ***“Behold, Luqman said to his son by way of instructions: ‘o my son join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong doing.’ [Q:31:13]***

2. When one attaches Allah's attributes to any of his creations, he or she undermines Allah's sovereignty yet Allah is supposed to be sovereign in everything and each aspect.
3. It is of all the sins, Allah (S.W.T) vows not to forgive anyone who commits it knowingly. This is because a person who commits such a sin undermines Allah's function as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of life. Allah (S.W.T) says, ***"Allah forgive not that partners should set up with Him; but He forgives anything else to whom he pleases; to set up partners with god is to devise a sin most heinous indeed."*** [Q: 4:48]
4. Belief in Shirk creates enmity in the society, since people will always be suspicious of each other and they will devote themselves with the belief in Allah as one who predetermines people's destiny.
5. Shirk makes man to have little or no confidence in Allah but in other things most especially in times of danger which defames the status of man as Allah's vicegerent as the best of his creation.
6. Shirk makes a person to distance him or herself from Allah (S.W.T) yet man is supposed to always be nearest to Allah praying to Him whenever he or she has a problem. Yet those who practice other objects created by Allah. ***"And who is more astray than one who invokes besides Allah, such as will not answer to the day of judgment, and who (in fact) are unconscious of their call (to them)"***[Q: 46:5]
7. Shirk makes an individual not to be dutiful and upright, one who performs shirk does not carry out his or her duties whole heartedly and this makes her or him near to sinking all the time.
8. Shirk makes a person behave like a coward as he or she will always be thinking that even objects which have no life can protect her or him from any danger or misfortune e.g. wearing of amulets and charms.
9. The dua (supplications) of a person who practices shirks are not answered by Allah (P.B.U.H). He or she always lives in disgraceful of life.
10. The Divine Destiny is doomed and lost for good. A person performing shirk never believe in the power of Allah and never depend on Him for anything, but rather depend on other objects.

11. It is costly hence brings financial constraints to the individual performing shirk particularly and to the entire society at large.

BELIEVE IN ANGELS

The belief in the angels is the second pillar of Iman (Islamic faith).

Characteristics of Angels (Malaika tul-Rahmaan)

The Angels are characterized by the following main features:

- i. They are creatures of Allah that He created from Noor (light).
- ii. Allah created them outside blood relationship, hence unlike human beings; they are not associated with having such relations as parental, fraternal, or any other blood relation.
- iii. They lack gender like the human beings. Therefore, they are neither male nor female.
- iv. They are free from humanitarian aspects like feelings of hunger, thirst, slumbering, sleeping or such related desires.
- v. They were relieved by the divine powers of Allah from fatigue, monotony and the desire to either relax or sleep.
- vi. They lack definite body shape to be identified with but Allah has bestowed them with the ability to be in any form that is relevant with the prevailing circumstance.
- vii. Allah has prepared their abode (the place of their convergence) in heaven.
- viii. Their main duty is to diligently praise Allah and glorify Him in deeds and articulation.
- ix. They are totally obedient and submissive to perform their duties and executing what they have been commanded.
- x. Their total is unknown to anybody except Allah (S.W.T).
- xi. They are *maasumeen* (sinless).
- xii. They are invisible (that is they cannot be seen neither touched).

How the belief in angels affects the life of a Muslim.

The following are ways in which the belief in angels affects the life of a Muslim:

- 1) Help them to strive to have clean records.
- 2) It includes the fear of Allah.
- 3) The Muslim appreciated that he/she is a worthy being, who is being taken care of.
- 4) The Muslim should always be aware of the happening around him/her.
- 5) The Muslim should account themselves on the earth before the final day.
- 6) They take care not to found on the wrong on the day of judgement.
- 7) They strive to lead a good and perfect life.
- 8) It instills the sense of responsibility in the Muslims.
- 9) Good actions are recorded immediately by the recording angel while bad actions are delayed.

ANGELS AND THEIR DUTIES

The Al-mighty Allah (S.W.T) has created the Holy Angeles and given them specific roles to play. The following table shows some Angeles and their respective duties.

NAME OF THE ANGEL	DUTY PERFORMED BY THE ANGEL
Jibril (Gabriel/Ruh) (A.S)	In charge of deliverance of revelation (wahyi) to the chosen person
Mikail (A.S)	In charge of weather (rain) and growth as well as fertility of plants
Israfiil (A.S)	In charge of blowing the trumpet to call everyone to account for his deeds
Malakul-Maut/Izrael(A.S)	In charge of removing souls at the time of death.
Kiraman Katibun (A.S)	In charge of keeping the records of the deeds of human beings. That is: Atid: in charge of recording of bad deeds of human being. Raqeeb: in charge of recording of good deeds of human being.
Malik (A.S)	In charge of the gates of Hellfire.
Ridhwan (A.S)	In charge of the gates of paradise.
Munkar and Nakeer (A.S)	In charge of Questioning the Dead in the grave and severe punishment to the dead people who had committed sin.
Hamalatul-arshy (A.S)	In charge of carrying the sacred throne of Allah (S.W.T)

Ways in which the belief in Kiraaman katibun (Recording Angels) affects the life of a Muslim

The following are some of significance of belief in examining angels (Mumkar and Nakir) as well as Recording Angels (Raqib and Atid) according to Islam:

- By making Muslims strive to lead a good and perfect life due to the fact that they become more vigilant of the deeds, statements and gestures.
- By enhancing the sense of Taqwa (fearing Allah (S.W.T) in Muslims, thus making them be righteous.
- It makes Muslims to believe in the day of reckoning and therefore, strive to have clean records.
- Muslims become much more observant and hence, take care so as not to be found on the wrong doers during the Day of Judgment.
- It instills a sense of responsibility and punctuality in Muslims. Therefore, they become dutiful in fulfilling the religious obligations.
- Muslims account themselves on earth and make tawba (repentance) before the Day of Judgment.
- It promotes the believing in the other metaphorical articles of faith such as the existence of paradise and hellfire, barzakh, miizan and among others.