



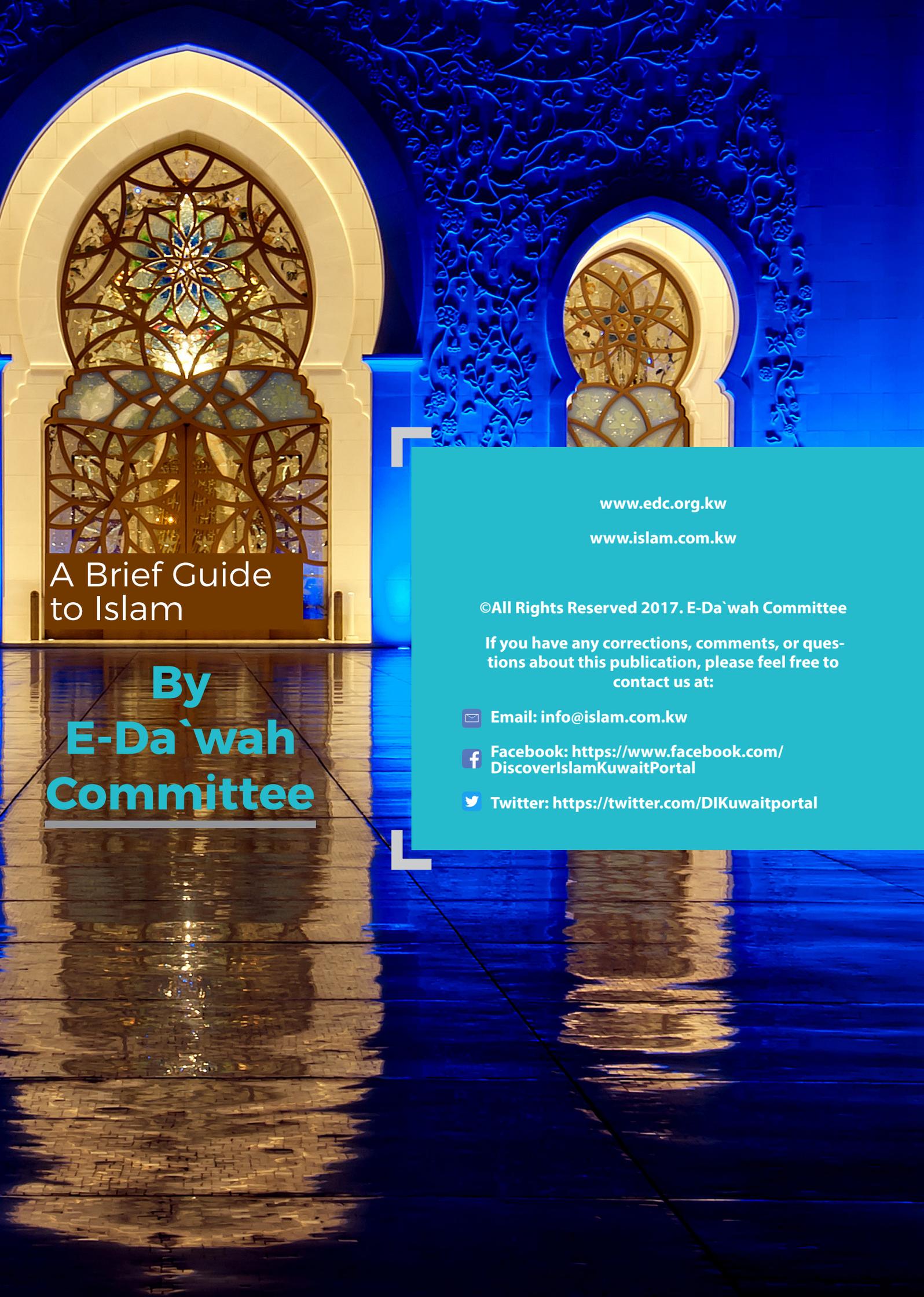
النجاة الخيرية



لجنة الدعوة الإلكترونية
E-Dawah Committee
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A Brief Guide to Islam

By
E-Da`wah Committee



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Introduction



Almighty Allah (Allah is the Arabic name of God) has chosen a man who has been renowned for his uprightness, honesty, high moral standards and intelligence. He sent down to this man, Prophet Muhammad, a divine message to disseminate among people. The message included a perfect integrated approach that regulates the course of life, tunes the relationship between God and creations, explains the purposes of existence and helps man lead a God-pleasing way of life. It is a coherent and comprehensive course that covers all aspects of one's interests and sets aright the human relationship with other beings in the universe. This system has been revealed by God, the Creator of man Who knows what is good or bad for His creation, to be their way of life. This religion is Islam, by which Almighty Allah sealed His Messages and Messengers to mankind. He made it perfect and complete and chose it for people as He says,

I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion. (Al-Ma'idah 5:3)



The E-Da`wah Committee is pleased to present this ebook which provides a brief introduction to the basic concepts of this religion, Islam, including its articles of faith and five pillars. It does not delve deeply in the details but it rather discusses the general guidelines of the Islamic concepts related to matters of faith, worship, contemporary issues and the peculiarities of Islam. However, it gives the dear reader an inclusive overview of Islam to be his first step towards understanding the great religion of Islam. The ebook is highly useful for non-Muslims, new converts and the general Muslim readers. We attempted to be to the point without excessive elaborateness or deficient abridgment.

What is Islam?



Islam is the last divine religion revealed to and propagated by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last of God's Prophets. The Arabic word "Islam" centers on the meanings of peace and willing acceptance that are the core of Islam. Thus, Islam means peaceful acceptance of the commands of God, the Creator, through believing in Him and His Messenger and obeying them. Islam is a comprehensive system that regulates the different aspects of one's life. It offers a logic and reasonable explanation to the existential questions and expounds the goals of life and the Afterlife.

