



Shahadah

What does it mean to me?

In an every day sense, if someone would ask me what I believe I would do what any well trained Muslim would do and tell them what is in the shahadah; namely that there is One God and Muhammad is His messenger. Of course, I have other beliefs, but this is a pretty good summary of Muslim belief generally.

Muslims are trained from a young age to be able to recite shahadah, normally about age 3 or 4 they will delight roomfuls of people with their high-pitched sweet recitation of the Muslim testimony of faith. However, they have no real idea of what this means. If you ask them to say it in their own language they wouldn't even know what that meant. As Muslims grow and learn they are expected to take this very basic rote learning of the shahadah and build upon it until when it is, inshaAllah the final thing that is whispered on their dying lips it means more to them than they would be able to communicate in words.

So where have I got to so far in my understanding? The only thing I know for sure and for certain is the reality of Allah; belief in His oneness. Once this is something you witness it is not something you can forget, it is not something you can turn your back on because it is always there in everything you look at and in every thought you have. Before belief in Allah, everything is disparate and slightly confused. Meaning may exist in small portions for example a good meal is worth having because you enjoy it but real deep meaning is there but you can't see it; and there is a feeling of desperation attached to that. So, in this way, shahadah has been my saviour because it has infused meaning and purpose into my life. The second part of shahadah, the declaration that the Prophet Muhammad is the final messenger of Allah helps me to live life in the best way to others and teaches me how to worship effectively and improve my character. This is a work in progress and always will be. You may think you have mastered 'patience' but a change will occur in your life and you are back to square one. It is the same for anything you choose to work on. It is a constant struggle against your lower self and the second part of the shahadah; the belief that Muhammad is His messenger helps guide me through that process.

Shahadah, therefore is not something you remember to say and then tell people when they ask you; in fact the ideal life of a Muslim is a journey of understanding what these limitless testimonies mean to the ends of your own potential.

Task:

1. Make a list of reasons why the first part of shahadah is important.
2. Make a list of reasons why the second part of shahadah is important.
3. For each of these reasons make a personal list of what helps you in life to achieve these
Eg if you have said 'purpose' you may say 'I think my purpose is to work hard to get a good Job'