

ISLAM AND THE ROLE IT PLAYS IN BUSINESS (Cont'd):

These are known as the five pillars of Islam. They are:

- 1). The Profession of Faith
- 2). Prayer (Salat)
- 3). Charity (Zakat)
- 4). Fasting
- 5). Pilgrimage or Hajj.

For the experienced traveller to the region the manifestation of these five basic principles are evident on a daily basis. For the newcomer, however, it is important to note the importance of each.

The profession or declaration of faith occurs in the daily prayers of all Muslims as well as in the call to prayer that is heard from each mosque. Obligatory prayers or Salat are said five times each day; at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. Business and shops stop all commercial activity and close their doors for prayer time. These five prayer times determine the rhythm of the day, at home and at work.

Charity or Zakat (almsgiving) has developed from a voluntary act of charity towards the needy to an obligatory tax. Although there are many variations according to circumstances, every Muslim is subject to some form of Zakat. Local commercial enterprises are also subject to Zakat and usually government contracts require submission of the certificate from the Department of Zakat & Income Tax attesting that the company has fulfilled its obligations.

Fasting is carried out during the month of Ramadan. Ramadan commemorates the month during which the Quran was first revealed and the victory of Mohammed's followers over the Makkans at the Battle of Badr. The close of Ramadan is celebrated by the festival of Eid al Fitr (Festival of Breaking the Fast). The Eid period is marked by special community prayers and joyous family celebrations and feasts.

Performance of the Hajj or pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in his/her lifetime is an obligation of every Muslim who is fit and can afford to make the journey. The Hajj begins with the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar called Dhul Hijjah. The close of Hajj is marked by the feast of Eid al Adha (Festival of Sacrifice).