The Islamic faith is basically founded on the inevitable relationship between the existence of life and its goals. In Islam, God is the Creator of all existence and everything around. He brought man into existence to worship Him and made the universe in the service of man to accomplish the goal of his existence. Thus, one should by no means desist from pursuing that sublime goal. Almighty Allah says,

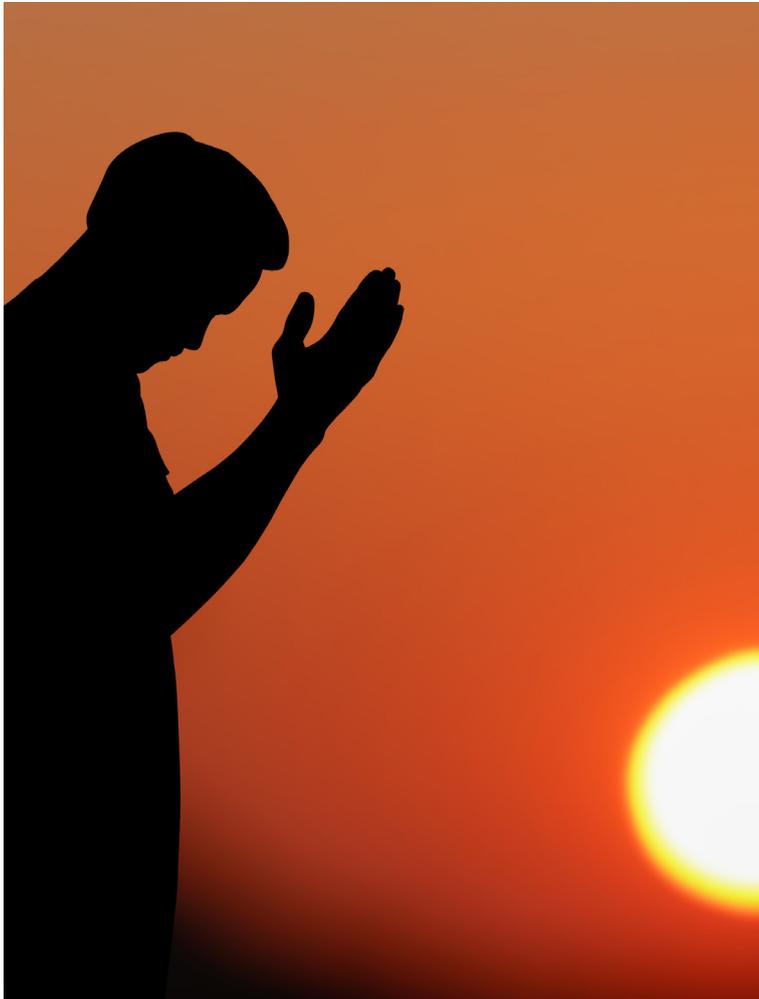
And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me. Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength. (Adh-Dhariyat 51:56-58)

There are some people who worship other gods, but they are at fault because those gods are false. Those gods, being humans, animals, stars or anything else, are nothing but a part of Allah's creation, while Allah is the only Creator. So, it is irrational to leave the Almighty Creator, the Originator of all blessings and the Controller of the universe for a helpless and weak god who possesses nothing for him/her/itself regardless of others. In Islam, God is the Omnipotent, Powerful Creator Who is not in need of anyone because He is Almighty and Supreme. This is the core of the Islamic Monotheism.

Islam organizes the relationship between man and others, the universe and God through a coherent system of beliefs, commands and recommendations that combine revelation and reason and do not go against anyone of them. Islam has been open to criticism throughout history. However, it proved perfect in all of its beliefs and orders, as supported by the testimonies of famous scientists.



Islam's View of Life



The link between man and life is always found in the relationship between man and His God. Almighty Allah is the Creator of the whole universe, including man, for certain purposes. One of these goals is the worship of God. The entire universe with its stars, suns, seas, animals, plants, humans, etc. worship Almighty Allah. God says,

Do you not see that Allah is exalted by whomever is within the heavens and the earth and [by] the birds with wings spread [in flight]? Each [of them] has known his [means of] prayer and exalting [Him], and Allah is Knowing of what they do.

(An-Nur 24:41)

In fact, the Qur'an reiterated the purpose of the creation of the Jinn and humans to always remind them of this sacred goal, namely worship. Almighty Allah says,

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. I do not want from them any provision, nor do I want them to feed Me. Indeed, it is Allah who is the [continual] Provider, the firm possessor of strength.

(Adh-Dhariyat 51:56-58)

They were not created to occupy themselves with provisions and material needs because the goal of their existence is to worship God Alone, in the broad sense of worship.

Worship in Islam is not restricted to spiritual rituals done in a ceremony or a prayer place. Worship is not only fasting, pilgrimage or remembrance of God. We do not belittle these great deeds, God forbid, but we would like to let the dear reader know that worship is much broader than this. Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah defined the concept of worship saying, "Worship is everything that pleases God including the apparent and hidden sayings and actions." Thus, the whole of one's actions and sayings, even intentions, can be a kind of worship. Work can be worship, and also eating, drinking, picnicking, sleeping, etc. so long as one observes the commands of God regarding them. The Qur'an confirms that the whole of one's life should be intended for the sake of God. Almighty Allah says,

Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds.

(Al-An`am 6:162)

For this reason, Islam provides a coherent and comprehensive system and way of life that covers almost all sides of man's life, within a theological, scientific and logical frame that gives room for human contributions and provides general guidelines based on high moral standards. The Islamic law, for example, is based on five bases, namely protecting man's religion, reason, soul, property and offspring. These rules constitute the foundation of the Islamic law as a whole.

Six Articles of Islamic Faith

1 - Belief in God (Allah)

A god is a being, spirit or whatever is worshiped by people out of admiration, glorification, fear, hope or anything else. There are many people who take animate or inanimate things as gods which they implore and worship. They may have a belief that these gods possess supernatural powers or miraculous capabilities or even worship them because they like to do so. But, this concept is invalid in Islam. The Islamic creed states that God is the One Who is worthy of worship because He is the Creator. This sound concept is the most accurate one because it considers worship as a right of the Creator Who has absolute dominance over everything. Godhood cannot be tolerable on the part of anyone or anything that has limited capabilities or has no impact on the course of events. Almighty Allah, states in the Qur'an that worship is a right to Him,

O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous. [He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him]. (Al-Baqarah 2:21-22)

Moreover, it is not allowable to associate partners with God. `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud said: "I asked the Messenger of Allah, "Which sin is the gravest?" He replied: "That you associate someone with Allah (in worship), while He has created you". (Abu Dawud)

In addition, it is not permissible to ascribe a son to God because this goes against the basis of the Islamic creed, namely monotheism, and also against logic. God (Allah) is unlike us; He does not eat, drink, beget, sleep or have any of the characteristics of humans. Everything other than Him is from His creation. He is a deity not a human. God says in the Qur'an,

Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent." (Al-Ikhlās 112:1-4)

Thus, ascribing a son to Allah is not allowed because Allah has negated this. Moreover, taking partners with Allah in worship is also unacceptable because they will be false gods, since God is the Only Creator and anything else is from His creatures.

And to Allah belong all the virtues and nothing of the vices is ascribed to Him.

He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise. (Al-Hashr 59:22-24)





” 2- Belief in Angels

Angels are mystical beings that Almighty Allah created from light. They are able to take multiple forms, but only the good ones. They should not be described as males or females. The belief in the existence of angels, as mentioned in the Qur’an and the authentic narrations from the Prophet (peace be upon him), is an indispensable part of the Muslim’s faith. The proofs of this are numerous; Almighty Allah says in the Qur’an,

The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. (Al-Baqarah 2:285)

Almighty Allah stated that those who disbelieve in angels have indeed gone astray. He says, **And whosoever disbelieves in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day, then indeed he has strayed far away.** (An-Nisaa’ 4:136)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Heaven has squeaked, and it has right to do so. By Him, in Whose Hand my soul is, there is not a space of four fingers in which there is not an angel who is prostrating his forehead before Allah, the Exalted.” (At-Tirmidhi)

Angels are distinguished by special attributes such as their creation from light, ability to take multiple forms, huge size, lack of material desires and complete obedience to and worship of God.

“ Every Muslim has to believe in these sacred books, in the sense that they are revealed from Allah

3- Belief in Divine Scriptures



Almighty Allah has revealed certain scriptures to His Messengers (peace be upon them), including the Qur'an, the Torah and the Gospel. The aim of these scriptures is to be a guide for people to lead a God-pleasing way of life and to help them know about Him, His Prophets, the Afterlife and the Unseen. These books serve as a link that keeps man connected with God through His own Words and Teachings. Almighty Allah says,

We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. (Al-Hadid 57:25)

Every Muslim has to believe in these sacred books, in the sense that they are revealed from Allah and conveyed, by Angel Jibril (Gabriel, peace be upon him), to the Prophets of Allah who in turn disseminated them to people. These books are a means of guidance to all people. Almighty Allah say,

The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers. (Al-Baqarah 2:285)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Scriptures, His Messengers and the Last Day and that you believe in preordainment (destiny), its bad and good consequences." (Muslim)

The faith in the revealed books does not go in conflict with the Islamic view that the divine books that preceded the Qur'an have been subject to distortion. This is because the Islamic faith is to believe that Allah has revealed certain books to His Messengers, such as Moses and Jesus, while they were subject to perversion and misinterpretation at the hands of people. The distortion has been explained by the Qur'an which discussed certain positions in these books that go against the essential requirements and principles of Godhood and Lordship, such as ascribing children to God or characterizing Him by weakness and disability. Almighty Allah says,

The Jews say, "Ezra is the son of Allah "; and the Christians say, "The Messiah is the son of Allah." That is their statement from their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved [before them]. May Allah destroy them; how are they deluded? They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah , and [also] the Messiah, the son of Mary. And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him. (At-Tawbah 9:30-31)

The Qur'an

The Qur'an is the last divine book revealed to the final messenger of God, Muhammad (peace be upon him). Almighty Allah revealed the Qur'an through Angel Jibril (peace be upon him) who conveyed the words of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad, who conveyed it to the Companions, especially the scribes among them. Neither Prophet Muhammad nor Angel Jibril had added from their own to the Qur'an in any of its words or chapters. It was transmitted the same as taken from Allah to Prophet Muhammad. Allah (Glory be to Him) clarified in the Qur'an that it is inadmissible that Prophet Muhammad might have changed or distorted any part of the Qur'anic text or even a single word or letter of it, and if this happens, God forbid, Allah will terminate Muhammad's life right away. God says,

And if Muhammad had made up about Us some [false] sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand; Then We would have cut from him the aorta. And there is no one of you who could prevent [Us] from him. (Al-Haqqah 69:45-47)

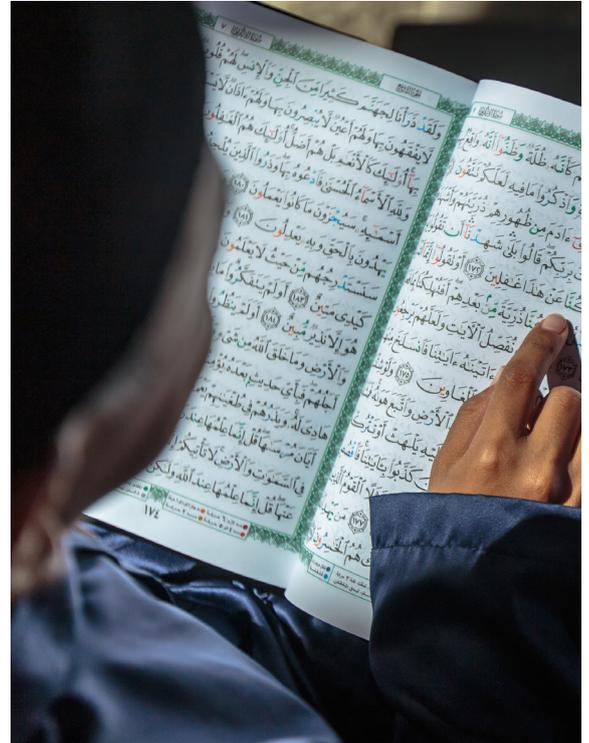
The Qur'an has been written and memorized at the time of the Prophet by most of the Companions and their children. It has been transferred to the next generations, every generation delivering it to the next until it reached us now as memorized by hundreds of thousands or even millions of Muslims. The Arabs are known for their strong memories; they used to memorize long poems that exceeded 1000 verses.

The Qur'an is a book of guidance, legislation, admonition, science and history. It organizes the Muslim's attitude and sets his daily life in a harmonious order through a miraculous text that proves absolute comprehensiveness of the requirements of human soul that drops not the physical or moral sides. Almighty Allah says,

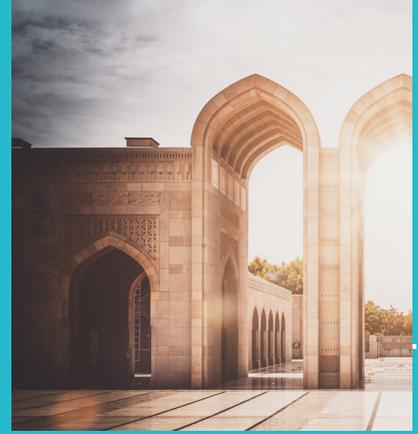
Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward. And that those who do not believe in the Hereafter - We have prepared for them a painful punishment. (Al-Israa' 17:9-10)

Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills. And one whom Allah leaves astray - for him there is no guide. (Az-Zumar 39:23)

Also, Al-Harith Al-A`war narrated that he heard `Ali ibn Abi Talib saying, "I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "Indeed there comes a Fitnah." So I said: "What is the way out from it, O Messenger of Allah?" He said: "Allah's book. In it is news for what happened before you, and information about what comes after you, and judgment for what happens among you. It is the Criterion (between right and wrong) without jest. Whoever among the oppressive abandons it, Allah crushes him, and whoever seeks guidance from other than it, then Allah lets him go astray. It is the firm rope of Allah, it is the wise remembrance, it is the straight path, and it is the one that the desires cannot distort, nor can the tongues twist it, nor can the scholars ever have enough of it, and it shall not become dull from reciting it much, and its wonders do not diminish. It is the one that when the Jinn heard it, they did not hesitate to say about it: 'Verily, we have heard a wonderful Recitation (this Qur'an)! It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein.' Whoever speaks according to it has said the truth, and whoever acts according to it is rewarded, and whoever judges by it has judged justly, and whoever invites to it then he guides to the straight path." (At-Tirmidhi)



4- Belief in the Prophets



Prophets (peace be upon them) are God's messengers to mankind to guide them to the way of God and convey God's messages to them. The prophets or messengers are chosen persons whom Allah entrusted with transferring His revelation to people and calling to His worship. Due to the great hardships they endured along their missionary mission and the unbearable harm they tolerably bore, they are favored over other people. They are considered the best of Allah's creation.

The Islamic creed maintains that a Muslim has to believe in all the prophets and messengers of God, such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad without making any kind of discrimination among them. Almighty Allah says, **The Messenger [Prophet Muhammad] has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers."** (Al-Baqarah 2:285)

The Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day and that you believe in preordainment (destiny), its bad and good consequences." (Muslim)
A Muslim has to believe in all of the Prophets, including those who were mentioned in the Qur'an by name and those who were not.

And We have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those [whose stories] We have related to you, and among them are those [whose stories] We have not related to you. And it was not for any messenger to bring a sign [or verse] except by permission of Allah. (Ghafir 40:78)

Some of the Prophets were given preference over the others, as mentioned in the Qur'an.

Those messengers -some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degree. (Al-Baqarah 2:253)

Almighty Allah has supported His Prophets with miracles so that people would have faith in them and follow their precepts. Among these miracles are the Ark of Noah, the salvation from fire for Abraham, the crossing of the Red Sea for Moses, healing the blind and the leper and giving life to people for Jesus and the Qur'an for Prophet Muhammad. These miracles are things that go beyond natural laws or human capabilities, which Allah made as evidence for His Messengers' Prophethood.

The core of the messages of all prophets is the same, namely monotheism, which is to worship Allah alone without ascribing partners or children to Him. All messengers called their people to the creed of monotheism. However, the legal instructions may differ from one prophet to another, depending on his time and people. When the Qur'an narrates the stories of Prophets with their people, it tells us that the first thing they invited people to is always, "worshipping Allah without ascribing partners to Him."

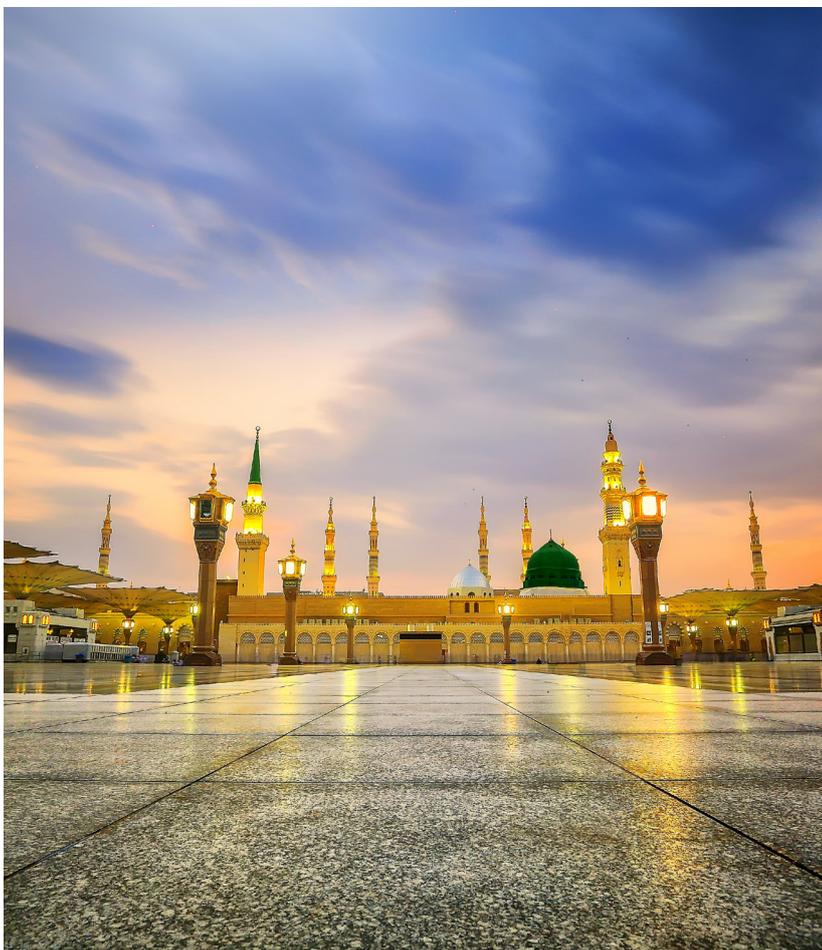
(Qur'an 7:59, 7:65, 7:73, 7:85)

Prophet Muhammad

He is Muhammad son of `Abdullah son of `Abdul-Muttalib from the tribe of Hashim from Quraish and his lineage goes back to Isma`il (Ishmael, peace be upon him) son of Ibrahim (Abraham, peace be upon him). His mother is Aminah bint Wahb who died when he was 6 years old, and his father had passed away when he was still an embryo. Muhammad grew up as an orphan and his uncle Abu Talib took care of him. As he grew up, Muhammad worked with his uncle in herding his sheep. Prophet Muhammad was well-known for his good manners, honesty, truthfulness, keeping away from evil acts and love of seclusion. The Prophet's legacy before assuming Prophethood wasn't more than a great stock of good manners. He did not have any of the cultural activities which Arabs were known for at these times such as poetry; he even did not learn how to write or read. Prophet Muhammad was divinely prepared for his mission, without any interference from anyone else.

Muhammad (peace be upon him) started his mission by calling people to the worship of the one true God, the same call of all Prophets before him. He did not compel anyone to accept his faith or spread his message with the sword. He peacefully invited his people to monotheism and good manners. He was met with great opposition so much so that the people of Mecca forced him and his Companions to leave their homeland, Mecca, to Abyssinia and then Medina.

When he moved to Medina, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) laid down the foundations of the Muslim community, starting by establishing the main mosque to regulate Muslims' worship as well as all other affairs. Then, he strengthened the social unity by making brotherhood between the migrants and the people of Medina. In addition, the Prophet extinguished the flames of tribal conflicts between the main Medina tribes: Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj. Moreover, the Prophet made a pact between the Muslim community and the Jews based on mutual cooperation, business and defense of Medina against its enemies. After that, the Prophet started his outside



mission by, peacefully, sending letters to the presidents and chieftains at his time inviting them to Islam.

The main commandments of Prophet Muhammad are justice, good doing, good treatment of others and the worship of one God. He is not reported to have killed or wronged anyone or shed blood. His tolerance has encompassed all, even those who concealed hatred and disbelief against him. Nothing is more evidencing of his mercy, forgiveness and tolerance than his attitude towards the people of Quraish when he returned in command of a huge army of 10,000 fighters around Mecca awaiting his order to crash Mecca and its people. However, he always acted upon a rule he has said before, "I hope that Allah brings about from their progeny those who worship Him alone." The Prophet forgave the people of Mecca who expelled him before and said to them, "Go, you are free."

5- Belief in the Last Day and Afterlife

The Islamic view of life is that the worldly life is transient and it is a prelude to an eternal life after death. The worldly life is a test for people; whoever passes it will enjoy eternal bliss in the Hereafter, and whoever fails will be deprived from this pleasure and be punished with eternal torment in the Hellfire. The Day of Judgment or the Last Day is a day that Muslims believe to come after death at a specific time known by God. This day must come so that everyone who has been able to escape his rightful penalty in this life will take it on that day. The belief in that day is a part of the Muslim creed as indicated by the Qur'an and Sunnah. There are numerous verses and hadiths that stressed this pillar of faith, owing to its great significance and status in Islam. Allah (Glory be to Him) says,

Righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Prophets... (Al-Baqarah 2:177)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day and that you believe in preordainment (destiny), its bad and good consequences." (Muslim)

The verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad have described in detail the events of the Last Day, including resurrection of people from death, bringing people to the place of reckoning, calling people to account, the bridge over the Hellfire, the description of the Hellfire and Paradise, etc. The Last Day is in the Afterlife that everyone will go through as stated by the Muslim creed. The most important thing for a Muslim is his status in the Afterlife not in the worldly life because the former is the lasting one. Almighty Allah says,

And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter - that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew. (Al-`Ankabut 29:64)

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Do you know who is the bankrupt?" They said: "The bankrupt among us is one who has neither money with him nor any property." He said, "The real bankrupt of my Ummah would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayer, fasting and charity, (but he will find himself bankrupt on that day as he will have exhausted the good deeds) because he reviled others, brought calumny against others, unlawfully devoured the wealth of others, shed the blood of others and beat others; so his good deeds will be credited to the account of those (who suffered at his hand). If his good deeds fail to clear the accounts, sins will be entered in his account and he will be thrown in the (Hell) Fire". (Muslim)



6- Belief in Predestination

In his book "Al-Qada' wal-Qadar", Sheikh `Abdur-Rahman Al-Mahmud states, "Al-Qadar (Divine predestination) refers to God's preexistent predestination of things, His Knowledge and Approval of the times and ways of their occurrence, and that their occurrence as was predestined by Him." The bases of the belief in divine predestination are:

Knowledge: God knows everything pertaining to people. God says, "Allah has encompassed all things in His knowledge." (At-Talaq 65:12)

Writing: God has written down the destiny of all creatures. Almighty Allah says, "Know you not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Verily, it is (all) in the Book (Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz). Verily! That is easy for Allah. (Al-Hajj 22:70)

Approval: Nothing in the universe happens without God's Will. God says, "And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds." (At-Takwir 81:29)

Creation: God is the Creator of all things, including the actions of people. He is the Creator of them and what they do. Allah says, "Allah has created you and what you do." (As-Saffat 37:96)

The belief in the divine predestination is part and parcel of the Islamic faith, as Allah says,

Indeed, all things We created with predestination. (Al-Qamar 54:49)

And ever is the command of Allah a destiny decreed. (Al-Ahzab 33:38)

`Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day and that you believe in



preordainment (destiny), its bad and good consequences." (Muslim)

The belief in the divine predestination is an indication of the soundness of the Muslim's faith and contentment with Allah as Lord and God. It goes between the belief in Allah's comprehensive Knowledge and Justice. The true believer has no doubt about the Absolute Justice, Mercy and Knowledge of God Who has decreed everything. He (Glory be to Him) never does injustice to anything or anyone whatever. He says,

Indeed, Allah does not do injustice, [even] as much as an atom's weight. (An-Nisaa' 4:40)

Truly! Allah wrongs not mankind in aught; but mankind wrong themselves. (Yunus 10:44)

Also, the concept of predestination is not restricted to religious commands or people's actions but it rather includes everything in the universe. As one stands astounded by the matchless and incredible Creativeness, Mightiness and Skillfulness of the Creator of the universe, even in the least things of His creatures, one should have the same feelings and contentment with Allah's decrees for people. God is the Creator and Predestiner of everything and He is also the Creator and the Predestiner of every person. He said, "**Allah has created you and what you do.**" (As-Saffat 37:96)

Therefore, if one has true faith in Allah's Beautiful Names and Sublime Attributes, submits to His commands with peace of mind and trusts in Him as Lord, one will easily have perfect faith in His Predestination.

Five Pillars of Islam

1- Declaration of Faith

To enter Islam, you have to willingly and wholeheartedly profess that there is no true God except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. This testimony is the first pillar of Islam as a Muslim has to fully believe in Allah as his Only God while other gods are nothing but a kind of falsehood. A Muslim must have faith in Allah as God, Lord, Creator, Sustainer, and Provider, Who has absolute power and dominance over everyone and everything whereas anything or anyone else is of limited power and, of course, in need of Him. The first part of the declaration of faith is to deny that anyone other than Allah has the right to be



worshipped, and to affirm that this is the right of Allah alone, with no partner or associate. Just as Allah has no partner in His dominion, He has no partner in His worship. Allah says:

That is because Allah is the Truth, and that which they call upon other than Him is falsehood, and because Allah is the Most High, the Grand. (Al-Hajj 22:62)

The second part of the declaration of faith is to bear witness that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah, His slave and His Messenger to all of creation: mankind and the jinn. This belief implies trusting him in all that he informed us, following his commands, avoiding his prohibitions, holding him in high esteem, adhering to his Sunnah (way), and knowing that obedience to him is obedience to Allah, and disobedience to him is disobedience to Allah.

A person is not accepted as a Muslim unless he utters this declaration of faith, willfully, wholeheartedly, and completely. It is not acceptable to utter or believe in one part without the other. A Muslim has to confess that there is only one true God, Allah, and that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger. By then, one enters Islam and becomes a Muslim from whom the rituals of Islam are required.



2- Prayer

Prayer is the most important of the rituals of Islam, being ranked as the second of the pillars of Islam following the declaration of faith. It consists of specific actions and supplications that constitute a unit (rak`ah) of prayer that may be repeated two, three or four times. There are prayers which are obligatory in the sense that they must be offered on a daily basis, that is, the five daily prayers, including Fajr (Dawn), Zhuhr (Noon), `Asr (Afternoon), Maghrib (Sunset) and `Ishaa' (Night), or on a weekly basis such as Friday prayer. There are other kinds of prayer that are voluntarily done. Every adult sane Muslim has to observe prayer to attain the pleasure of Allah.

Prayer has great status in Islam as stressed by the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah. It has been made obligatory in Islam during the miraculous journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi`raj (Journey to Jerusalem then to the heavens). This implies a special merit of the obligation of Prayer over other obligations. Allah (Glory be to him) says,

And to establish Prayer and fear Him." And it is He to whom you will be gathered. (Al-An`am 6:72)

From the narrations of the Prophet, Ibn `Abbas reported: "The Prophet appointed Mu`adh as a governor of Yemen, and at the time of his departure, the Prophet instructed: "First of all, call the people to testify 'La ilaha illallah' (there is no true god except Allah) and that I (Muhammad) am the Messenger of Allah, and if they accept this (declaration of Faith), then tell them that Allah has enjoined upon them five Prayers during the day and night..." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)



3- Zakah



Zakah is a specified portion of the wealth that Almighty Allah has imposed to be given by the rich and to be delivered to one or more of the eight categories of the beneficiaries of Zakah. Those beneficiaries are determined in the Qur'an in the following verse:

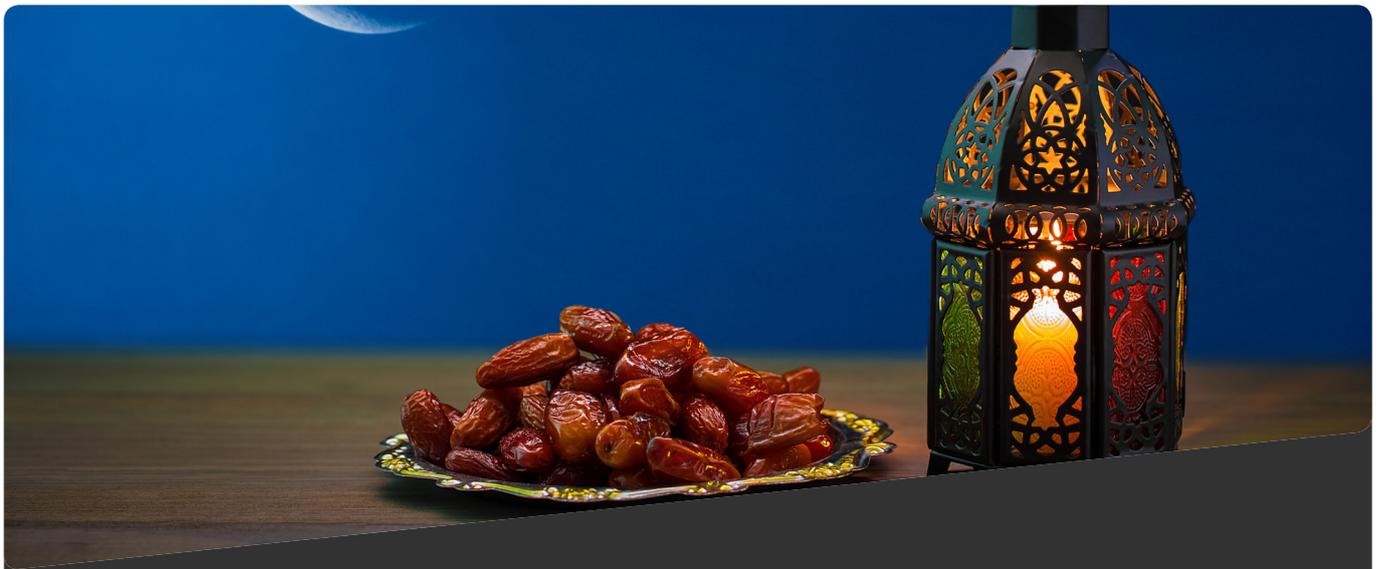
The verse also states that Zakah is an obligation imposed by Allah. This is also confirmed by the rest of the above hadith of the Prophet narrated by Ibn `Abbas, "If they obey you in that, then tell them that Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, has enjoined on them a charity (Zakat) to be taken from their rich and given to their poor..." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Zakah is one of the five pillars of Islam and a strongly required obligation. Those whose stinginess deters them from paying it out are intimidated with severe punishment from Allah. Abu Hurairah narrated, "Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "Anyone whom Allah has given wealth but he does not pay its Zakat, then, on the Day of Resurrection, his wealth will be presented to him in the shape of a bald-headed poisonous male



snake with two poisonous glands in its mouth and it will encircle itself round his neck and bite him over his cheeks and say, "I am your wealth; I am your treasure." (Al-Bukhari)

Actually, Zakah is a manifestation of the Islamic concept of social cooperation and coherence among the members of the society. The philosophy of Zakah is that it is God's right in the wealth of the rich while its beneficiaries are generally the poor and the deprived in the society or to be spent in the public interest. It is thus a major factor in spreading mutual love and support among people. Zakah has specific conditions with regard to the payer, the wealth and the receiver. These stipulations must be fulfilled in order for Zakah to be obligatory; for example, the property must reach the nisab (the minimum amount of property from which zakah is due) and a full lunar year must elapse before paying the Zakah.



” 4- Fasting

Sawm or fasting is a significant act of worship in Islam that involves abstention from specific things, mainly food, drink and sex, from dawn to sunset. Muslims have to observe this worship for a full lunar month called the month of Ramadan.

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam as shown in the hadith narrated by Ibn `Umar that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “Islam is based on five (pillars): testifying that there is no true god except Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger; performing Prayer; paying Zakah (obligatory charity); performing Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House [Ka`bah]; and fasting the month of Ramadan.” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Fasting is only obligatory during the month of Ramadan for the adult healthy Muslims while it is recommended during the rest of the year with the exception of few days.

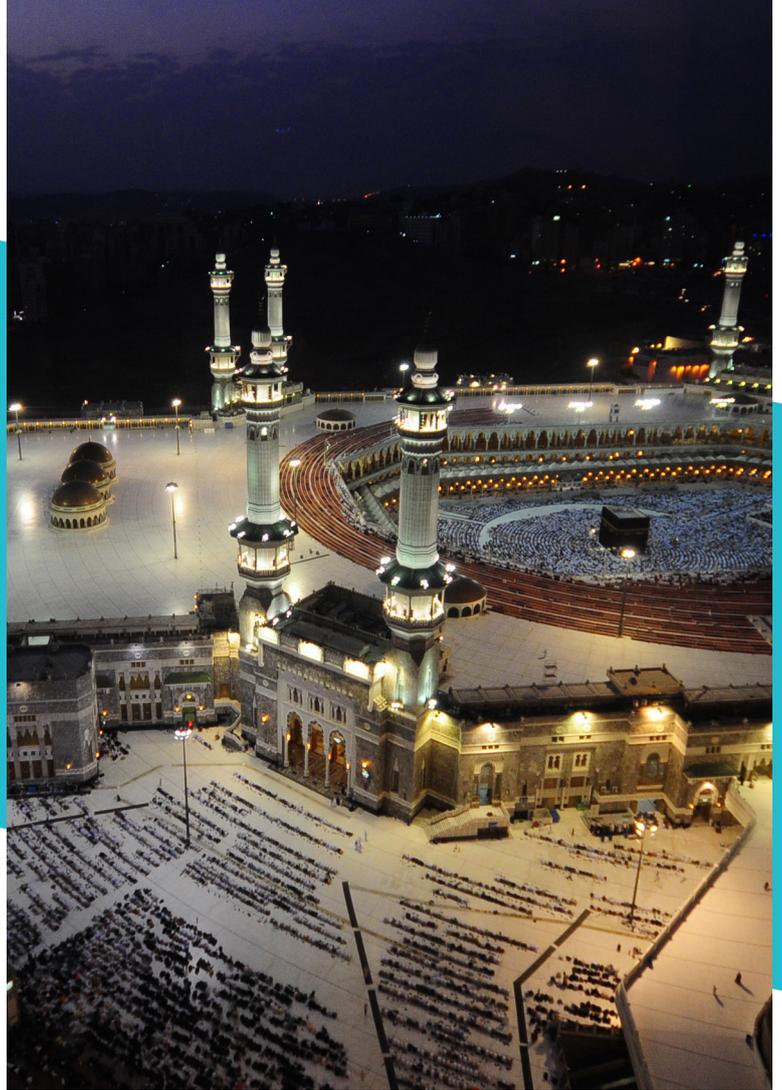
The medical benefits of fasting are numerous and are substantiated by medical reports. Fasting has also spiritual and moral effects on the fasting person. It is a training course of virtuousness, fear of God, patience, strong will, mercifulness to the poor, generosity, and many other things. Muslims highly welcome the coming of the month of Ramadan because they love to do charitable and righteous deeds, seeking the doubled rewards in Ramadan. The narrations from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions show their keenness to utilize the high rewards during Ramadan by increasing their good deeds in it.

Ibn `Abbas reported. “The Messenger of Allah was the most generous of people in charity, but he was generous to the utmost in the month of Ramadan. Gabriel (peace be upon him) would meet him every year during the month of Ramadan until it ended, and Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) recited to him the Qur’an; and when Gabriel met him Allah’s Messenger was most generous in giving charity more than the blowing wind.” (Muslim)

The Qur’an states that fasting has been an obligation for the previous nations before Muslims and likewise it has been imposed on Muslims. Almighty Allah says,

O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous. (Al-Baqarah 2:183)

5- Hajj



Hajj or pilgrimage is the fifth of Islamic fundamentals. It is a sublime and highly elevated act of worship in Islam to be offered in a specific time and place. Hajj is made in the beginning of the last month of the lunar year, the month of Dhul-Hajjah. The place of this worship lies in the sacred city of Mecca and its surroundings. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that it is an obligation in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "O people, Allah has made Hajj obligatory for you; so perform Hajj." (Muslim) This obligation is also stressed in the Qur'an, as God says,

And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka`bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah those who can afford the expenses (for one's conveyance, provision and residence). (Aal `Imran 3:97)

Hajj is the greatest Islamic congregation ever, with more than 2 million pilgrims visiting Mecca in that part of the year. The worship of Hajj can be only offered one time in the year in the sacred city of Mecca, in the sense that it is invalid to perform it in other months or days of the year. The pilgrims visit the House which was built by Ibrahim (Abraham, peace be upon him). This house has been glorified in Islam and before Islam as people would visit it for offering Hajj but with different yet polytheistic rituals. Since the main message of Islam has been monotheism, Islam abolished all the corrupted and perverted rituals of polytheism and set up its precepts on the pure worship of the true One God, Allah.

Hajj is a symbol of Muslims' unity being dressed in similar garments of "Ihram", offering the same rituals, visiting the same places, following the same calendar, worshiping the same God, following the same Prophet and directing themselves towards the same House. It is wrongly thought that Muslims worship the Ka`bah by circumambulating it and touching the Black Stone at its side but this is nothing but a misconception because every ritual in Islam is done as a form of worship to God, Allah, not anyone or anything else.

Women in Islam

Men and women both are human beings from among Allah's creations. Allah made a general rule that humans, men or women, are given special honor above anything else, as Allah says,

And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference. (Al-Israa' 17:70)

However, Islam provided woman with care and attention, and provided her with honor and good treatment whether she is a daughter, wife, sister or mother. It is safe to say that Islam has given a special confirmation of the rights of woman more than it does for a man. Once a man came to Allah's Messenger and said: Who among people is most deserving of a fine treatment from me? He said: Your mother. He again said: Then who (is the next one)? He said: Again it is your mother (who deserves the best treatment from you). He said: Then who (is the next one)? He (the Holy Prophet) said: Again, it is your mother. He (again) said: Then who? Thereupon he said: Then it is your father. In the hadith transmitted on the authority of Qutaibah, there is no mention of the word "people". (Muslim) This indicates that Islam highly recognizes the rights of woman by comparison with man.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) always urged Muslims to take care of women. He told his Companions: "I urge you to take care of women." (Al-Bukhari) He repeated this advice during his farewell pilgrimage when he addressed thousands of people of his nation and also it was his will on the deathbed.

In a word, Islam is a religion revealed by God Who has created man and woman. God is characterized by absolute justice. Islam stated that women and men are equal in status and prestige, and that nothing detracts woman because she is female. In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him) established an important rule when he said: "Women are counterparts of men" (At-Tirmidhi).



Why Islam?

If you agree with the basic concepts presented in this ebook, you may still ask why Islam stands out from other religions. The reason is simply that Islam is the final and complete way of life that God revealed to guide humanity. Previous divine messages (such as the ones taught by Abraham, Moses and Jesus) have been lost or altered throughout time. God chose to send Muhammad (peace be upon him) to deliver His final message, which maintains the core teachings of all the previous revelations. The book sent to Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the Qur'an, which was revealed as guidance for all of humanity. Just like the Torah sent to Moses and the Gospel sent to Jesus, the Qur'an is a guidebook teaching us how to worship God in the purest manner and thereby achieve our purpose in life. The Qur'an is unique because it has remained preserved in its exact and original form for more than 1,400 years. Islam is not a new way of life; rather, it is the final message, which upholds the same essential beliefs that God sent to humanity through all of His messengers. Through this message, God calls on each individual to lead a conscientious life by drawing close to Him and to remain cognizant of their final accountability in front of the one and only God.





If you still have some questions, please feel free to have one-to-one live chat:



www.chatonfaith.com

You can also find answers to your questions on this page:



www.islam.com.kw/askaboutislam/

If you have more question, please send them to this page:



www.islam.com.kw/askaboutislam/submit.php

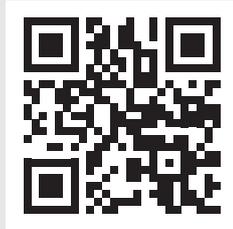


If you decide to convert to Islam, it is very easy. Just watch this video:



goo.gl/erXrV3

After becoming a Muslim, you need some help at this transitional period in your life. All help and assistance is provided here:



www.new-muslims.info



www.prayerinislam.com

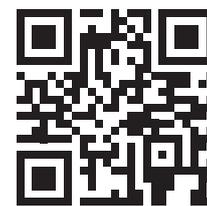
This is a list of our sites that might be of some help:



www.islamforchristians.com



www.truth-seeker.info



www.islam-hinduism.com

EDC Publications

